

ECONOMY COMMITTEE – 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

1. From Mr Edwards to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Nash
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FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

Note, the Chair will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution;
- explain that the questions received will be answered by the Chair or other appropriate Members of the Committee
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question.
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION ONE

From Mr Edwards to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Nash

Question

Does the council recognise the huge, largely untapped economic and investment opportunities the health and wellness sector could bring through partnerships between the council and local business ventures, and what plans does he have to promote this through councils' policies and initiatives. And does the council recognise the potential role of small businesses, and business startups to continue contributing to the regeneration of Littlehampton visitor economy.

Answer

The Council continues to be aware of the current economic potential of Arun and is always keen to consider new markets and opportunities which may increase that potential. The Council does not have policies on promoting individual sectors but rather supports the business community as a whole.

The Council provides a wide range of support for both small businesses and start-ups and has done so for many years. This includes Arun Business Partnership which has been running for over 25 years and has supported both large and small businesses in a variety of ways as well as providing networking and growth opportunities. A monthly newsletter goes out to around 3,000 businesses of varying sizes but the most feedback is gained from small businesses who tell us how helpful this is to their business. The Council is currently supporting a one-to-one service which provides small and start-up businesses the opportunity to have a one-to-one appointment with consultants to look at how their business might flourish – there is no cost to this for the business. These are just a small selection of the ways in which this Council supports small businesses, and our economy team would be very happy to provide further information.

Supplementary Question

I completely understand that you need to prioritise larger initiatives or existing wellness programmes, and it is good to hear that you have loads of things in place. But having pretty much emailed most of you in the Economy Committee, I never got any support or messages back to confirm which direction I could point my new start up business to and so I am just asking would the Council consider establishing a better framework or policy that actively encourages and supports small scale wellness initiatives that align with the broader community goals.

Supplementary Answer

What you say is very important and I am sorry that you did not receive a response to the emails that you sent. I think that the best way forward is that our Officer, Miriam Nicholls, is here today and if you can give her your contact details, I am sure that we will be able to arrange a meeting in the near future.

QUESTION TWO

From Mr Edwards to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Nash

Question

Will the Chair of the committee, given the committee's responsibility for tourism, economic partnerships, commercial activities, business development, property and estates and regeneration, commit to working with the chair of the licensing committee to undertake a review of the council's street trading & market policy to treat the foreshore as within the scope of the policy and bring it in line with both neighboring councils including Worthing Borough, Adur District Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and other coastal authorities further afield

Answer

The current street trading and markets policy was adopted on 1 April 2022 following a period of public exhibition and consultation with relevant stakeholders. Whilst street trading is governed under the same legislation by district and borough councils in England, the Policy sets out arrangements based on the local needs and priorities of each council area and will also be influenced by the arrangements within each local authority for managing public land. A review of the arrangements in relation to the foreshore and consideration of other local authority's policies will be conducted and relevant members will be updated when Arun's policies are reviewed.

Supplementary Question

I appreciate the Council's recognition of the importance of supporting local businesses, and I welcome any steps forward to review the street trading policy, however as someone who approached the Council yet again several months ago, having emailed loads of you, I thought I was sure of operating correctly and above board, I have been disappointed with the slow progress, despite my initial support from the Foreshore Team and the Health and Wellbeing team, it has been a really frustrating phase of delay because my business does not fit neatly into the existing categories within Littlehampton with its reputation as a tourist

destination and should embrace a new opportunity that I have set up and especially new ventures that may happen including the trading policy section 2.6 which recognises arts and crafts as a streets trading licence policy but not health and wellness. So, I am confused with that section and my question is, do you have a timeline for when the Council would offer this revised policy to new local businesses allowing them to compete commercially for sites adequately to prepare and will there be increasing support for these startups like mine, particularly when they bring new and unique opportunities for tourism and wellbeing to this area. I am a local lad, in the local community, speaking to a local council and I just thought that there would be better opportunities for myself, I am 20 years old, and I just wanted to seek the support of all of you and I don't think I have gotten that.

Supplementary Answer

Thank you and I am disappointed that you are saying that and hats off to you for your enterprise and clearly the effort that you are putting in and that goes for a lot of other people. It is true to say that in the Arun district, as in other areas of the country, people being enterprising and starting up businesses should be supported as much as possible. Certainly, in terms of the detail that you have mentioned, we will email you back with some responses and I hope that we can go forward together.