

Public Document Pack

Subject to approval at the next Full Council meeting

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE ARUN CIVIC CENTRE ON 10 JANUARY 2024 at 6.00 PM

Present: Councillors Mrs Cooper (Chair), Dr Walsh (Vice-Chair), Ayling, Batley, Bence, Birch, Mrs Bower, Bower, Brooks, Butcher, Cooper, Edwards, Elkins, Goodheart, Greenway, Gunner, Hamilton, Jones, Haywood, Kelly, Lawrence, Lloyd, Long, Lury, Madeley, May, McAuliffe, McDougall, Nash, Needs, Northeast, O'Neill, Oppler, Partridge, Patel, Pendleton, Penycate, Purser, Mrs Stainton, Tandy, Turner, Wallsgrove, Warr, Wiltshire, Woodman, Worne, Worne and Yeates.

The following Members were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to in the Minutes indicated:- Councillor Miss Worne – Minute 498 to 512 (Part)].

498. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillors, representatives of the public, press and Officers to the meeting.

499. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Blanchard-Cooper, English, Harty, Huntley, Stanley and Woodman.

Apologies for Absence had also been received from the Council's Honorary Aldermen Mr Dingemans and Mr English.

The Chair stated that it was a great shame that Alderman English and Councillor English were not able to attend the meeting this evening as the Honorary Alderman board had been updated confirming Alderman English as an Honorary Alderman following the Special Meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023.

500. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Declaration of Interest Sheet set out below confirms those Members who had made a declaration of their personal interest as a Member of a Town or Parish Councillor or a West Sussex County Councillor, as confirmed in their Register of Interest as these declarations could apply to any of the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

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Name	Town or Parish Council or West Sussex County Council [WSSC]
Councillor Kenton Batley	Bognor Regis
Councillor Trevor Bence	WSSC
Councillor Paul Bicknell	Angmering
Councillor Carol Birch	Aldwick
Councillor Billy Blanchard-Cooper	Littlehampton
Councillor Jim Brooks	Bognor
Councillor Alan Butcher	Littlehampton
Councillor Andy Cooper	Rustington
Councillor Alison Cooper	Rustington and WSSC
Councillor Roger Elkins	Ferring and WSSC
Councillor Steve Goodheart	Bognor
Councillor Keir Greenway	Bersted and WSSC
Councillor Thomas Harty	Felpham
Councillor Shirley Haywood	Middleton-on-Sea
Councillor David Huntley	Pagham
Councillor Lesley-Anne Lloyd	Rustington
Councillor Jill Long	Littlehampton
Councillor Martin Lury	Bersted
Councillor Maralyn May	Littlehampton
Councillor Roger Nash	Bognor Regis
Councillor Claire Needs	Bognor Regis
Councillor Mike Northeast	Littlehampton
Councillor Peggy Partridge	Rustington
Councillor Jacky Pendleton	Middleton-on-Sea and WSSC
Councillor Matt Stanley	Bognor Regis
Councillor Freddie Tandy	Littlehampton
Councillor Sue Wallsgrove	Barnham and Eastergate
Councillor Jeanette Warr	Bognor Regis
Councillor Christine Wiltshire	Littlehampton
Councillor Bob Woodman	Littlehampton
Councillor Amanda Worne	Ford and Yapton
Councillor Amelia Worne	Littlehampton
Councillor Gillian Yeates	Bersted and Bognor Regis

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

501. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that six questions had been submitted for this meeting. The questions have been very briefly summarised below:

- 1) From Mr Rogers to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Blanchard-Cooper regarding the Lidsey Caravan Park at Lidsey and site licence conditions for foul drainage
- 2) From Mr Rogers to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Blanchard-Cooper regarding the Lidsey Caravan Park at Lidsey and site licence conditions for foul drainage
- 3) From Mrs Smith to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Hamilton regarding an Ombudsman complaint and compensation.
- 4) From Mrs Smith to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Hamilton regarding correspondence with Planning Officers and Officers regarding Council Tax.
- 5) From Mrs Smith to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Hamilton regarding breach of Condition Notices regarding Plots 1 and 2 at Land West of Fontwell Avenue in relation to planning application (AL/232/26/PL)
- 6) From Mr and Mrs Smith to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Hamilton regarding Land West of Fontwell Avenue and Heras fencing and access to that site

Having had supplementary questions asked, the Chair then drew Public Question to a close.

