

Public Document Pack

Subject to approval at the next Policy and Finance Committee meeting

61

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

9 July 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lury (Chair), Nash (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Cooper, Gunner, Pendleton, Mrs Cooper (Substitute for Greenway), Oppler (Substitute for Stanley) and Wallsgrove (Substitute for Birch)

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

[Councillor Andy Cooper was absent from discussion at all or part of discussion at Minute 100]

90. APOLOGIES

Apologies for Absence had been received from Councillors Birch, Greenway and Stanley.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Oppler declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 16 as a Committee Member of the 39 Club.

92. MINUTES

The minutes from the last Meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2024 were approved as a correct record subject to one minor change. This was at:

Minute 685 [Angmering Sports Hub Project] in relation to Councillor Turner's Declaration of a Personal Interest as a Member of the MCC Foundation. This should read MCC with the word Foundation being removed.

The Chair then confirmed that he would sign the minutes at the conclusion of the meeting.

93. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIR 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 items for this meeting.

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

94. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

95. START TIMES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2024/25 be 6.00 pm.

96. ANGMERING SPORTS HUB PROJECT

[At the beginning of this Item the Chair, Councillor Lury, declared a Personal Interest as a member of the MCC]

The Principal Landscape and Project Officer presented her report, which provided a project update and focused on the forthcoming consultation which was due to begin at the end of the week. Mace had been undertaking work to review background information and commission a number of site surveys, which would gather data to feed into the design process. The design team had now produced concept layouts for the sports hub site which would be displayed at consultation. The final consultation boards were being prepared, and the draft scheme layouts were attached as appendices within the report. The plans showed the site in its context, the proposed layout for the sports hub and a more detailed plan of the community building. In order to secure the land transfer next spring there was a need to submit a planning application this autumn, it was therefore important that public consultation took place. The consultation would run for 3 weeks. This would be accessed via the website and there would be 2 staffed exhibitions for people to talk to the project team. Angmering Parish Council would also hold hard copies of the consultation information. Following the consultation, the plans would be reviewed and updated. The cost plan would also be revised and Members would be informed of the expected costs and funding options at a future Committee meeting.

At the meeting, Members had been provided with paper-copy visualisations of the building.

Before entering debate, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Andy Cooper and seconded by Councillor Shaun Gunner.

Members then took part in debate and asked questions as summarised below:

- This was long-awaited and much welcomed.

- It was asked whether Angmering Parish Council would be involved. The Principal Landscape and Projects Officer confirmed they were working closely with Angmering Parish Council.
- One Member asked whether solar panels and air source heat pumps would be included in the project. The Principal Landscape and Projects Officer explained both were being considered.
- It was asked whether grey water usage was being considered. The Principal Landscape and Projects Officer confirmed it had not been, however she would review this.
- Questions were asked around the timescales and possible amounts regarding a funding application to the Football Foundation. The Principal Landscape and Projects Officer explained the application would need to take place next summer when the process reopened, and potential funding amounts were not yet known.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To endorse the concept design for the proposed Angmering Sports Hub prior to public consultation.

97. LITTLEHAMPTON SEAFRONT PROJECT

The Principal Landscape and Project Officer presented her report explaining it was a further update since the last Committee meeting held on 8 March 2024. At the time of writing the report the expected project update had not been available and the report had noted that more information would be provided at the Committee meeting.

The project was currently in RIBA Stage 4, which included the procurement process to obtain a final cost for delivering the work. The Stage 4 design packages were issued by Neilcott Construction to their suppliers earlier this year and Arun District Council had been advised in late May 2024 that the projected construction costs were higher than expected. In response the project team had been reviewing options to value engineer the scheme to within the approved budget. Any design changes would aim to minimise the impact to the visitor experience, while maximising the opportunity for savings. The process was nearing conclusion, although there were still details to be worked through. Examples of changes to the scheme included omission of the new car park entrance; reconfiguration of the marketplace; reduction to one end of the toilet block canopy; changes to the water play layout; selecting an alternative climbing wall; omission of lighting bollards, there would however be inclusion of ducting to enable future installation; changes to footpath materials.

The reasons for the high costs were that the design had evolved in response to planning conditions and building control requirements, as well as further work identified following site surveys and safety review. Prices had also increased against cost plan

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

assessments in a number of procurement packages because the markets were still volatile.

