

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 April 2018

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 23 April 2018 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors P.N. Osborne (Chairman), S.D. Elford (Vice-Chairman), J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes (ex-officio), G.S. Browne, C.A. Clark, G.C. Curtis, S.H. Earl, R.V. Elliston, J. Potts, Mrs S.M. Prochak and M.R. Watson.

Other Members present: Councillors J.J. Carroll (in part), Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams and I.R. Hollidge (in part).

Advisory Officers present: Executive Director (AL), Programme and Projects Officer, District Curator and Democratic Services Officers x 2.

Also present: 10 members of the public.

OSC17/55. **MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 March 2018 as a correct record of the proceedings.

OSC17/56. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G.F. Stevens, Executive Director (MJ) and Assistant Director Resources.

OSC17/57. **CA4 04 COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS CORPORATE PROJECT – EAST PARADE** (5)

Members received and considered Minute CB17/77 from the Cabinet meeting held on 12 March 2018 on delivery of the East Parade Heritage Project, for conservation, restoration, interpretation and improvement of the cultural heritage of East Parade. To ensure full participation by all Members, Cabinet referred the item to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for further consideration.

In 2015, Rother District Council (RDC) commenced an East Parade Study which incorporated a community engagement exercise. Members were advised that unfortunately, a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2016 had been unsuccessful; however, in order to achieve the intended objectives for East Parade, the project plan had been revisited to facilitate delivery through four smaller, distinct projects, using existing RDC resources and thereby increasing opportunities for several smaller grant applications for external funding.

The Chairman welcomed Cheryl Poole, the Council's Programme and Projects Officer and Julian Porter, the District Curator to the meeting who provided a detailed presentation on the history of East Parade and the Promenade, as well as the four heritage projects proposed. Councillor Hollidge, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Bexhill Town Centre was also in attendance.

The four projects proposed were:

- **Project A Bexhill East Beach:** improvements to create a mini-destination and seafront users 'hub' at the easternmost end of East Parade, incorporating the car park, adjacent public realm and a new Bexhill Sea Angling Club (BSAC) building.
- **Project B East Parade Heritage Project:** repair, restoration and conservation of the four, Grade II listed seafront shelters, along with a community heritage project to create Heritage Trails.
- **Project C East Parade Landscape Uplift:** aligned closely with the Heritage Project, introduce a more cohesive approach to the soft and hard landscape, keeping any design sympathetic to the promenade's unique heritage.
- **Project D De La Warr Parade Ornamental Lighting:** work with East Sussex County Council and Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group to ensure ornamental street lighting (30 lanterns) was maintained consistently along this stretch of highway.

Members were advised that the site of Project A, Bexhill East Beach, was at the eastern end of East Parade, was owned by RDC, a portion of which was let to BSAC. Currently, the appearance and visitor offer at this end of the promenade was a poor terminus from the west, and an uninspiring welcome as approached from the east.

In 2017, RDC officers and BSAC worked with an architect to produce a Bexhill East Beach Concept Design Statement for the site, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, with the following objectives:

- create an attractive 'destination' space/place to define this end of East Parade, responding to the mix of users of the promenade, including walkers and cyclists on the Coastal Culture Trail and the Connect2 cycle route;
- improve and extend the BSAC accommodation and facility offer;
- provide public facilities including a refreshment kiosk and external seating area and to consider fully accessible public conveniences (replacing those at East Parade, not in addition to the existing facilities);
- formalise off-street car parking facilities; and
- incorporate pedestrian signage.

The overall budget for Project A was estimated at £694,500, of which up to £265,000 was allocated to RDC elements for the car park, public facilities, proposed refreshment outlet and optional public conveniences. A share of the associated fees and consultant costs, and a small contingency, would bring RDC's required capital investment up to £295,000. Members noted that this had already been approved as part of the Capital Programme.

The BSAC project team was currently developing a club development and business plan and a funding strategy for their elements of the scheme. Subject to Members' support for the scheme, BSAC would use RDC's £295,000 contribution to lever in match funding from external grant awarding bodies. Once BSAC had secured funding for their element, an architect would be procured by RDC to take the scheme as a whole to the detailed design phase, including planning permission, and project delivery.

Projects B, C and D were currently in the research and planning stages.

Following the presentation, Members had an opportunity to put forward questions and the following points were noted during the discussion:

- ensure that projects considered all disability access issues including improvements to pedestrian areas to improve movement along East Parade without removing heritage features;
- important that the design concept was linked to the Connect2 coastal traffic-free cycle route;
- improve visitor attraction and encourage economic growth to Bexhill;
- some Members expressed concern that the design of BSAC clubhouse was too modernistic and not sympathetic with the heritage theme, whilst others thought it fitted well in this area, as there was no heritage assets in this part of the promenade and had design merit;
- keeping within budgets it was hoped that attractive floral designs and sympathetic landscaping could be incorporated into Project C;
- assurance was sought that the railings along East Parade would be retained. Members were advised that the railings would be retained and repaired as appropriate;
- retention of ornamental street lighting enhanced ambience of the scheme;
- important that the public were supportive of the proposed scheme;
- improvements to public conveniences was essential; and
- income generation opportunities were achievable from the car park, kiosk and hire of BSAC clubhouse facilities.

