



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 15th DECEMBER 2025

PRESENT:

Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chair); Cllrs: D. Dawes, S. Goodheart, F. Oppler, N. Smith, Mrs. J. Warr, P. Wells, M. White and Mrs. G. Yeates

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. J. Davis (Town Clerk)
Mr. M. Hirst (Deputy Clerk)
Mr. D. Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd.) – via Zoom
Cllrs: R. Nash and Miss. C. Needs in the public gallery

The Meeting opened at 6.31pm

117. WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone present. The Council's opening statement was read, and particular attention was drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of the fire alarm sounding and the Council's Standing Orders relating to public question time.

118. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND THEIR APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE AGREED CRITERIA

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. J. Barrett, with the Clerk recommending that the reason given was acceptable. This absence was therefore **APPROVED** by Members.

119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair addressed those Members present to ask if they wished to confirm any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

As noted on the Agenda, Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

- a) the item they have the Interest in
- b) whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interest
- c) the nature of the Interest
- d) if it is an Ordinary Interest whether they intend to temporarily leave the meeting for the discussion and vote

- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable Interest, and therefore must temporarily leave the meeting for the discussion and vote, whether they will be exercising their right to speak on this matter under Public Question Time.

They then need to re-declare their Interest and the nature of the Interest at the commencement of the item or when the Interest becomes apparent. They should request that it be recorded in the Minutes that they will leave the meeting and will neither take part in discussion, nor vote on the item.

As per the Agenda, it is each Member's own responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interests notifiable under the Council's Code of Conduct, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

The Chair reminded Members to declare their Interests as any arise or again at the relative point in the meeting if they have already.

Mrs. Davis declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest in Agenda item 10 and stated that she would leave the room during the discussion and vote

Cllrs. Goodheart, Oppler, Mrs. Warr and Mrs. Yeates stated that as a Member of Arun District Council, they would not participate or vote in Agenda item 9 so to not prejudice them from participating or voting in Arun District Council discussions or decisions on the same subject matter

120. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17th NOVEMBER 2025

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th November 2025, and these were signed by the Chair.

121. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

There were no members of the public seated in the gallery, therefore the meeting was not adjourned.

122. ADJOURNMENT FOR TOWN COUNCILLORS NOT APPOINTED TO THIS COMMITTEE TO MAKE COMMENT AND ASK QUESTIONS ON THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/2027

The Chair welcomed Mr. Kemp, from the Council's accounting firm DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd., to the meeting.

At the Chair's discretion, non-Committee Members seated in the public gallery were invited to speak, as and when, without the Meeting being adjourned

123. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/2027 INCLUDING ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES; TO AGREE TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/2027 NOTING THE REQUIRED PRECEPT TO FUND THE AGREED BUDGET

The Town Clerk's report, including the statement regarding restrictions on voting under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, was **NOTED**.

All Members of the Council had received a hard copy of the draft Budget proposals, prior to the meeting, which had also included a Budget Summary, together with breakdowns of Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending 31st March 2027. These were prepared in liaison with the Town Council's Accountant and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and based on the recommendations from the various Committee Meetings. Since the circulation of the hard copies, the Tax Base for 2026-27 had been received from ADC. Mr. Kemp verbally provided Members with an updated Budget Summary.

Whilst not a Member of the Committee, Cllr. Nash declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to his association with Southdowns Music Festival, who were recipients of Partnership Funding from the Town Council

Councillors raised a number of questions which were clarified as follows: -

- 123.1** Clarification was sought as to why the Town Council had a budget for street lighting. It was confirmed that the Town Council is responsible for approximately 40 streetlights, under a long-standing PFI contract with SSE. Following a query as to whether the lights were LED, which would reduce running costs, the Chair advised that this was something that could be looked into.
- 123.2** Members attention was drawn to a change in the draft proposals in relation to the budget provision for the BRTC Warden, which had been increased from £45,000 to £65,000, in line with the budget provided in 2025/2026 with a small contingency for inflation. However, as this was funded from the Economic Development Fund, this increase would not affect the bottom line.
- 123.3** Regarding Partnership Funding, the draft proposals included an increase of £20,000, taking the overall budget to £45,600. This would ensure that there were enough funds in the budget for existing Partnership Funding Agreements, whilst allowing for the Council to enter into new partnership agreements in 2026/2027.
- 123.4** It was noted that the Bognor Regis BID had requested a slight increase to the Town Council's funding contribution towards the Business Warden, from £16,683 to £17,367.

- 123.5** Whilst noting that the budgetary provision proposed for 2026/2027 towards the Arun Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) contribution was £6,000, it was further **NOTED** that Arun District Council had requested a commitment from the Town Council that this level of funding would continue into 2027/2028. It was unanimously **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND IN PRINCIPLE**, that this provision be made when considering the 2027/2028 Budget next year.

Whilst not a Member of the Committee, Cllr. Nash declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor

- 123.6** Following a query about funding for the potential future acquisition of community assets, such as Bognor Regis Town Hall, it was suggested that this could come from the Economic Development Fund.
- 123.7** It was clarified that the total expenditure, year to date, on maintenance and repair for the Bike Repair Stations was £261. It was noted that the station in Hotham Park had been relocated away from the Park Run route. A Member suggested that a budget of £500 should be included for Bike Repair Station maintenance in the 2026/2027 Budget proposals.
- 123.8** A separate budget line for horticultural work was queried. It was explained that, although most work is carried out by the Town Force, specific supplies must be purchased for these tasks, and staff hours are not accounted for within this budget line.
- 123.9** The Budget proposal highlights are detailed in **Appendix 1**, and reflect the items incorporated in the overall draft Budget provision to be recommended to the Council on 5th January 2026.
- 123.10** Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to **COUNCIL** the draft Budget and set a Precept for 2026/2027 of £1,104,229, equivalent to a 1.61% increase on a Band D Equivalent property of £2.31 per annum (4.43pence/week).

