Brighton & Hove City Council

Policy & Resources Committee

2.00pm 29 July 2022

Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ - HTH/CC

Minutes

Present: Councillor Mac Cafferty (Chair) Druitt (Joint Deputy Chair), Gibson (Joint Deputy Chair), Allcock (Joint Opposition Spokesperson), Bell (Group Spokesperson), Allbrooke and Evans, & Moonan (Substitute for Councillor Appich)

Part One

29 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Moonan was present in substitution for Councillor Appich.

(b) Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were no declarations of interests in matters listed on the agenda.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

1.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items contained in part two of the agenda.

30 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair gave the following communications:

Committee members will have seen that the Patcham Court Farm Disposal Report has been withdrawn from the Agenda – this was after I consulted the Group Leaders and in line with 7.4 of the Constitution that the Chair can withdraw the item of business in consultation with the opposition leaders. I'd also like to bring item 38 (TBM 2) up the Agenda and take it as the second item after the recommendations of the PSV working group which we will hold on to as the first item because I believe we've got a number of people who are joining us for that particular item.

Next week obviously our city is going to be awash with colour when we celebrate our first in person Pride in 2 years. Pride is when our city is at its Bohemian, bubbly best when we celebrate community, love and diversity as we welcome thousands of visitors to the city. Its worth remembering that Pride is, at its heart, a protest – a fight for the rights of LGBTQIA+ people at home and abroad. We follow in the footsteps of ordinary LGBTQIA+ people and community organisations whose unwavering voices have made mainstream the right to live without the scourge of prejudice. As we welcome so many to our city I wanted to highlight the enormous amount of unseen work that Council officials, business, transport providers, health experts, Pride organisers and the emergency services have been putting in – they will all be helping to keep everyone safe. For months now I have been convening meetings to bring together these groups to ensure that Pride is a success that's involved everything in discussions from Licensing and Transport, all which would be impossible without the brilliant partnerships that are prevalent right across the city. We've also been tirelessly working to ensure that all those involved in Pride have contingencies in place if things don't quite go right. As we hear the final touches on planning I want to thank all those that make the event so special.

Today's P&R is another full agenda. The first item is the procurement of Services Social Value and Community Wealth Building and that is a result of the collaboration and hard work of the cross party working group which carried out an investigation into the procurement of a new domestic violence service for the city. The report provides a number of recommendations to improve future processes but importantly they did not find any failing in the way the procurement was conducted. I know three speaking were councillors from across the political spectrum that the work of the working group was challenging but the number 1 priority through this process is , and remains, providing domestic violence services with the best client centred support wherever possible.

31 CALL OVER

The following items were called:

Item 34 Recommendations of PSV Working Group
Item 35 Review of the Civic Office
Item 38 TBM Month 2
Item 39 Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund Update
Item 40 Moulsecoomb Hub & Housing Project Update
Item 42 Ukraine Update
Item 43 Sports Facilities Contract Extension
Item 47 Buy Back of Former Council Home

The following items were therefore agreed:

Item 36 Review of the Constitution
Item 37 Corporate Systems Review
Item 41 Major Projects Update
Item 51 Review of Staff Mileage Rates

32 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

32.1 Daniel Harris asked a question regarding Workforce Equality Data. The Chair gave the following response:

The workforce equalities information for the Council, along with our fair & inclusive commitments and action plans are published on the council website.

This equalities data sets out how the Council is tackling inequality and how progress is being measured in relation to implementing our Fair and Inclusive Action Plan.

The data includes the Directorate data you have requested, breaking down the numbers of staff by ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion and sex as well as the percentage of the workforce in each pay band and contract type by protected characteristics.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention that the Council's Whistleblowing Policy enables any member of the public, staff or elected members to raise concerns or complaints.

If employees have concerns regarding employment matters, there are recognized informal and formal channels of communication for matters to be raised.

But I want to be clear that, as an administration, we are committed to creating a more diverse, equal and welcoming organization.

The workforce equalities report also sets out actions taken to tackle inequality in the last year and next steps planned.

There are too many to list but actions include, for example,

- The delivery of mandatory fair and inclusive briefings to around 3000 staff and senior leaders holding BME Wellbeing Listening Workshops.