Councillor Hollidge acknowledged the OSC's comments and understood the sensitivities expressed to ensure that the projects were in-keeping with the heritage theme.

Concerns were also raised regarding the condition of the seafront shelters (rust) and deteriorating promenade surfaces along West Parade.

Members were supportive and sympathetic of Project A, but requested that the architects reconsidered the design of the clubhouse to be sympathetic with the heritage theme. It was noted that progression of Projects B, C and D would be reported to the OSC at a future meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cheryl Poole and Julian Porter for attending the meeting and providing an interesting and comprehensive presentation.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet and then full Council that:

- 1) it be noted that full Council has already agreed to set aside £295,000 in the Capital Programme from the car parks earmarked reserves to progress Project A;
- 2) subject to Cabinet approval of Project A, the Bexhill Sea Angling Club be authorised to confirm RDC's £295,000 contribution to lever in match funding from external grant awarding bodies;
- 3) subject to Bexhill Sea Angling Club securing funding for their element, an architect be procured by Rother District Council to progress the scheme to the detailed design phase, including planning permission, and project delivery, to be funded from the capital allocation; and
- 4) the remaining three projects (B, C and D as outlined within the report) being planned to address the heritage and environment of East Parade be further developed and brought before Members as appropriate.

OSC17/58. **CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURES**
(6.1)

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director on the Council's Call-In and Urgency Procedures. In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Rule 17 (b) of the Constitution, the operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency was monitored annually through a report submitted to full Council via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

The Call-In procedure was the mechanism by which the Council's OSC could challenge decisions made by the Executive that were not yet implemented. Thirteen Executive meetings had been held during the period of the report from 13 March 2017 up until 12 February 2018. The OSC had found it necessary to call-in only one Executive decision for further scrutiny and two decisions, within the approved budget and policy framework had been deemed and resolved as urgent.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the call-in procedure, in principle, was working satisfactorily however the Committee requested an amendment be made that any two non-executive Members of Council who need not be Members of the OSC be able to call-in a decision with effect from the new civic year and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to recommend to full Council that the call-in procedure be amended to enable any two non-executive Members of the Council to call-in a decision with effect from the new civic year and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

OSC17/59. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL**
(7)

Members received the draft Annual Report to Council as submitted by the Chairman, Councillor Osborne. In accordance with Article 6, Paragraph 6.3 (d) of the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) was required to report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods, if appropriate.

The report covered the period from April 2017 through to the end of March 2018 and gave examples of the various subjects that the OSC had considered during this period as well as the in-depth scrutiny reviews that had been conducted.

The Chairman reported that it had been a very busy and productive year and he had been pleased with the progress made in terms of improved scrutiny processes and comprehensive contributions from outside representatives. The reduced size of the OSC had worked well and encouraged increased Member participation. Members were thanked for their input into the many debates that had taken place. The commitment of those who had taken part in the Task and Finish Groups over the past year was also commended.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft Annual Report, be approved and recommended to Council.

OSC17/60. **WORK PROGRAMME**
(8)

Consideration was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme and the following points were noted:

- Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20 to be reported at the meeting scheduled to be held on 11 June 2018.
- Members to receive an update on the Corporate Programme Projects at the meeting scheduled to be held on 10 September 2018.
- Members were reminded that the informal Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting had been arranged for Tuesday 22 May 2018 at 3:00pm in the Council Chamber and all non-executive Members had been invited to attend. At this meeting Members would give consideration to the items they wished to see included within the Work Programme and to consider these with the Strategic Management Team and Heads of Service in attendance. The following topics were suggested for consideration: commercial development opportunities (Beeching Road, Bexhill); high speed rail service to Bexhill; and broadband update.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme, as attached at Appendix A, as amended, be agreed.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8:00pm

OSC180423/jh

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2018 – 2019		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM (Capitalised)	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
11.06.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Work Programme • Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20 • Performance Progress Report: Year End and Fourth Quarter 2017/18 • Tourism Event Funding Review 	
23.07.18	HOUSING ISSUES TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT	Hughes
10.09.18	CORPORATE PROGRAMME UPDATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: First Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to July 2018 	Ampthill
15.10.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2023/24 	Ampthill
26.11.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: Second Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to September 2018 	Ampthill
28.01.19	DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20 KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2019/20	Ampthill Maynard
18.03.19	CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE: TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Progress Report: Third Quarter 2018/19 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to January 2019 	Ampthill Kirby-Green
29.04.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council • Review of Task and Finish Groups / Outcomes 	-

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Portfolio Holder Updates • Rother Public Realm Strategic Framework progress [Minute OSC16/25 – 17 October 2016] • Special Expenses Review [Minute OSC17/47 – 29 January 2018] • Tourism Strategy (creation of a Tourism Task and Finish Group) to be held during 2019/20 [Minute OSC17/13 – 24 July 2017/ OSC17/47 – 29 January 2018] • Waste and Recycling Contract Update