

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

5.00PM – 10 MARCH 2008

HOVE TOWN HALL

### MINUTES

Present: Councillor Young (Chairman); Councillor Barnett (Deputy Chairman);  
Councillors Alford, Allen, Davis, Duncan, Harmer-Strange, Janio,  
Simpson, Steedman and Watkins.

### PART ONE

#### ACTION

#### 61. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 61A. Declarations of Substitutes

61.1 There were none

##### 61B. Declarations of Interests

61.2 During consideration of item 67, Councillor Janio declared that he had a personal interest as he was a member of the South East Region Flood Defence Committee.

##### 61C. Exclusion of Press and Public

61.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

61.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

#### 62. MINUTES

62.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**63. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 63.1 All councillors had been invited by the Chairman of the East Sussex Transport and Environment scrutiny committee to view the committee and discuss scrutiny afterwards (18<sup>th</sup> March.) Scrutiny Support Officer had more information. **All/MvB**
- 63.2 The Dual Diagnosis Scrutiny Panel comprising Cllr Watkins (Chair), Hawkes, Taylor and Young was at the stage of hearing evidence. The next meeting would be on 28<sup>th</sup> March and at least one further meeting would be arranged.

**64. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 64.1 There were none.

**65. OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT**

- 65.1 The Chair welcomed the Senior Departmental Officers and Councillor Geoffrey Theobald as the Lead Councillor for Environment.
- 65.2 The Head of Service Improvement and Review for the Environment Directorate referred members to the summary of divisions and contact details then gave a presentation and overview of the work and services provided by the directorate (See minute book)
- 65.3 He said the council was leading the way for local authorities in implementing the on-street parking management model contract recommended by the British Parking Association for parking enforcement and had received an award for introducing audible bus-stops.
- 65.4 The materials recycling facility and waste transfer station which is currently being built at Hollingdean will considerably help the council to towards meeting the government's 40% recycling target. Options for collections and recycling, for example weekly collections of food waste were currently being evaluated and will be identified as part of the Waste Management Strategy, a key document, which would be considered by councillors in the next few months.
- 65.5 In order to improve performance in the processing of planning applications the new Development Control Manager is currently carrying out a full review of the service and a thorough review of all systems and processes supporting the service including actions to improve work flow and bringing in new systems and additional staff to work on high case load.
- 65.6 Road improvements at Seven Dials and the Clocktower were among the high casualty sites across the city where extensive road safety improvements will be carried out in the coming year and these improvements will be undertaken improve the flow of traffic and reduce

casualties. A number of the off-street car parks were being brought back in-house. The resident parking programme was in place up to 2012 and not 2015 as stated in slide 12.

- 65.7 The council coordinates with water and gas utilities as far as possible to avoid unnecessary disruption from road works. A list of highway works for this year was handed out. (See minute book)
- 65.8 Councillor G Theobald paid tribute to the officers in the Department; for example street cleansing staff were at work today despite severe storms. Senior officers as listed in the summary of divisions were available to answer Members' technical questions.
- 65.9 Members discussed:
- a) Potential legal difficulties if Members became involved at the pre- planning application stage
  - b) Possible Member development/progress updates on large-scale planning applications
  - c) Reducing road accidents. There were 173 sites on the priority list, the Clocktower being at the top with 35 accidents. Available funding should allow 26 sites to be improved during the current local transport plan which has three years remaining. A new campaign for pedestrians 'Stop Before You Cross' including overseas visitors/students was under way.
  - d) It is likely that planning guidance will be published for facilities as part of new developments to store/dispose of waste
  - e) Improving recycling in high-rise flats and in connection with hotels, hospitals and communal bins.
  - f) Possibility of more communal bins
  - g) Incorporation of Corporate Communications Division within the Environment Directorate.
- 65.10 The Committee thanked the officers for the interesting presentation and information and asked for more details on:
- a) The costs of graffiti removal and work of the Environmental Improvement Team
  - b) The Council's statutory duty and current waiting lists for allotment sites
  - c) Update on the work of the council's drugs and alcohol team/service