(A schedule of the full questions asked, and the responses provided can be found on the Public Question Web page at: [Arun District Council](#))

502. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS WITH PECUNIARY/PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

The Chair confirmed that there were no questions for this meeting.

503. PETITIONS

The Chair confirmed that no petitions had been received.

504. MINUTES

The minutes from the last meeting of the Council held on 8 November and the Special Council Meeting held on 29 November 2023 were approved by the Council as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

505. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair confirmed that all Councillors had been sent an email providing an update on the activities of the Chair and Vice-Chair since the last Full Council meeting held on 8 November 2023. This update sheet also provided detail of monies raised for the Chair's Charity, AJ's Legacy.

The Chair highlighted that she had been particularly honoured to have attended His Grace, the Duke of Gloucester's visit to the Bognor Regis Museum.

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The Chair then turned to the King's New Year's Honours list and confirmed that she wished to convey the Council's congratulations to Janice Sheward for being awarded a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) as Director of Cancer United and for services to people with cancer in West Sussex.

The Chair also extended congratulations to Gloria Moss who had also been awarded a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire as Sussex President of the British Red Cross in recognition of her voluntary service to the community in Sussex.

The Chair confirmed that both honours were very well deserved and in view of the recipient's great contribution towards helping the community within Arun.

506. URGENT MATTERS

Although the Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items for the meeting to consider, she confirmed that she had had discussions with several Members, cross-party, and would be making a change to the order of the agenda to bring Agenda Item 19 [Motions] forward so that it could be debated before Agenda Item 18 [Special Policy & Finance Committee – 8 January 2024].

507. REVIEW OF ENTITLEMENT OF POLITICAL GROUPS TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES - PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Council received and noted a report from the Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer which was being brought to Council in response to Councillors Goodheart and Harty confirming their intention to create a Group called The Arun Independent Group consisting of themselves as Members.

The Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer confirmed that having received this formal confirmation, Officers had worked on changes to the proportionality and the entitlement to Committee seats and allocation to those seats. Councillors were reminded that Councillors Goodheart and Harty had already been gifted seats following the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2023. Having undertaken a recalculation of seats on Committees, the result of this work confirmed just a small change. This was that the new Group was entitled to four seats with one seat remaining to be filled and this would be the one vacant seat on the Standards Committee. Councillor Goodheart had confirmed that he would occupy this vacant seat, and this had been communicated to Group Leaders with no comments having been received from them.

508. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

In the absence of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stanley, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Nash, presented a report seeking Council's approval to the appointment of Philippa Dart as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

Councillor Nash formally proposed the recommendations which were then seconded by Councillor Oppler.

In considering the report, clarification was sought from one Member regarding the appointment of a new Chief Executive and upon that appointment would that person then become the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer and had always been the case in the past.

It was explained by the Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer that this matter would be addressed and confirmed via a report to Council at the appointment stage in recruiting a new Head of Paid Service.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Philippa Dart be appointed as the Returning Officer for local elections, the Electoral Registration Officer for Arun District Council and the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections.

509. RECRUITMENT TO THE PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POST

In the absence of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stanley, the Chair invited the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Nash to present this report. It was confirmed by the Chair that the minutes from the meeting of the CEO Recruitment & Selection Panel held on 19 October 2023 had been sent to Members and uploaded to the Full Council web page in supplement pack 1 on 9 January 2024 as they had been omitted from the main agenda pack.

Councillor Nash explained that following the resignation of the previous Chief Executive in 2023 this report set out the role of the Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel and the role of the Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee and presented recommendations from both to Full Council.

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The Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel had met twice and considered information around several options for filling the post of Chief Executive. These included a fixed term contract, different structures that did not include a Chief Executive post, sharing a Chief Executive, a part time contract and a full time contract.

The Panel concluded that following research into other authorities' experience and several practical considerations, the Council should recruit a full time permanent Chief Executive to provide the leadership and ongoing commitment required by Arun. The Panel also recommended, as was normal for a post at this level, using a specialist executive recruitment agency to support the Council with the recruitment process, as detailed in Recommendation 2.1.1 of the report.