Early orders had not yet been placed, but would be processed shortly now that the scheme was confirmed to be affordable. The construction programme was subject to final review, but the contractor intended to begin work in September, with some early set-up likely in August for temporary facilities. This had the benefit of minimising disruption to the seafront area during the peak summer season. Logistics plans would now be revisited so these could be shared with stakeholders and a date for a 'meet the contractor' event was expected to be confirmed for August.

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were raised.

- One Member expressed disappointment that this project, along with others, had been delayed.
- It was asked whether a power supply for events was still to be included at the Stage by the Sea. The Principal Landscape and Project Officer confirmed this would be included as part of the project.
- There was concern around the exclusion of lighting bollards, and questions were asked around the safety aspect of this. It was requested that further analysis of this be carried out.
- Several Members expressed disappointment that value engineering had been required.
- It was felt more communication with the public was required regarding the timescales and when work would begin.
- One Member suggested that solar power be looked at as an alternative to ducting. The Principal Landscape and Project Officer explained that the coastal location meant any street furniture needed to be extremely robust, but she would look further into this.

The Committee then noted the content of the update provided.

98. ALEXANDRA THEATRE - PROGRESS REPORT

The Chair invited the Chartered Development Surveyor/Project Development Manager (who was joining the meeting virtually) to present his report. He updated that he had met with the contractors that day and good progress had been made. Most design packages had now been put out to tender, which would inform budget during the coming weeks. They were waiting for one more tender return, which would determine when enabling works would commence on site. It was likely the site would be set up early to mid-August, with enabling works commencing after that. One survey, commissioned that day, was yet to be completed, and this would finalise foundation designs. It was anticipated that the main works would begin in autumn, with a project

completion date of early to mid-December 2025, after which there would then be a commissioning period for the technical set-up and operator.

The Chair invited questions and the following points were raised by Members (and a non-Committee Member given permission to speak):

- It was asked whether the project had been delayed. The Chartered Development Surveyor/Project Development Manager explained details of the process were in the report, but timings had been due to the tendering and robust procurement process, rather than delay caused by Officers.
- It was asked how confident Officers were about the project completion date of December 2025. The Chartered Development Surveyor/Project Development Manager explained he was relatively confident, but was waiting for final tenders and surveys before he could provide a more definite completion date. It would not be open to the public in December 2025, as commissioning and technical set-up would then have to be completed.
- Clarification was requested around who would install ducting, lighting etc. It was confirmed the contractor and specialist sub-contractor would install all the equipment, although Arun Arts would likely have some of their own kit to install after the project had been completed.
- One Member thanked Officers for the work they had completed, and understood that project work was not always completed to initial planned timescales.
- It was asked whether the hoarding around the perimeter of the site could be used to advertise the project, and be updated regularly. The Chartered Development Surveyor/Project Development Manager explained hoarding was expensive, but they were looking at this for some of the areas, which they were hoping to use to advertise on. Harris fencing would likely be used for other sections.

The Committee then noted the content of the update provided.

99. CARBON ACTION WORK PLAN - UPDATE

The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager presented his report providing an update on projects within the Action Plan and an overview of the Council's Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for the 2022-2023 financial year. He highlighted key areas of the attached Climate Action and Biodiversity Work Plan, and explained that this was a snapshot of the situation at the time.

Councillor Wallsgrove proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Nash.

The Chair invited debate and the following points were made:

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

- The action plan did not make the priorities clear. The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager explained the action plan was ordered in timings rather than priority. He would look into that when completing the action plan for the next municipal year.
- It was not clear what all the costs were, as some were not included. The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager explained it had not been possible to establish the costs for all areas.
- It was not always clear exactly what the benefits on environmental impact would be as this was not always stated. The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager would look at this for the next version of the action plan.
- It was asked why the action plan contained actions that did not reduce the emission if the objective was solely to reduce emissions. The Joint Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Growth explained that the document was a Climate Action and Biodiversity Action Plan, so covered more than just emissions, and some of the actions would be focused more on the biodiversity.
- It was noted that paragraph 5.1 on page 49 stated the overall total emissions had reduced, however then went onto say this was partly due to the changing methodology of consultants. It was asked how reliable the figure was if the way it was done had been changed. The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager explained it was difficult to comment exactly due to the change in methodology used, however a multi-year contract had now been put in place, so figures and results could be compared more accurately going forward.