- We have recruited a new HR Diversity Recruitment position

We have implemented a new process to check compliance with recruitment training which includes developing a positive action development programmed to support staff from underrepresented groups to progress and increasing our communications to staff about where to report issues and get support.

32.2 Daniel Harris asked a supplementary question regarding the poor reviews on Glassdoor regarding issues concerning inequality under Housing Management in the Council. The Chair responded that points were addressed in the above answer regarding the Council's plan to tackle inequality and the whistleblowing policy, but answers couldn't be responded to about specific staff queries.

33 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

There were none.

34 PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES SOCIAL VALUE AND COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

34.1 The Chair invited Rachel Sharpe to introduce the report.

34.2 Councillor Powell raised the following points in relation to the report:

- She thanked Cllrs Druitt, Evans, Grimshaw and Simson for their collaboration and effort.
- A lot of effort has been put in to understand the procurement processes for this specific item.
- The main focus of the report is to provide survivors of Domestic Abuse with the best client centred support.

34.3 Councillor Bell welcomed the report.

34.4 Dr Ansuree Biswas Sasidharan suggested that the PSVWG revisit the framework and have a refresh as it has been 6 years since it was launched. She was then informed that 7.2 of the report mentions that PAB will be looking at the social value framework policy.

34.5 Councillor Evans raised that she wanted to thank her colleagues for keeping professional and collaborating on the item.

34.6 Councillor Druitt raised that it was eye opening listening to survivors of Domestic Violence and that everything in the report had been written extremely well and to the book.

34.7 Dr Ansuree Biswas Sasidharan was informed that the original policy was conceived in partnership with the Third Sector. She also confirmed that she'd send her comments to Rachel Sharpe after the meeting.

34.8 Councillor Powell thanked Dr Ansuree Biswas Sasidharan for her question and confirmed that work needs to be looked at concerning the third sector. She then thanked members for their comments regarding the Community Advisory Group.

RESOLVED:

That Committee noted the findings of the Procurement, Social Value and Community Wealth Building Member Working Group and approved the proposals set out in paragraph 3.5 .

35 REVIEW OF THE CIVIC OFFICE

35.1 Abraham Ghebre-Giorgis introduced the report starting on page 17 of the Agenda.

35.2 Councillor Moonan raised that:

- The Civic Office need to manage costs, and the move to paperless should have happened earlier.
- She welcomed the in depth view of the mayor's role.
- She raised that the mayoral driver has an important role in safety and security, as there are often late nights and crowd management aspects to the role which are made easier with a driver/security.

35.3 Councillor McNair raised the following points:

- He was worried that Councillors would have to declare a private medical condition to receive paper copies of Agendas.
- The £11,000 saving would be miniscule in comparison for Councillors to do their jobs properly.
- Councillors aren't elected on their ability to use IT to access agendas.
- The use of computers and mobile phones have a far worse environmental impact than paper copies of agendas.
- The city should be proud of having a mayor and the Civic office should continue to receive funding.

35.4 Councillor Druitt raised that:

- He disagreed that £11,000 is a small sum of money considering how many painful decisions were made to decide the year's budget.
- If Councillors have legitimate needs they can go through appropriate channels to receive the assistance they need.
- Councillors can print off paper copies themselves from a library if needed.

Cllr Mac Cafferty agreed that the funds should be spent on staff and not paper.

35.5 Councillor Allcock agreed that £11,000 is a large sum of money that could be spend more effectively, and that IT knowledge can always be learned.

35.6 The Committee voted on the recommendations which were passed 8 for and 2 against.

RESOLVED:

1. That Committee agreed to reduce the Democratic Services printing budget by 11k by implementing the arrangements set out at paragraphs 3.2-3.4 relating to the provision of Committee papers;

2. That Committee agreed that a further reduction in the Democratic Services budget in relation to the Civic Office support to the Mayor is not be pursued in 2022-2023;

3. That Committee noted that a wider review of Civic Office functions and budget will be scoped and discussed with Group Leaders and any review reported back to Committee.

36 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

RESOLVED:

1. That Committee agreed the amended Contract Standing Orders for Social Care, Public Health and other Light Touch Regime Services as attached at Appendix 1.

2. That Committee agreed that the arrangements for the use of Enhanced Officer Delegated powers are not extended as set out at paragraph 3.5.