Following the recommendation from the Recruitment and Selection Panel the Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee met to consider the appropriate remuneration for a full time, permanent Chief Executive post. It considered the views of the Recruitment and Selection Panel and market data for similar posts and considered whether any allowances should be paid in addition. That Committee also agreed how annual pay awards for the Chief Executive should be determined in the future. Councillor Nash drew Members' attention to the three recommendations covering these points at 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

Councillor Nash then formally proposed the recommendations which were then seconded by Councillor Northeast.

The Chair invited debate. A recorded vote was requested on the voting of the recommendations set out in the report.

Those voting for the recommendations were Councillors Ayling, Batley, Bence, Birch, Mrs Bower, Bower, Brooks, Butcher, Elkins, Goodheart, Greenway, Gunner, Hamilton, Haywood, Jones, Kelly, Lawrence, Long, Lury, Madeley, May, McDougall, Nash, Needs, Northeast, O'Neill, Oppler, Patel, Pendleton, Pencyate, Purser, Stainton, Tandy, Turner, Wallsgrove, Walsh, Warr, Wiltshire, Mrs Worne and Yeates [40]. Councillor McAuliffe voted against the recommendations [1] and Councillors Mrs Cooper, Cooper, Edwards, Lloyd, and Partridge abstained from voting [5].

The Council

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel are agreed, as follows:

- (1) Approval be given to recruit externally for a permanent Chief Executive Officer using a specialist executive recruitment agency; and
- (2) The recommendations of the Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee are agreed, as follows:

- The annual salary to be paid for the permanent Chief Executive be £140,000;
- This salary be an all-inclusive salary with no other allowances being paid; and
- The annual pay award should continue to be aligned with the national pay award and should not be linked to the annual appraisal panel and subsequent review by the Chief Executive's Remuneration Committee.

510. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Lury, presented a report seeking the Council's approval to adopt the updated Statement of Community Involvement following a period of public consultation. He explained that this was required as part of the Local Plan update and so was an important part of the process in achieving the corporate vision of achieving the right homes in the right places.

Councillor Lury then proposed that the updated Statement of Community Involvement be approved and adopted, and this was seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Council

RESOLVED

That Full Council adopts the Statement of Community Involvement (Background Paper 1).

(During the consideration of this item, Councillor Bence declared a Personal Interest as a Member of Aldwick Parish Council).

511. CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY - 16 NOVEMBER 2023

The Chair of the Constitution Working Party, Councillor Yeates, presented recommendations from the meeting of the Constitution Working Party held on 16 November 2023.

Councillor Yeates drew Members' attention to the first of many recommendations at Minute 6 [Audit & Governance Committee – 28 February 2023 – Recommendation for the Working Party].

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In formally proposing the recommendation, Councillor Yeates explained that this recommendation was correcting an oversight in the Constitution that had omitted granting delegated authority to the Chief Executive to be able to extend the terms of office to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel that had been appointed by the Audit & Governance Committee to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

Councillor Jones then seconded the recommendation.

The Council

RESOLVED

The following wording be added to the Chief Executive's delegation at Part 4 of the Constitution:

After consultation with and agreement of the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, to appoint members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances and be able to extend their term of office.

Should the Chief Executive consider that the appointment of any Independent Remuneration Panel Member for the Members Allowances Scheme be changed or terminated, the Chief Executive will consult with the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee prior to making a final decision.

Councillor Yeates then alerted Members to the next recommendation which was at Minute 7 [Planning Protocol] and drew Members' attention to the updated Planning Protocol set out at Page 75 of the agenda pack. This set out, using tracked changes, the proposed areas of changes around Public Speaking Rules and deferral.

Councillor Yeates then formally proposed the recommendation which was then seconded by Councillor Jones.

The Council

RESOLVED

That the proposed amendments to the Planning Protocol, as amended by the Working Party, be agreed.

Councillor Yeates then presented the next recommendation at Minute 8 [Consultation Amendments – Finance Group] which she formally proposed. The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Jones.

The Council

RESOLVED

The Contract Standing Orders be amended as set out in the report.

Councillor Yeates then drew Members' attention to the final recommendation at Minute 9 [Consultation Changes and Updates] which she formally proposed. The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Jones.

The Council

RESOLVED

That the Planning Committee and the Licensing Sub-Committee be excluded from applying the duration of meeting Committee Procedure Rules.

512. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 21 NOVEMBER 2023

The Chair, Councillor Wallsgrove, presented the recommendations from the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 21 November 2023.

Councillor Wallsgrove alerted Members to a recommendation at Minute 382 [Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme] which she formally proposed. The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Mrs Worne.

In discussing the recommendation, questions were asked why only three Wards had been proposed for this designation and whether other Wards that might be suitable could be added. This view was supported by many Councillors who held concerns relating to many other Wards around the district.

The Chair confirmed to Members that the recommendation before them was focusing on the three wards of Marine, Hotham and River. The Environment Committee could undertake further work to investigate if further wards should be designated and she asked Councillor Wallsgrove if she would be happy to take this back to the Committee. Councillor Wallsgrove confirmed that she would be happy to undertake this action and in the absence of the officer responsible at this meeting to assist with responding to Member questions.

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Debate continued with Members agreeing that the recommendation proposed could make other areas extremely vulnerable to problems relating to houses in multiple occupation, however, the recommendation was recognised as a positive first step in managing the various concerns.

Following further discussion, Councillor Pendleton proposed that the question about which areas should fall under this licensing change should be referred to the Environment Committee for consideration and possible alteration moving forward. She confirmed that she supported the recommendation and asked the Monitoring Officer how it could be made a broader prospective.

The Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer provided advice confirming that Members could ask the Environment Committee to add this further review to its Committee Work Programme or could ask the Chair of the Committee to refer members' concerns to Officers to review.

Following debate, Councillor Wallsgrove agreed to take the points raised by Members back to Officers so that this matter could be considered further.

The Council

RESOLVED

To designate the whole of the three wards of Marine, Hotham and River as subject to Additional Licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 for all Houses in Multiple Occupation that contain three or four occupiers making up two or more households irrespective of the number of storeys, and those properties defined as Section 257 Houses in Multiple Occupation under Housing Act 2004. Such designation to take effect in the financial year 2024/2025 and last for 5 years, the specific date to be agreed by the Group Head of Technical Services in consultation with Legal Services.

513. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 30 NOVEMBER 2023

The Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Walsh, presented the Minutes from the meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee held on 30 November 2023.

Councillor Walsh drew Members' attention to a range of recommendations at Minute 445 [Treasury Management Interim Report – 2023/24] which he formally proposed. The recommendations were then duly seconded by Councillor O'Neill.

The Council

RESOLVED – That

(1) The mid-year treasury management report for 2023/24 be noted;

(2) The treasury mid-year activity for the period ended 30 September 2023, which has generated interest receipts of £1,068,012 (4.65%). Budget £1,540,000 (3.20%), be noted;

(3) The actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24 contained in the report be noted; and

(4) The addition of a further Money Market Fund (MMF) – State Street Global Advisors (details of which can be seen in 2.4 of appendix 1) be approved.

514. POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 6 DECEMBER 2023

In the absence of the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Nash, presented recommendations from the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 6 December 2023.

Councillor Nash alerted Members to a recommendation at Minute 456 [Council Vision Working Party] which he formally proposed. The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Birch.

In presenting the recommendation, Councillor Nash stated that he wished to have placed on record his thanks to the Officer team and he paid tribute to the vast amount of work that had been undertaken in reviewing the Vision document. As there had been significant debate on the flooding issues discussed at Full Council on 8 November 2023, the Policy & Finance Committee had great discussion on those issues and the response of Southern Water Services and had decided that this was of such significance that an additional Vision aim and objective should be added and so this had been included in the recommendation.

Councillor Birch then seconded the recommendation.

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The Chair then invited debate. There were numerous observations made. One of these questioned the lack of new ideas contained within the Vision document and that it was disappointing that it very much resembled the last Vision with very few changes having been made.

Other Councillors speaking stated that although they supported the revised Vision, they too agreed that very few changes had been made. Clarification was sought regarding the amended recommendation and its wording asking the Council to lobby or require Southern Water to upgrade their sewerage systems as there had been detailed discussion on this point and it had been felt that the Council could not 'require' Southern Water to do anything.

Talking in favour of the recommendation were Councillors supporting the statement that had been added in view of the major flooding and associated issues that Barnham had been experiencing since November 2023. Barnham and its surrounding villages had been inundated with sewage for twelve weeks and continued to experience new flooding and drainage issues. In view of this major problem, it was felt that the Council did need to take Southern Water to task.