The Committee

RESOLVED – That

- (1) It continues to support the work of the Climate Change and Sustainability Manager in reducing the Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions produced by the Council;
- (2) The report, particularly the challenges identified in reducing Co2 emissions referred within the conclusion of the report, be noted; and
- (3) The forthcoming changes highlighted which will be reflected in the report when this is taken back to Committee in early 2025, be noted.

100. COUNCIL VISION 2022-2026 - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023-2024

The Group Head of Organisational Excellence presented the report which updated the Committee on the end of year performance of the Vision indicators for the

period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. A full report had been submitted to each Service Committee that received regular Key Performance Indicator reports.

The Chair invited questions from Members which are summarised as follows:

- CV9 [Number of council housing fraud cases prevented or properties recovered] – there was a total saving to the Council of £2.3 million, which was felt to be a credit to Officers, it was in excess of the target and an excellent saving for the Council.
- CV14 [Improve our green spaces] – this was felt to be an excellent achievement, although it was noted that the appendix said ‘details on a separate document’, however these could not be found, and Members wished to know what they contained.
- CV5 [Adopt public art strategy] and CV23 [Achieve green flag awards for Council parks] – One Member expressed dissatisfaction that the commentary said both of those would not be achieved. He felt the Vision had been decided upon by Members and the delivery of them should be made a priority or the Vision should be amended by Members. The Chair agreed to look into this. The Group Head of Organisational Excellence explained that these were 4 year targets, and could not all be achieved in the first 2 years. CV5 was down as a target for 2025/26 as agreed by the Council Vision Working Party. The Joint Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Environment and Communities explained the 6 green flags had been retained, which was a fantastic result for the Council.
- CV11 [Emergency accommodation] – One Member was concerned about the emergency accommodation requirement being so high, and requested confirmation about what would be done around this. The Group Head of Organisational Excellence would circulate an update to Members after the meeting. It was requested that this further information be presented to the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, and distributed to the Members in advance of the next meeting.

The Committee then noted the content of the second annual report covering 2023-2024 on performance against the agreed Vision for 2022-2026.

101. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 4 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

The Group Head of Organisational Excellence presented the Key Performance Indicators for 2022 to 2026 covering the Quarter 4 End of Year Performance period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2024. She went onto explain the recommendations to Members.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Oppler and seconded by Councillor Nash

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

Questions and debate took place as summarised below:

- It was asked whether the ability for Officers to work from home decreased overall staff sickness. The Group Head of Organisation Excellence felt this was likely to have a positive impact, however noted that Officers should not continue working if they were too ill to do so.
- CP19 [Housing Register applications] and CP21 [Emergency repairs]– there was concern around the reporting of these. Officers confirmed that although data was unavailable at this time, reporting of the KPI would be re-established for the next municipal year.
- CP16 [Average days to re-let properties] – although this was still shown in red, it was noted that the void time was reducing and the team were congratulated on this.
- CP18 [Homeless cases owed a relief duty] – there was concern around the figure provided of over 2200 households waiting for social housing in the District. This was felt to be a very large number, likely to rise. It was asked that the Housing & Wellbeing Committee reviewed this and how the situation could be managed going forward. Another Member confirmed that there had been a Member Briefing on 16 July 2024 regarding the Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The Committee

RESOLVED – That

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The suggested amendment to KPI's CP36, CP41 and CP42 be approved.
3. The suggested addition of KPI CP43 be approved.

102. BUDGET PROCESS - 2025/26

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented his report, the purpose of which was to inform Members of the budget process for 2025/26 as required by Part 6, Section 2 of the Council's Constitution. The report outlined the timeline for the budget process, explaining that Committees would be consulted on the budget, and it would be driven by the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan report, which would also be reported to Policy & Finance Committee in the autumn. He then explained the recommendations to Members.

Councillor Nash proposed that:

- (1) The Budget process for 2025/26, as set out in the report, be approved;
and
- (2) Delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer to explore the possibility of setting up a Budget Working Party, consisting of Officers and Members.

This was seconded by Councillor Oppler and a debate took place.

There were mixed views regarding the setting up of a Budget Working Party, with some Members stating they felt this would be useful, and others believing it to be unnecessary. Some felt the whole process should be completely transparent, while others felt private meetings of the Policy & Finance Committee should be able to address this. The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that he did not have a strong view either way regarding this, but had wanted to give Members the opportunity to set up a Working Party following feedback received from them on the budget setting process the previous year. Members also highlighted that there had been many Member Briefings last year, which the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer confirmed would take place again this year.