3. That Committee agreed the changes to the Scheme of Delegations to Officers as set out in paragraph 3.7-3.9, to come into effect from 1st September 2022 and delegates authority to the

Executive Director Governance, People and Resources to make the necessary changes to the Constitution.

37 CORPORATE SYSTEMS REVIEW

RESOLVED:

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1 That the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to commence procurement of a corporate Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

2. That the Policy & Resources Committee noted that a report will be brought back to Committee to seek approval to award a contract to the successful supplier and notes that the report will include revised purchase and implementation costs and a full business case following the outcome of the procurement process.

3. That the Policy & Resources Committee noted that the procurement process will be reported through the Member Procurement Advisory Board (PAB) at appropriate points of the process.

38 TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) 2022/23: MONTH 2 (MAY)

38.1 James Hengeveld introduced the report starting on page 63 of the Agenda.

38.2 Councillor Moonan was asked about where the cost pressures are coming from in the NHS and how the Council was keeping on top of them, and also if the budget in section 75 is being sustained by rationing services, and why the Council aren't able to provide those packages. James Hengeveld confirmed that he would take those questions away and give a written response.

38.3 Councillor Allcock was informed that:

- There has been a significant increase in the use of residential care which is closely related to sufficiency issues around foster placements, in that there aren't enough placements for the numbers of children requiring them, meaning that costly residential care is the only option.
- There are a couple of extremely expensive residential placements due to specific requirements that has put pressure on the budget
- A 2% uplift was factored into the budget for adults with learning disabilities along the community care line which accounts for some of the budget pressures, but this hasn't been agreed with providers and they may well come back pressuring for more given the current cost of living crisis.
- There are significant cost pressures around home to school transport due to worker shortages and increased fuel costs, meaning there are fewer and more expensive bids on routes – but this is a national issue.
- There are problems with Adult respite provision at Beach House due to worker shortages related to the cost of living crisis, however hopefully the decision taken at July P&R around pay grades will have a positive impact.

38.4 Councillor Clare (Allbrooke) raised that in meetings with other lead members from across the South East, problems are reported concerning lack of social workers, not enough

placements and that placements are too expensive. She also raised that the McAllister review doesn't solve the problem of the placements issue.

38.5 Councillor Druitt raised that he hasn't seen any evidence of rationing as per Councillor Moonan's question earlier and that officers are working extremely hard to ensure care is provided. Councillor Moonan clarified that her point earlier wasn't directed at officers as SPFT provide the services.

38.6 Councillor Evans was informed that:

- The NJC are providing a fixed fee of £1925.
- The budget was set in February prior to the current inflationary pressures.
- Several million pounds could be added to the budget gap for the next financial year or to the TBM position.

38.8 Councillor Yates was informed that:

- There is a void backlog of general needs stock and temporary housing stock.
- Temporary and emergency housing stock is held in the general funds account.
- The improvements to the repairs and maintenance service haven't come as far forward as expected.
- There is a backlog of repairs and maintenance due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- There is now a well-developed void improvement programme, and extra staff are being brought in to deal with the backlog of repairs.
- If there is no permanent stock ready to move people in from temporary accommodation, that only increases the amount of people still in temporary accommodation – so both HRA and Temporary Accommodation are being worked on to get stock back into use.
- The £200,000 going towards repairs for seaside homes as they make up a significant proportion of the temporary housing stock, and the Council does provide most of the management and maintenance services to that stock.
- ORBIS allowed the Council to make some savings in management costs, but as East Sussex and Surry County Councils have withdrawn from this arrangement, the funds are less evenly spread meaning that Brighton & Hove would incur more costs.
- The Council will try and generate more income from using the skills of officers or to create further partnerships with other authorities to reduce costs.
- Patcham Court Farm has been earmarked for redevelopment for a very long time.
- The impact of not being able to develop the site are whether or not the capital programme itself spends in line with its plans, meaning that there may be cash needed to cover it in the short-term leading to delays.
- Capital receipts are being relied on to cover the modernisation programme to support savings over the next few years as well as major projects.
- You can't borrow money for the modernisation programme as it utilises a specific type of Government support called capitalization.