Councillor Bence in his capacity as West Sussex Ward Member for Barnham supported the statements made confirming that the situation also included road and sewer collapses and heavy pollution into the Aldingbourne Rife. The amended action to require Southern Water to upgrade their sewages systems was therefore supported.

Councillor Walsh who had moved the amendment at the Policy & Finance Committee explained why. He stated that the point had been raised at the Committee that the Council did not have the power to require Southern Water to do anything with the Council's only power was that of being able to lobby, and that lobbying should require central government to press southern Water into undertaking certain actions. He reconfirmed his view that it was essential to indicate to the public and Southern Water that the Council was serious in its approach to address the problems as best as it could.

The Group Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer provided some advice and confirmed that there was a slight discrepancy in terms of what the recommendation confirmed and what the vision document confirmed in terms of the word 'require'.

A lengthy debate then took place over the use of the word 'require'. Many Councillors confirmed that they liked the word require as it reflected how seriously the Council proposed to respond to the flooding situation, even though it was acknowledged that it could not enforce action. Further tweaks to the wording were suggested in that the Council should "require through Government and lobby Southern Water" to make it clear of the intention. It was felt that wording stronger than lobbying was needed to make the statement more forceful. Although alternative wording was suggested and proposed, this was not formally seconded even though Councillor Walsh stated that he would be happy to accept some of the suggestions made.

A further observation was made in that the addition made by the Policy & Finance Committee should sit under the Environment section of the vision and not the Economy section.

The Interim Joint Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Communities informed Members that the Environment Committee had agreed the terms of reference covering the establishment of the Flood Forum. It was also confirmed that Southern Water would be invited to attend the first meeting of the Forum which would be announced very shortly. She confirmed that all Members would receive notification of when the meeting would be held so that they could attend if they wanted to.

Councillor Yeates confirmed that she too wished to propose an amendment to the recommendation in that she wished to replace the word 'dwellings' with 'development'. This was not seconded.

In response, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Nash confirmed that he felt that it was not necessary to change the wording in the recommendation which was quite clear and took all points raised on board.

As there were no more speakers for this item, and as the seconder had no further statement to make, the Chair invited Councillor Nash to conclude as proposer of the recommendation. Councillor Nash paid tribute to Councillors Bence and Wallsgrove in view of the work they had been undertaking supporting residents and liaising with stakeholders to get issues resolved in Barnham and surrounding areas.

(During the course of the discussion on this item, Councillor Bence declared a Personal Interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council representing the Barnham Ward as much discussion had focused upon the immense flooding issues that the Barnham area had experienced recently).

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The Council

RESOLVED

That the revised Vision document, as attached, including the Vision themes, overall aims and objectives, and measures of outcomes and progress for 2024-25 and 2025-2026 be agreed, with the addition of a new outcome under Supporting our Environment to support us as set out below:

To lobby or require Southern Water to upgrade their sewerage systems especially in areas of large volume new dwellings to enable the increased sewage volume to be fully accommodated". The important factor was that action was needed now and not in the months ahead that might be needed in setting up the Forum.

515. PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14 DECEMBER 2023

The Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Hamilton, presented the Minutes from the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 December 2023 which had been circulated separately to the meeting and uploaded as a supplement pack to the Full Council web page on 9 January 2024.

Councillor Hamilton drew Members' attention to the first set of two recommendations at Minute 477 [Butlins – Local Development Order] which she formally proposed.

The recommendations were then duly seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Council

RESOLVED - That

The amended Local Development Order for the Butlins Complex, Bognor Regis be adopted.

Councillor Hamilton then drew Members' attention to the next recommendation at Minute 478 [University of Chichester – Local Development Order] which she duly proposed. The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Council

RESOLVED

That the amended Local Development Order for the University of Chichester, Bognor Regis Campus be adopted.

516. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA - MOTIONS

As confirmed earlier in the meeting, the Chair confirmed a change in the order of the agenda announcing that Agenda Item 19 [Motions] would be considered now.

The Chair confirmed that in line with requirements of the Constitution a motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedures 15.1 and 15.2.

The Chair invited Councillor Gunner to present his motion.