At the request of a Member, voting was taken separately on part one and part two of the proposal.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Budget process for 2025/26, as set out in the report, be approved;
and
- (2) Delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer to explore the possibility of setting up a Budget Working Party, consisting of Officers and Members.

103. FINANCIAL PROSPECTS 2025/26 TO 2029/30

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented his report which provided Members with an update on the Council's Financial Forecasts for 2025/26 to 2029/30. It was confirmed that regular updates would be provided to the Committee, along with progress updates on the delivery of the Council's Financial Strategy. A more detailed report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on 24 October 2024. He highlighted to Members the main changes set out in paragraphs 4.1-4.3, which indicated an increased budget deficit and reiterated to Members that work was still required to close it.

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

The Chair asked whether the Government were planning to give a 2-year settlement, rather than a 1-year settlement. The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that he was aware the new Government had made reference to this in their election manifesto, however there was no timeframe included. He also explained that whilst it would be helpful to receive a multi-year settlement, he wasn't sure that this would be provided as part of this year's Local Government Finance Settlement. There were no other Member questions.

The Committee then noted the updated financial forecast provided.

104. DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN EXPENDITURE - 2022/23 & 2023/24

The Interim Financial Services Manager presented a report from the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, setting out the draft high-level Capital Programme, Housing Revenue Account and General Fund Revenue outturn performance against budget for the 2023/24 financial year, with the 2022/23 figures also shown for information. He highlighted the key figures from Appendix B, the consolidated dashboard.

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained they felt it important that this high-level report be presented to Members at an early stage. The detailed reports would be presented to Service Committees in the next cycle of meetings, and then to the Policy and Finance Committee. He highlighted that while spending was within budget for 2023/24, £4.2 million from reserves were being used to support the budget.

Members commended the report, and felt this to be very useful, with the layout and format being easy to read and understand.

The Committee noted the report.

105. ARUN COMMUNITY ASSET FUND - CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, ROUND 2

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Joint Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Growth presented his report explaining that it sought Member agreement to the allocation of funds to specific projects in accordance with the terms of the fund, as set out in the background papers at the end of the report. A further four bids for funding had been received, in addition, consideration was to be given for a bid that was deferred from the Policy & Finance Committee on 8 February 2024, as additional information had now been received. The total sum of the five bids was £92k against a sum available of only £45k.

The Joint Interim Chief Executive and Director of Growth had contacted all relevant Ward Members to ask whether or not they supported the projects, and he updated the Committee on the responses as follows:

- Bognor Fun Bus CIC Children and Youth Project – 37 Ward Members had been contacted, 5 responded that they did not support this, 4 responded to say did support, 1 offered conditional support. 3 other comments had been received, but it was unclear whether or not they supported the project.
- Arun Youth Project (AYP) Connect - 6 Members had been contacted, 3 responded to say they supported, the other 3 did not respond.
- 39 Club, Bognor Regis - Responses received from both Ward Members to confirm they did support the project.
- Littlehampton Community Fridge & Café - 3 Ward Members were contacted. 2 responded to say they supported the project, and 1 did not respond.
- Woodlands Recreation Ground (Rustington) replacement play equipment (phase 1) – 2 Ward Members had been contacted and both responded to confirm they supported the project.

The Joint Interim Chief Executive and Director of Growth explained Officers were not making any recommendations, as it was for the Committee to decide how the funding was allocated. He believed there were two options for the Committee, which was either to decide to share £45k between all 5 projects, or to only support some of the projects rather than all.

The Chair then opened for questions and debate and the following points were raised:

- Some Members felt only certain projects should be chosen, as by offering only a proportion of the funding to all projects may not work for any of them. Other Members felt that all projects should be supported with a proportion of the funds available.
- It was felt by several Members that youth projects should be supported.
- The food projects were vital to families currently struggling, and it was felt the Community Fridge was important.
- Members offered various potential solutions and ideas to the splitting of funds between the varying projects, and the strengths of each project were highlighted by different Members.
- One Member offered support for the 39 Club bid, which it was thought was the longest running youth club in the District and felt the money would be well spent and he encouraged others to support this.
- There was concern that a percentage of the requested funds by the Fun Bus would make the project impossible to launch, and they would require the full amount if any was offered. Another Member explained they were also looking at alternative funds, so any money would assist them and they should be supported.
- It was suggested that a condition be placed on the funds allocated, that it must be spent within one year or returned to Arun. This was supported by

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

other Members. Officers confirmed this was possible for such a small number of funding bids.

