

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00PM 10 JUNE 2008

COMMITTEE ROOM 3, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Mitchell (Opposition Spokesperson)

Other Members present: Councillors Kemble and Mears

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1a. Declarations of Interests

1.1 There were none.

1b. Exclusion of Press and Public

1.2 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).

1.3 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the Terms of Reference of the Culture, Recreation & Tourism Cabinet Member Meeting (for copy see minute book).

2.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Terms of Reference be noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee held on 2 April 2008 be agreed.

4. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member welcomed everyone to the inaugural Culture, Recreation & Tourism Cabinet Member Meeting.

Visitbrighton.com

- 4.2 The Cabinet Member informed the meeting that VisitBrighton's website continued to grow and was one of the best performing destination websites in the country, whilst continuing to draw visitors from overseas.
- 4.3 The website's success was in large part down to the search engine optimization work carried out by the VisitBrighton team. This year the team won the Searchability Award at the Brighton Web Awards, in recognition of how well the web site was optimized to appear on the search engines, and also in recognition of social media work, such as the VisitBrighton blog.
- 4.4 All of this was excellent news for the hundreds of local businesses that partner with VisitBrighton, bringing them extra visitors.
- 4.5 The Leader of the Opposition asked if there had been any research to show who had visited Brighton & Hove as a result of using the website. The Acting Director of Cultural Services agreed to provide a written response which would be prepared by the Head of Tourism.

Brighton Jubilee Library

- 4.6 The Cabinet Member informed the meeting of the success of the extended Jubilee Library opening hours, which were estimated to achieve an additional 73,000 visitors on Sundays this year. The Dads & Kids event planned for Saturday 14 June was noted as an example of activities developed to attract families to the library at the weekend.

5. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 5.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member reported that one written question had been received from Mr Hawtree.
- 6.2 Mr Hawtree asked the following question:

"Could Councillor Smith please tell us whether this authority welcomes the continuation and expansion of the National Agreement with OUP which provides online reference works available to readers with a library membership card?"

6.3 The Cabinet Member replied:

“We very much welcome the continuation and expansion of the national agreement with 22 publishers of online resources, including the Oxford University Press, as part of a Framework Agreement brokered by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Through this agreement, we can offer library members free access to high quality information usually only available through subscription services.

Using their Library membership card, people can access these free resources in any of our libraries, or from the comfort of their own homes through the library website.

It forms part of our ongoing commitment to increase access to a wide range of electronic resources, which currently number over 300 different online reference book titles or subscription websites.”

6.4 Mr Hawtree noted the response and asked the following supplementary question:

“In continuing these arrangements will the local authority be obtaining reference items such as the encyclopaedia of popular music and the encyclopaedia of Islam? If publicised, this would encourage people to take out library membership.”

6.5 The Head of Libraries & Information Services informed Mr Hawtree that she was looking at ways to expand the list of titles when the council’s subscription was due for renewal. She would keep Mr Hawtrees’s suggestions in mind.

7. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

7.1 There were none.

8. PETITIONS

8.1 There were none.

9. DEPUTATIONS

9.1 There were none.

10. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

10.1 The Leader of the Opposition presented a letter from Councillor Davis concerning proposals to find ways to secure the Foredown Tower’s future (for copy see minute book).

10.2 The Cabinet Member explained that the former Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee requested officers to investigate a number of options around the future of Foredown Tower and to report back on these in September 2008. Progress on these options was being made and a full report would be presented to the Culture, Recreation & Tourism Cabinet Member meeting on 16 September 2008.

- 10.3 It was good practice Asset Management to regularly review the council's property portfolio to ensure that the council constantly challenge the reasons for continuing to hold property/assets and demonstrate how these linked into the corporate council priorities and objectives. The preliminary identified list of properties for disposals was an early confidential discussion paper only. Asset reviews were fluid processes that changed regularly and the council could remove this property from the preliminary list at this stage pending the outcome of the options that were currently being explored around the future of Foredown Tower.
- 10.4 The Leader of the Opposition asked for confirmation that the Foredown Tower be removed from the list of disposals to give proper consideration to the feasibility studies.
- 10.5 The Cabinet Member stressed that he had not given approval to the disposal of this property. He had agreed to investigate every possibility to secure the Foredown Tower's future.
- 10.6 The Acting Director of Cultural Services informed the meeting that work was progressing well on the feasibility study around the future of the tower remaining open. He assured the Leader of the Opposition that a report on the feasibility work would be presented to the Cabinet Member Meeting in September 2008.
- 10.7 **RESOLVED** – That the letter and response be noted.

11. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

- 11.1 There were none.

12. MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION

- 12.1 There were none.

13. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

- 13.1 There were none.

14. LIBRARY PLAN REVIEW

- 14.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of The Acting Director Cultural Services which reviewed progress with the medium term action plan for public libraries development as outlined in the Libraries Plan 2007, and set out proposals for the development and agreement of the new Libraries Plan 2009-2011 (for copy see minute book).
- 14.2 The Leader of the Opposition welcomed the report but asked if officers could deliver the plan in the light of the restructuring and re-grading of staff. The Head of Libraries & Information Services replied that the division was already delivering significant elements of the plan. The service had settled down quickly and was delivering well. The management structure had been revised and this had given opportunities to staff with key skills.
- 14.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the progress report on the Libraries Plan 2007 be agreed.

(2) That the process for developing and agreeing the Libraries Plan 2009-2011 be agreed, with a view to it going to Council for approval in December 2008.

15. ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME FOR THE ROYAL PAVILION & MUSEUMS

- 15.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of The Acting Director Cultural Services which recommended a rolling programme of maintenance closures at the Royal Pavilion and Museums (for copy see minute book). It was considered that the proposed maintenance programme and improvements was best achieved through temporary closures of the buildings. The planned programme of maintenance was attached as appendix one of the report.
- 15.2 The Head of Museums & Royal Pavilion stressed that the buildings would not all be closed at the same time. The buildings would re-open on the day communicated to the public, except in extreme circumstances.
- 15.3 The Cabinet Member congratulated the division on its recent maintenance works and made particular reference to the excellent new entrance to Brighton Museum and Art Gallery.
- 15.4 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the maintenance programme for 2008/09 be agreed and that delegated authority be given to the Acting Director of Cultural Services for the implementation of necessary works.
- (2) That the temporary closures of the Royal Pavilion and Museums be agreed on a rolling basis to carry out the works.

The meeting concluded at 4.28pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of