Councillor Gunner in presenting his Motion confirmed how disappointing it was that he was having to table it. He outlined that he and other Councillors had been asking for some time to receive information about the proposed savings and the budget and that councillors had not received this information. Councillors only as recently as 4 January 2024 had received a highlighted list of savings and had been told that Councillors effectively had no say on what had been placed onto that list. The list included entries such as the reduction in the foreshores team; a reduction in the RNLI team, it included cuts in community safety; cuts to play area budgets and parks; and included the removal of the coffee machine as well as work on energy efficiency and omissions reducing work. As things stood, apart from the headlines that Members received on 4 January, which had still not been published publicly, members had not received the full detail of what those savings meant. Councillor Gunner confirmed that many Councillors, cross party, had raised concerns over the lack of Member consultation and the lack of briefing in terms of what the savings meant in the longer term. One Councillor had asked if impact assessments had been undertaken on those savings and Councillor Gunner outlined that this was something that many Councillors would be interested to receive. Councillor Gunner explained that all his motion set out to achieve was to insert the right of Councillors to know, in full, what the savings were and what they meant in the budget. In view of the depth of his and other Members' concerns he had submitted this motion and following further discussion with cross-party members he proposed to adjust the motion slightly to include the wording below:

Furthermore, officers will identify viable new income generation opportunities and provide to the relevant Committees annual estimates of any new income streams identified.

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Councillor Greenway confirmed that he would second the motion and the alteration.

The Chair sought advice from the Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer. He confirmed that the Motion presented by Councillor Gunner had been altered and was different to what had been confirmed within the agenda papers. The Group Head of Law & Governance confirmed that a member could alter a motion of which they had given notice with the consent of the seconder and the meeting and that the consent of the meeting should be indicated without discussion. If support was not signified, then the alternation would then need to be moved as an amendment.

Having obtained consent from the seconder to the Motion, Councillor Greenway, and the Council, the alteration to the motion was accepted.

The altered motion was read out as follows with the added words highlighted in **bold**:

That this Council will provide to all Members full details of all proposed cost savings in the 2024/5 budget, including implications on service delivery, ahead of the individual service committee meetings where their service committee budgets will be recommended for the 2024/5 budget. **Furthermore, officers will identify viable new income generation opportunities and provide to the relevant Committees annual estimates of any new income streams identified.**

As consent to the alteration had been confirmed, the Chair then invited debate on the motion. Most Councillors speaking confirmed that they supported it. Many emphasised the importance of pursuing and understanding income streams and undertaking work to improve income generation. Councillors also felt that being provided with as much information as possible would assist with debate at the budget setting meeting. They supported the points raised about improving income generation and investing to save which were all important parts of the strategy to achieve the savings required. A plea was made to provide the added information required in sufficient time ahead of the next cycle of meetings that would be taking place in January and February and to avoid providing presentations on the night or the day before a committee meeting.

The Interim Joint Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Communities confirmed that Members had been provided with written detail of the proposals and what the savings looked like at a Member Briefing on 4 January 2024. That briefing had also explained in detail what the Savings Strategy aimed to achieve; and the longer term plans for the Council covering the next few years. Each of those plans would come forward to Members as a project and so Members would receive all the detail covering several issues including maximising cost, recovery and looking at income streams. All of that had been covered within the Savings Strategy report presented. The Interim Joint Chief Executive confirmed that Officers would be happy to provide more detail at the forthcoming Service Committee meetings that would consider each of their budgets, however, the first of the budget committee meetings would be taking place on 23 January 2024, which was the Environment Committee, with the remaining committees following in rapid succession. This meant that Officers would provide what they could at those meetings, but it could not be promised that this information would be provided allowing Members a week to review what they would receive. This was because following tonight's meeting, officers would have to work in gathering this information and assembling it in an appropriate way. With the publication deadlines in place for the issuing of agendas, this would be a challenge. The message was reinforced in that the Financial Strategy covered much of what Members needed to know.

In response, Councillors questioned where this information existed. The Interim Joint Chief Executive referred to the further detail on savings that had been provided to Members on 4 January 2024 and she explained that vacant posts had been proposed as savings and why. The strategy aimed to protect the services to the community as far as possible. This was the Council's first attempt at making the savings that it needed to with the Savings Strategy outlining the consequences of not doing so, which were reinforced by the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

Councillors reinforced their wish to receive this information stating that it would assist them in understanding and being able to properly scrutinise the budgets. This was why it was important to receive as much information as possible to allow Councillors to fully understand what the savings meant for the Council in the longer term and to understand the income streams available and the full detail of these.

