

F&GP Decisions / Minutes relating to Steyning and District Partnerships Loan request

Item 6.8

13th November meeting

To discuss and agree support for a Steyning and District Partnership proposed Loan – Clerk sent around supporting papers, and a committee member from the Steyning and District Partnership was allowed to speak in relation to the request. Cllr Northam **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that Council agree in principle to support Steyning and District partnership (SDP) proposed Loan request, subject to terms and conditions which are to be provided by SDP, for 6 months and for the sum of £10,000 which will be guaranteed via a payment From a 'Leader' award. **Agreed**

11th December meeting

F&GP/18/66.4 Steyning and District Partnership Loan request – The Clerk spoke with the internal auditor who agreed that there was no issue with the Council undertaking a bridging loan agreement with the Steyning and District Partnership – The Clerk showed him an outline Memorandum of understanding which he agreed would be adequate. The Clerk will add some further details and seek F&GP agreement then Full Council's approval – Again the internal Auditor was happy with this arrangement. The Clerk will therefore put that together, having run it past the Partnership first and send out as supporting paper for next F&GP meeting.

15th January meeting

Committee discussed the content of the MOU as supplied by the Clerk, regarding the Steyning and District partnerships' request for a bridging Loan. Cllr Bowell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Northam that Council are now in a position to sign the MOU for a Loan to the Community Partnership subject to the Committee seeing confirmation from the internal auditor that he agrees with its content and that even without the Council holding the 'Power of Competence' he was still happy for SPC to proceed. **Agreed**

12th February meeting

F&GP/18/91.4 Clerk to make further checks in relation to Steyning and District partnerships loan request – Clerk sort and gained approval to proceed from the SPC internal auditor and from SALC in regards to this request and based upon the MOU given out (and despite the Council not holding the power of competence) – Clerk sent this to all committee members and then received additional questions from Cllr Goldsmith. To deal with these in the first instance the Clerk went back to The Partnership to supply responses and answers and then having received them I went back once again to the SPC internal Auditor and await his response.

12th March meeting

Loan for Steyning Partnership. The Clerk sort and gained approval to proceed from the SPC internal auditor and from SALC regarding this request and based upon the MOU already distributed (And despite the Council not holding the 'power of competence'). Cllr Bowell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Willett that having taken advice from SALC and the internal auditor the F&GP Committee confirms the decision made on the 15th January in reference to the request for a loan from the Steyning parish Council to the Steyning and district community partnership as stated in the MOU supporting paper. **Agreed - For 3 {SN, PB, MW}, Against 2 {GS, RG}**. *It was agreed that a statement from Cllr Goldsmith regarding this item be attached to these minutes.*

9th April Meeting

Proposed Loan for Steyning and District partnership - Committee agreed last meeting to proceed with this arrangement as per initial agreement made in January, however, during the course of a conversation with our external auditor a couple of weeks ago it transpired that a councillor who opposed this decision had emailed them directly and the external auditor suggested council seek further legal advice to check that it is not illegal to offer the Loan under the terms agreed. Clerk consulted with the Chair, and the Solicitors are now going to check it for SPC. Committee agreed that any financial burden regarding this investigation should not be borne by the Council, as it was an individuals request.

11th June Meeting

F&GP/18/125.5 Steyning and District Partnership's loan request – Clerk was tasked by this committee to check details with SPC solicitors regarding the proposed loan to Steyning and District. This was in light of the fact that in January of this year this F&GP committee agreed for the Loan to go ahead, as the details of it and the MOU had been agreed by SALC and the Internal Auditor. In February the Clerk was tasked with gaining further approval because of additional questions raised and did so and again the Internal Auditor agreed it was okay to proceed and subsequently in March it was agreed once more that the Loan could go ahead via a decision from this committee. In April the Clerk understood from the SPC External Auditor that they had been approached with misgivings from an SPC councillor and they suggested the Clerk seek further legal advice to ensure the Loan was not illegal. This the clerk did before the April meeting and recently received emails from the SPC solicitors saying that indeed the Loan was not illegal. Cllr Hanson **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd an amendment to Cllr Goldsmiths original proposal, the amended proposal stated that subject to the solicitor's letter being distributed and content verified by Councillors that the Loan should be authorised, and the money lent to the Steyning & District Partnership group. **Not Agreed, 2 For {DH, TL}, 4 Against {RG, GaS, SaS, TC}, 1 Abstained {GeS}**. Cllr Goldsmith **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Cree that this matter be deferred for a month and in the meantime the Clerk distributes the email from the Solicitor, so that the new Councillors have an opportunity to verify the contents of the email. **Agreed. 4 For {RG, GaS, SaS, TC}, 2 Against {DH, TL}, 1 Abstained {GeS}**