124. TO RESOLVE TO MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS (S.O. 3d) (CONTRACTUAL AND STAFFING)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw (S.O. 3d) - Agenda items 9 and 10 (contractual and staffing).

The non-Committee Members, Cllrs. Nash and Miss. Needs, left the Meeting

125. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOGNOR REGIS TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY AND TO AGREE FURTHER ACTIONS

Cllrs. Goodheart, Oppler, Mrs. Warr and Mrs. Yeates stated that as a Member of Arun District Council, they would not take part in the discussion and would refrain from voting

The Chair briefed Members on the discussions held during the preceding meeting of the Bognor Regis Town Hall Working Party.

Cllr. Goodheart stated that despite having previously requested to be a Member of the Working Party, which had been approved at the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 2nd June 2025 (Min. 9.2 refers), he had since decided to relinquish this position to avoid prejudicing himself from participating or voting in Arun District Council discussions or decisions on the same subject matter and had not attended the preceding meeting for this reason. It was **NOTED** that there were now two vacancies on the Bognor Regis Town Hall Working Party and that an item would be included on the Council Agenda for January, with a view to reviewing the membership.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the recommendation by the Working Party for Expressions of Interest, feasibility studies and public consultation as summarised in the confidential report attached to the file Minutes.

126. TO RATIFY ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE (STAFFING) MEETING HELD ON 15th DECEMBER 2025

- 126.1** Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the recommendation of the Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing) made at the meeting held on 15th December 2025, as detailed in the confidential verbal report given by the Clerk, resulting in the progression of proposed changes to staff resources, with a report to be brought back to a future meeting.

Mrs. Davis redeclared her Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the next recommendation and left the Meeting

- 126.2** The Committee **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the recommendation that the discrepancy in the salary scale paid to the previous Deputy Clerk, between 1st January and 30th September 2025, be rectified with a back-dated payment to be funded from the appropriate budget.

The Meeting closed at 7.28pm

BUDGET PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS 2026-2027

DECISIONS FOLLOWING COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

In addition to the various Committee recommendations made to the Policy and Resources Committee, other budget proposals identified were considered by the Committee as detailed below.

Provision has been made within the draft budget proposals to allow for the following: -

- An estimated 5% cost of living rise increase in salaries in 2026-2027
- An increase in Employers NI Contributions, following changes in the Government Budget, with a decrease in Superannuation
- Provision for Annual SCP Scale Point increases for eligible staff
- Changes in salary for a member of staff due to a promotion
- 1.61% increase in the Precept has been applied.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

4065 - 102 Election Fees £20,000 in line with 2025 to cover estimated increased costs in 2027.

4204 - 102 Cllr. Allowances increased from £10,621 to £11,366 following notification from ADC of the increase in the Members Allowance owing to the staff salary pay award for 2025/26. This will be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee in the New Year for a decision as to whether to increase the Members Allowance accordingly.

PROJECTS AND EVENTS

4140 - 104 BRTC Warden currently funded from EDF (£62,288 contracted). Increase to £65,000, to allow for inflation.

GRANT AID

4765 - 107 BOOM Bank no additional provision made for next year to cover any shortfall. £795 has been identified which has been written off by Boom Bank as this is deemed uncollectable therefore funds of £24,585 were remaining within the scheme as notified to the P&R Committee in November 2025.

P&R PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

4702 - 108 BR BID Warden provision in the Town Centre increase from £16,683 to £17,367, following a request from the Bognor Regis BID.

4708 - 108 Partnership Funding provision of additional £20,000, on top of £21,000 in line with 2025/26, to cover Partnership Funding already committed with further funds available for new Partnership Agreements.

4712 - 108 BCRP Contribution provision of £6,000 for 2026/2027, with in principle agreement that it be recommended this provision continues into 2027/2028.

E&L PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS - 208 E&L RECOMMENDATIONS

4032 - 208 Publicity/Promotion budget increase from £7,000 to £7,500.

4401 - 208 Youth and Young Persons increase from £15,000 to £16,275.

4311 - 204 In Bloom Competition Expenses increase to £2,450.

4321 - 204 In Bloom Environmental Projects decrease from £1,000 to £0
(moved to Competition Expenses Budget (Budget neutral)).

4034 - 402 Allotments Competition Expenses increase from £150 to £250.

EVENTS - 301 P&R COMMITTEE EVENT OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

4745 - 301 Book Day Event £5,250.

4736 - 301 Proms in the Park £3,150.

4406 - 301 Hampshire Avenue Fun Week (Playdays) £5,250.

4737 - 301 Funshine Days £5,250.

4743 - 301 Halloween Event £4,200.

4749 - 301 Sunday Afternoon Concerts £3,150.

4748 - 301 Carols in the Park £2,625.

4746 - 303 Drive Through Time £5,250.

4000 - 306 Christmas Switch-On £6,300.