Councillor Greenway, as seconder to the Motion, confirmed that it was clear that there were still some large outstanding questions that members had, and they were simply requesting to receive as much detail as possible on the implications to service delivery ahead of the next round of Service Committees. He held concern that Members did not have that level of detail.

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Councillor Gunner, as proposer of the Motion, stated that as Members were expected to make some very tough decisions, the request for more information was not unreasonable. Members could not make decisions on the future of Arun Times and how this would be published; on events or increasing cemetery fees, without being in receipt of the essential detail. The fact that Members had not been invited to have input into these proposals was another concern. Councillor Gunner confirmed that he had been requesting to receive this information since October and had tabled this motion in the middle of December 2023. He confirmed that he had also said that he would be happy to withdraw the motion if the outstanding information was provided and he believed that this information could have been provided earlier. What Members had received had been the headlines at the Member Briefing, not the detail that sat behind the headlines. The motion had been presented to allow Councillors to understand what the savings proposed meant in practice. Councillors wanted to receive as much detail as possible and alternative options and proposals.

Having undertaken a vote on the motion this was unanimously approved and therefore declared CARRIED.

The Council, therefore

RESOLVED

That this Council will provide to all Members full details of all proposed cost savings in the 2024/5 budget, including implications on service delivery, ahead of the individual service committee meetings where their service committee budgets will be recommended for the 2024/5 budget. Furthermore, officers will identify viable new income generation opportunities and provide to the relevant Committees annual estimates of any new income streams identified.

The Chair then called a short adjournment confirming that the meeting would resume in 10 minutes at 18.04.

517. SPECIAL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE - 8 JANUARY 2024

In the absence of the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Nash, presented the minutes from the Special Meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 8 January 2024, which had been circulated separately to the agenda and uploaded to the Full Council web page as a supplement on 10 January 2024.

Councillor Nash alerted Members to a recommendation at Minute 497 [Financial Strategy] which he formally proposed.

The recommendation was then seconded by Councillor Birch.

The Chair invited debate. The first Councillor to speak was Councillor Gunner who proposed that consideration of the Strategy be deferred to the Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024. This was because Councillors had not been provided with all the information that he felt was required and necessary to approve the Strategy. This was especially relevant following the approval of the Motion at the last agenda item.

Councillor Greenway seconded this amendment.

The Chair invited debate on the amendment. Several Councillors spoke opposing the amendment claiming that Councillors had received a wealth of information via two separate briefings and a range of reports. It was felt that to defer approving the Strategy now would be a retrograde step. It was essential for Councillors to move on in preparing to set its budget, even if this meant taking some tough and difficult decisions. Councillors were therefore asked to oppose the amendment to defer.

Those in support of the amendment confirmed that they were not comfortable voting for post deletions without understanding the full implications and what this meant and why the identified posts were no longer required. Councillors confirmed that they wanted to understand the review process that had been used to decide what posts should be made redundant; deleted and not filled. Councillors would then be happy to approve the strategy upon receipt of this missing information.

Further debate took place with Councillors expressing their concern that they did not have the full details to hand that would enable them to approve the strategy now. They needed to know what the impact on services to the public would be.

Councillor Greenway as seconder of the amendment stated that the points that the debate had highlighted explained why the strategy should be deferred. It was about receiving the information that was needed to enable Councillors to make the right decisions. He felt that Councillors did not know the detail and he questioned if they were happy to vote on approving a strategy without the full content.

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Councillor Gunner, as proposer of the amendment, summarised the debate that had taken place. He reminded Councillors that they were being asked to vote on reducing the number of staff within the Senior Management Team and were voting to approve all the redundancies listed in Appendix A as well as confirming the need for £2m of cuts. He reconfirmed his concerns that these decisions could not be made without receiving the full detail required.