38.9 Councillor Gibson raised the following points:

- Everyone would like to see the numbers of voids coming down more quickly.
- He was glad to see the number of rough sleepers has reduced considerably.
- We are facing a real crisis with inflation.

- He hoped that members would put the cities interests forward during the difficult budget that would be happening at the start of 2023 instead of political point scoring ahead of the next election.

38.10 Councillor Bell asked whether or not the £722,000 from the HRA would be included in the £1.5 million or whether it would be added on going forward. The Councillor was informed that his question would be responded to outside of the meeting in writing by Rachel Sharpe.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee noted the forecast risk position for the General Fund, which indicates a potential forecast overspend risk of £8.636m. This is net of an overspend of £0.235m on the council's share of the NHS managed Section 75 services.

2. That the Committee noted the forecast for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is currently an overspend of £0.722m.

3. That the Committee noted the forecast position for the Dedicated Schools Grant which is currently break-even.

4. That the Committee agreed to set aside £0.395m in a Schools Financial Smoothing Reserve to provide short-term support to schools already in, or expected to be in, deficit that will allow them additional time to adjust their budget plans.

5. That the Committee noted the forecast outturn position on the capital programme which is a forecast overspend of £3.502m and approve the variations and slippage in Appendix 5 and new schemes as set out in Appendix 6.

- James Hengeveld to provide written responses to Councillor Moonan's questions about the cost pressures from the NHS and how the Council are managing them, and about whether section 75 services are being rationed in line with the budget.

- Rachel Sharpe to provide a written response to Councillor Bell's question about the HRA.

39 COVID-19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND (CARF) UPDATE

39.1 James Hengeveld, Head of Finance (Planning & Reporting) introduced the report starting on page 111 of the Agenda.

39.2 Councillor Moonan acknowledged that there was fraud over the pandemic. The money should be going to small/medium businesses that have struggled - where money will make a difference. James Hengeveld responded and noted that it was difficult to give assurances on every business. A standard industry code was used by the government which sets out the percentage of money awarded. Schools and health sector units can be looked at for any flags. The intension to pass out the monies who have not benefited so far. Councillor Moonan requested that details be shared with the councillors.

39.3 Councillor Druitt welcomed the report and considered the approach sensible as he understood the challenges of a small business and looked forward to the positive changes it would bring.

39.4 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Policy & Resources Committee approved the revised scheme criteria described in Section 4.

40 MOULSECOOMB HUB & HOUSING PROJECT UPDATE

40.1 Rachel Sharpe introduced the report starting on page 117 of the Agenda.

40.2 Councillor Yates as ward councillor stated that this was a great piece of consultation by the council with the communities, and the scheme has residents excited. Sam Smith informed the councillor that the Hodge Way Lane was being looked at to a view to being adopted.

40.3 Councillor Gibson welcomed the scheme and noted it was the most ambitious so far. The councillor noted the city was facing an affordable housing crisis and they were proud of the scheme and that rents would be lower than the government standard.

40.4 Councillor Bell supported the scheme and stated that they considered this would put more pressure on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The councillor was extremely concerned about the use of the HRA. Rachel Sharpe noted the councillors concerns and considered the HRA needed to be carefully protected.

40.5 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED: *That Housing Committee:*

Recommends to Policy & Resources committee that Policy & Resources Committee:

1. Notes the progress made on the Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing project to date

2. Authorises officers to progress RIBA stage 4 (technical design)

3. Approves an additional budget of £3.771m for this work, to be funded by HRA Borrowing and BLRF grant allocation and included as part of the 2022/23 HRA Capital Programme

4. Approves the grant-funded enabling works to commence, including the demolition of Moulsecoomb Hubs north and south, to be financed by £1.694m BLRF grant allocation

5. Confirms minor changes to the appropriation of land as approved at Policy & Resources Committee in November 2021 to include land around the buildings on site, and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhood & Communities to approve further minor changes

That Policy & Resources Committee:

6. Notes the progress made on the Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing project to date.

7. Authorises officers to progress RIBA stage 4 (technical design)

8. Approves an additional budget of £3.771m for this work, to be funded by HRA Borrowing and BLRF grant allocation and included as part of the 2022/23 HRA Capital Programme

9. Approves the grant-funded enabling works to commence, including the demolition of Moulsecoomb Hubs north and south, to be financed by £1.694m BLRF grant allocation

10. Confirms minor changes to the appropriation of land as approved at Policy & Resources Committee in November 2021 to include land around the buildings on site, and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhood & Communities to approve further minor changes.