- It was noted that the Arun Youth Project needed to be celebrated for everything they did.
- It was suggested that there may be other sources of funding available for play equipment in Rustington.
- There was concern that the Community Fridge were currently looking for new premises, and it was asked whether a condition could be put on any funding allocated to them that stated they must have secured a permanent premises before the funds would be released. Officers confirmed this was possible.

Councillor Nash then proposed the following:

- 1) That they agreed bids for funding from the Arun Community Fund as follows:
 - i) Bognor Fun Bus CIC Children and Youth Project - £10k
 - ii) Woodlands Recreation Ground (Rustington) replacement play equipment (phase 1) - £7k
 - iii) Arun Youth Projects (AYP) Connect – Youth Drop-In & K2 Community Centre - £10k
 - iv) 39 Club, Bognor Regis - £10k
 - v) Littlehampton Community Fridge & Café - £8k, with the condition that they must have secured a permanent premises before the funds would be released.

This was seconded by Councillor Brooks. After a vote, this was declared NOT CARRIED.

Debate resumed and another proposal was suggested by Councillor Pendleton as follows:

- 1) That they agreed bids for funding from the Arun Community Fund as follows:
 - i) Bognor Fun Bus CIC Children and Youth Project - £5k
 - ii) Woodlands Recreation Ground (Rustington) replacement play equipment (phase 1) - £5k
 - iii) Arun Youth Projects (AYP) Connect – Youth Drop-In & K2 Community Centre - £18k
 - iv) 39 Club, Bognor Regis - £5k
 - v) Littlehampton Community Fridge & Café - £12k, with the condition that they must have secured a permanent premises before the funds would be released.
- 2) A condition would be put on all funding issued that if it was not spent within 12 months, the funding must be returned to Arun District Council.

Councillor Pendleton felt the two major projects of the Arun Youth Project and Community Fridge should get the full funding and the other three projects should receive £5k each. She did not fully support all three other projects, but was taking into account comments in the debate for her proposal.

Councillor Andy Cooper seconded this proposal.

During a short debate on this proposal it became clear that there was broad support for the Arun Youth Club and the Community Fridge receiving the full amounts requested, however there were differing views on the remainder of allocation. The proposer, with the agreement of the seconder, therefore agreed to amend her proposal, the remainder allocation amount would then be agreed after this initial proposal. The proposal was amended as follows:

- 1) That they agreed bids for funding from the Arun Community Fund as follows:
 - i) Arun Youth Projects (AYP) Connect – Youth Drop-In & K2 Community Centre - to receive £18k
 - ii) Littlehampton Community Fridge & Café – to receive £12k, with the condition that they must have secured a permanent premises before the funds would be released.
- 2) A condition would be put on all funding issued that if it was not spent within 12 months, the funding must be returned to Arun District Council.

Upon taking the vote, this was declared CARRIED.

Turning to the remainder of the funding to be allocated, which was £15k, Councillor Oppler then proposed this be allocated to the 39 Club. A condition would be put on all funding issued that if it was not spent within 12 months, the funding must be returned to Arun District Council. This was seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove. Upon taking the vote, this proposal was declared CARRIED.

The Committee therefore had

RESOLVED that

- 1) They agreed bids for funding from the Arun Community Fund as follows:
 - i) Arun Youth Projects (AYP) Connect – Youth Drop-In & K2 Community Centre - £18k funding agreed
 - ii) Littlehampton Community Fridge & Café – £12k of funding agreed, with the condition that they must have secured a permanent premises before the funds would be released.
 - iii) 39 Club - £15k funding agreed
- 2) A condition would be put on all funding issued that if it was not spent within 12 months, the funding must be returned to Arun District Council.

Policy and Finance Committee - 9.07.24

106. ITEMS PUT FORWARD FROM SERVICE COMMITTEES

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

107. OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS

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

108. WORK PROGRAMME - 2024/25

The Work Programme was noted.

(The meeting concluded at 8.38 pm)