In response, the Interim Joint Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Communities explained that the recommendations were asking Councillors to note the proposals to reduce the Senior Management Team with the appendices in the report explaining the implications and how with the proposed reduction in SMT, Council services would be provided. Reference was made again to the last Member Briefing held on 4 January 2024, where it had been confirmed that ten of the posts, were vacant and had not been filled. These posts covered work that was not currently being undertaken and so there would be minimal impact for the Council. It was felt that this was an important point to clarify. It was essential for the Council to have a Financial Strategy approved and in place to confirm the planned work that was needed to achieve the savings required to be made by the Council by 2028. Further details would be provided to all Councillors ahead of the Special Council Budget meeting on 21 February 2024. The Council's Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer confirmed how important it was for the Council to adopt a Financial Strategy at this point in preparing to set the budget for 2024/25.

A recorded vote was requested on the amendment to defer consideration of the Strategy.

Those voting for the amendment were Councillors Ayling, Bence, Mrs Bower, Bower, Mrs Cooper, Cooper, Edwards, Elkins, Greenway, Gunner, Kelly, Lloyd, Madeley, McAuliffe, Partridge, Patel, Pendleton, Purser, Stainton and Turner [20]. Those voting against were Councillors Batley, Birch, Brooks, Butcher, Goodheart, Hamilton, Haywood, Jones, Lawrence, Long, Lury, May, McDougall, Nash, Needs, Northeast, O'Neill, Oppler, Tandy, Wallsgrove, Walsh, Warr, Wiltshire, Mrs Worne, Miss Worne and Yeates [26]. Councillor Penycate abstained from voting.

This confirmed that having undertaken a vote on the amendment to defer consideration of the Financial Strategy, the amendment was declared NOT CARRIED.

The Chair therefore returned to the substantive recommendations and invited debate.

Councillor Wash, as seconder to the recommendations, responded to some of the points that had been raised during the debate and stated that senior management restructuring and changes were a responsibility of the Chief Executive. It was also relevant for a financial strategy to be approved at this timeline in preparing to set the Council's budget as it would inform the budget debate. Councillor Walsh confirmed that he commended to the council the financial strategy and he urged Councillors to support the recommendations. It was important for the strategy to be approved first and to note the decision taken by the Interim Joint Chief Executives in full consultation with Group Heads to reduce the Senior Management Team.

Councillor Nash, as the proposer of the recommendations, confirmed that the Council needed to make tough decisions in setting the Council's budget which would be informed by the financial strategy.

A recorded vote had been requested for the two recommendations outlined in the report.

Those voting for the recommendations were Councillors Ayling, Batley, Birch, Brooks, Butcher, Goodheart, Hamilton, Haywood, Jones, Lawrence, Long, Lury, May, McDougall, Nash, Needs, Northeast, O'Neill, Oppler, Tandy, Wallsgrove, Walsh, Warr, Wiltshire, Mrs Worne, Miss Worne and Yeates (27). No Councillors voted against. Those who abstained from voting were Councillors Bence, Mrs Bower, Bower, Mr Cooper, Mrs Cooper, Edwards, Elkins, Greenway, Gunner, Kelly, Lloyd, Madeley, McAuliffe, Partridge, Patel, Pendleton, Pencycate, Purser, Stainton, Turner [20].

The Council

RESOLVED - That

- (1) The Financial Strategy 2024 to 2028 be approved; and
- (2) The proposal to reduce the Senior Management Team as part of an organisational restructure be noted.

518. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Chair referred Councillors to the Questions from Members that had been submitted in line with Council Procedure Rule 14.3 and the schedule of questions that had been circulated to the meeting. This confirmed that two questions had been received.

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The Chair invited questioners to read out their questions which would be responded to by the appropriate Committee Chair. It was explained that the schedule of questions would be updated to include the responses provided, supplementary questions and responses and would be uploaded to the Council's web page within ten working days of the meeting, in line with the Council's Constitution.

Two questions had been submitted as bullet pointed below:

- (1) From Councillor Tandy to the Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Birch regarding anti-social behaviour at the Littlehampton Wave and cancellation of services.
- (2) From Councillor Greenway to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Wallsgrove regarding flooding and rain events and keeping streets clear of litter and debris.

519. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The Chair confirmed that there was just one change to report, as had been highlighted earlier as part of Agenda Item 8, which was that Councillor Goodheart had taken up the vacant seat on the Standards Committee. As this had already been noted as part of that earlier agenda item, there was no requirement to note this update again.

520. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chair confirmed that there were no changes to representations on Outside Bodies to report to this meeting.

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(The meeting concluded at 8.47 pm)