## d) The editorial policy of the new City News

65.11 **RESOLVED:** - That further officer information be requested as minuted above at 65.10. **MvB**

**66. PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3**

66.1 The Committee considered the Quarter 3 Environment Performance report of the Director of Strategy & Governance (see minute book)

66.2 The performance analyst presented the performance report giving particular attention to the indicators showing red. Answering questions on the principle of performance indicators he reminded the committee that the new Comprehensive Area Assessment based on outcomes, would be replacing the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

66.3 The officers replied to queries on streetlight repairs, abandoned vehicles, heat from waste, composting of household waste and litter.

66.4 More information was requested on sexually motivated violent crimes and abandoned vehicles.

66.5 **RESOLVED:** - That further officer information be requested as minuted above at 66.4 **MvB**

**67. FLOODING PREPAREDNESS UPDATE**

67.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment providing an update on progress following presentation of an interim report to the meeting on 29 October 2007. (see minute book)

67.2 The Assistant Director, Sustainable Transport said Appendix 1 showed action against the 2001 scrutiny recommendations which had been finalised as well as more recent actions and work in progress. A tour of council farmland in November 2007 had shown that most farm management practices and flood defences were in line with the agreed recommendations of the 2001 scrutiny review. Controls on the ploughing of some vulnerable slopes had been secured as part of some tenancies. The scrutiny review had been a fundamental source of information. Now the council was generally well-prepared and working more closely with the relevant organisations.

67.3 Councillor Simpson, Chairman of the former flooding scrutiny panel was pleased with the update report. At recommendation 4, she asked for clarification as she felt that an emergency helpline should be available before an incidence of flooding. **MvB**

67.4 Answering questions the Assistant Director said that at recommendation 22, Patcham residents preferred installation of a large drainage pipe which was deemed prohibitively expensive. However the local drainage system had been improved and an automatic borehole system installed to monitor ground water levels.

67.5 Councillor Steedman said green roofs could tackle flood risk by retaining water. He proposed an amendment to the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Duncan:

Add a new 2.2:

'The Committee recommended to the Environment Committee (or to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment if the new constitutional arrangements are adopted) that the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) should stipulate that major developments will be expected to include green roofs, as is the case in the London Plan.'

67.6 Following a vote the amendment was not passed. The committee asked for a report to the future environment overview and scrutiny committee on the subject.

67.7 **RESOLVED:** -

(1) that the report be noted

(2) That an officer report be requested as minuted as 67.4 above.

JW

## 68. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

68.1 The Development Control Manager presented a report outlining the general procedures with regard to planning enforcement and providing information about the structure of the Development Control Team in relation to enforcement. (see minute book)

68.2 Members could contact the new Planning Manager with questions about specific investigations and it was hoped that member development on implementing enforcement legislation would be possible.

68.3 Asked about the workload, resources and outcomes, the DC Manager said that of the annual 800 complaints received; between April 2006 and March 2007, there had been 14 enforcement notices, 4 planning contravention notices and 6 breach of condition notices served, 2 direct actions taken and 4 prosecutions made. Working on the 800 complaints were 4 senior enforcement officers, 18 case officers and 4 contract planning officers. Members asked for information on comparator authorities.

68.4 **RESOLVED:** - That information be requested as minuted above at 68.3.

JW

**69. AUDIT PANEL – 4 FEBRUARY 2008**

69.1 The Committee noted the summary of proceedings of the meeting of the Audit Panel held on 4 February 2008. (See minute book)

**70. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 FEBRUARY 2008**

70.1 The Committee noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 February 2008. (See minute book)

**71. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2008**

71.1 The Committee noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2008. (See minute book)

**72. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL**

72.1 None

**73. FORWARD PLAN**

73.1 The Committee noted the items proposed for the next meeting of OSOC on 21 April 2008.

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008