BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of the **BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL ASSET TRANSFER COMMITTEE** held in the **BEXHILL SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB, EVERSLEY ROAD, BEXHILL-ON-SEA** on **Wednesday 16ᵗʰ November 2022 at 6pm**

PRESENT: Cllr Plim; Cllr Baldry; Cllr Brailsford; Cllr Rustem; Cllr Winter; Cllr Wray

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: J Miller, Clerk; L Ford (Rother District Council); A Evett (Rother District Council); two members of the public.

00411. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
A member of the public asked the following questions:

a) Why has the council budgeted for toilets at a cost of £150k when there has been no agreement as yet to take them on, or has an agreement been made?
The council has not yet agreed a budget for 2023/24. It is prudent to consider the costs of both possible scenarios whilst exploring budget options for next year seeing as a decision has not yet been reached. The council is analysing a situation either with or without the costs of toilet maintenance. The final budget will be agreed at the January 2023 meeting of Full Council.

b) Why is the council considering taking on only the leases of the toilets and not the freehold.
Rother District Council policy requires this. The town council has attempted to negotiate the freehold of assets, however it is not an option for the WCs.

c) Are councillors aware that there is no obligation to take the toilets on at all?
Yes. Public toilets are a discretionary service.

d) Are the councillors mindful of the full impact on the residents when they are making decisions to take on toilets, when the proposed precept is already over £600k for the next financial year.
Yes, this has been debated at the budget discussions.

e) Would the chair of finance consider putting a motion forward to full council to agree that given the financial stresses on residents that this council be very circumspect in their action for spending money where only necessary.
Chair's of committees have no additional powers with regards to raising motions, it will be for the chair of finance to make this decision in their own right as a councillor, if they felt it necessary.

A member of the public asked

f) How much has factual evidence scrutiny has been given to the WCs and their full operational costs?
The council has reviewed the full breakdown of costs and existing contracts concerning the WCs.

g) Does the council agree that residents should/could face double taxation for the public conveniences – we will be paying RDC and BoSTC for the public conveniences if they are devolved.

The council has not taken a formal view on this statement however the NALC guide to Double Taxation is available on the town council website. This explains the principles of what is regarded as 'double taxation'.

Should the WC maintenance be transferred to the town council, the district council will no longer raise the council tax to cover these costs. This means that the costs of WC maintenance will fall solely on the town council and not the district council, by way of a lease agreement.

00412. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and accept apologies with reasons for Cllr Baldry.

00413. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllr Wray declared an interest in the discussion concerning public toilets at Manor Barn.

00414. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

00415. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of 12th October 2022.

00416. PUBLIC TOILETS

a) To receive answers to questions – the answers were noted.
b) To review conditions surveys – the essential costs were reviewed.
c) To discuss further with Rother Officers – a further
d) To consider next steps

It was **RESOLVED** that Rother District Council will present a full draft lease for the committee to consider.

The actual utility costs were questioned, and Rother officers will investigate this.

An extra-ordinary meeting of the committee will be held as soon as possible to discuss the information provided.

00417. MEETING – TO BE ARRANGED

Meeting closed at 19:01pm

Signed……………………..   Date……………………..