41 MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

RESOLVED:

1. That Committee noted progress on the projects detailed in the report.

2. Agreed that the Circus Street development is removed from future reporting now that it is fully complete and the Dance Space opened.

42 UKRAINE UPDATE

42.1 Rachel Sharpe introduced the item.

42.2 Councillor McNair welcomed the idea Eurovision Song Contest being hosted in Brighton & Hove and suggested that it should be organised and presented by Ukrainians if possible. He was also informed by Rachel Sharpe that there was no evidence that there are specific housing problems at the moment for Ukrainian refugees at the moment. Emma McDermott stated that preparations for Ukrainians and homelessness after their temporary accommodation has finished were being made. There are no numbers of how many Ukrainians have found work, and this is one of a number of reasons that a survey has been requested to get a better understanding of any local issues. Further refugees are expected in the near future and they will be supported.

42.3 Councillor Druitt noted that 88 school placements had been made and was informed by Rachel Sharpe that the remainder were not of school age, and they were not aware of any particular problems with school allocations. All children were 0-18, which includes children not of school ages, have been assessed EMAS for their needs. Emma McDermott informed Councillor Druitt that local employers who are keen to get involved to employ Ukrainian refugees should contact the Chamber of Commerce who will be running a job matching scheme for 3 months and would be reaching out to their membership to get involved. There was also a referral route from the council hub.

42.4 Councillor Mac Cafferty noted that the location and organisation of the Eurovision Song Contest would be decided by the European Broadcasting Union.

42.5 The Chair noted the report was an update.

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

43 SPORTS FACILITIES CONTRACT EXTENSION

43.1 Donna Chisolm Introduced the report starting on page 161 of the Agenda.

43.2 The Chair invited John Allcock to introduce the Labour Amendment located in Addendum 2 which was seconded by Councillor Moonan. Councillor Allcock raised concerns around basic standards at sports facilities, especially swimming pools, and the repair and maintenance. Councillor Allcock noted some improvements have been made, however, the council have a duty to monitor contractors to ensure that residents are getting best value for money. The councillor requested that the committee support the amendment.

43.3 Councillor Moonan seconded the amendment and asked what the funding would be spent on. Donna Chisolm confirmed that they pressing the contractor - Freedom Leisure. Kerry Taylor stated that site visits do take place more than every 6 months and a host of issues were being discussed and the service quality is being assessed.

43.4 The Chair noted that the committee did not require the meeting to move into Part Two – private session and requested a vote on the amendment.

43.5 A vote was taken, and the Committee agreed the Labour Amendment.

43.6 The committee were invited to vote on the amended recommendations.

43.7 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed the recommendations as amended.

RESOLVED:

That the Tourism, Equalities and Communities and Culture Committee:

1. Recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that it agrees to exercise the option to extend the Sports Facilities Contract with Freedom Leisure by two years until 31st March 2026 and that it agrees the variation in the management fee set out in Part 2, subject to the recommendation at 2.2 below.

2. Recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that it grants delegated authority to the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture to agree changes to the management fee set out in Part 2, following consultation with the Leaders Group.

That the Policy & Resources Committee:

3. Agreed to exercise the option to extend the Sports Facilities Contract with Freedom Leisure by two years until 31st March 2026 and agrees the variation to the management fee set out in Part 2, subject to the recommendation at 2.4 below, and with the proviso that the council's monitoring and quality assurance processes for the contract are strengthened, and that officers review the response time and actions from Freedom Leisure in addressing customer concerns and complaints regarding the quality of provision and service, and that those actions are effectively communicated to customers, including the status of repairs, expected delivery timescales, and mean-time solutions for issues that arise.

4. Granted delegated authority to the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture to agree changes to the management fee set out in Part 2, following consultation with the Leaders Group.

44 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

There were none.

45 SPORTS FACILITIES CONTRACT EXTENSION

There was no discussion.

46 BUY BACK OF FORMER COUNCIL HOME

46.1 RESOLVED: Agreed as per recommendations in the report.

47 RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

47.1 RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.