

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

**PLANNING, EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMY & REGENERATION CABINET MEMBER
MEETING**

4.00pm 7 JULY 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Kennedy (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillors Morgan and C. Theobald

Other Members present: Councillors Hawtree and MacCafferty

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1(a) Declarations of Interests

1a.1 There were none.

1(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

1b.1 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

1b.2 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 17 onwards.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

3. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined her vision and aims for the future and the running of the Cabinet Member Meetings for Planning, Employment, Economy & Regeneration (PEER). She hoped that in future the meetings would bring creativity and real energy to attracting investment and planning for regeneration. They would have a different style which reflected the Administration's determination to work in a collaborative and inclusive way to achieve these goals for the benefit of communities across the city.
- 3.2 In line with this administration's priorities, she wanted to see the city building again with the aim to pursue a positive vision for the future which looked forward to a low carbon economy and which maximised the opportunities to create jobs in important sectors including the creative industries and emerging environmental technologies.
- 3.3 In challenging economic times there must be a new emphasis on partnership and the combination of activities within her portfolio would place the city council in a good position to explore new models of development and to work in an imaginative way with its partners to pursue new solutions. She intended to invite speakers from outside the council to future meetings so that they and the council could benefit from their knowledge and ideas.
- 3.4 She believed that drawing planning, economic development and regeneration together provided an excellent opportunity to consider decision making in a more strategic way and to keep a close eye on the overall direction. It also provided the opportunity to look beyond traditional notions of planning as an exclusively regulatory activity and to show how positive planning can be used to deliver successful outcomes in the right places.
- 3.5 Councillor Morgan welcomed the Cabinet Member's commitment to getting the city open for business again and the greater inclusion at future meetings of those groups or people interested in particular issues.

4. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

5. PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were none.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 6.1 There were none.

7. DEPUTATIONS

- 7.1 There were none.

8. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 8.1 There were none.

9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

9.1 There were none.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1 There were none.

11. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION RELAXING PLANNING RULES FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL

11.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place concerning the council's response to the Government consultation seeking to relax planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential.

11.2 Councillor C. Theobald queried why there had not been an opportunity to consider a proposed response at the previous Environment Cabinet Member Meeting in May and noted that nationally the Property Agency had welcomed the proposed relaxation of the planning rules.

11.3 The Head of Planning Strategy explained that wherever possible officers brought proposed responses to Members, however it did take time to consult with various areas within the council and on this occasion there had not been time to bring a response forward.

11.4 Councillor Kennedy noted the comments and referred to the recommendation.

11.5 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:

- (1) That the council's response to the Government's consultation seeking relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential (see Appendix A) be approved and endorsed.

12. LOCALISM BILL UPDATE

12.1 The Cabinet Member considered a verbal update from the Principal Policy Advisor from the Local Development Team concerning the aspects of the Localism Bill that were relevant to her portfolio.

12.2 Councillor Morgan noted the information and stated that he would await the further update at the Governance Committee on the Bill. He stated that it would be helpful to have future updates in regard to the planning aspects e.g. in relation to pre-application consultations. He noted the change in relation to the number required for Neighbourhood Groups from 3 to 21 and queried why the figure did not include local councillors.

12.3 Councillor C Theobald also welcomed the revised number of 21 people and the proposals relating to the pre-application process. However, she felt that further

consideration needed to be given to how prospective developers were informed and made aware of the views of the planning authority.

- 12.4 The Head of Planning & Public Protection stated that the proposals around pre-application stage were welcome and would tie in with the enabling agenda, however more detail was required before the position would become clear.
- 12.5 Councillor Kennedy stated that she shared the concerns about the need to know the detail of the proposals and stated that she hoped that there would be regular updates on the Bill to her Cabinet Member meetings.
- 12.6 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

13. OVINGDEAN CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

- 13.1 The Cabinet Member welcomed a report of the Strategic Director, Place seeking approval to consult on a character statement for the Ovingdean Conservation Area and on changes to its boundary.
- 13.2 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That the draft Ovingdean Conservation Area character statement and boundary changes be approved for public consultation.

14. LONDON ROAD CENTRAL MASTERPLAN UPDATE

- 14.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place providing an update on proposals within and around London Road as part of the Masterplan that would help to realise the objectives of creating an attractive and economically successful shopping centre.
- 14.2 The Principal Planning Officer gave a presentation on the development of the London Road Masterplan and the current position in relation to various aspects of the plan and proposed developments.
- 14.3 Councillor Morgan noted that the Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee had held a workshop on the masterplan and queried whether there would be a role for scrutiny in taking the proposals forward.
- 14.4 Councillor C Theobald thanked the officers for the update and stated that she hoped something could be done in the near future with regard to the empty Co-Op building on London Road.
- 14.5 Councillor Kennedy noted the comments and stated that she hoped to see investment in the area being secured and work with scrutiny to take matters forward.
- 14.6 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:

- (1) That the various emerging proposals be noted.

15. EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

- 15.1 The Cabinet Member considered a verbal update from the Economic Development Manager concerning the latest employment statistics for the city.
- 15.2 The Economic Development Manager outlined the current position in relation to unemployment figures and those claiming job seekers allowance in the city in comparison to the national situation. She noted that the city had entered the economic downturn a quarter earlier than the country as a whole and had come out two quarters earlier. However, the economic forecast remained uncertain and the City Employment & Skills Plan would be an important factor for the long-term economic benefit of what was a diverse economic base within the city.
- 15.3 Councillor Morgan welcomed the information and asked if the employment figures referred to could be circulated to Members.
- 15.4 Councillor Kennedy thanked the Economic Development Manager for the information and stated that she intended to have regular updates to her Cabinet Member Meetings.
- 15.5 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

16. HSBC SUPERCITIES REPORT

- 16.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place concerning the findings of the recent HSBC 'Supercities' report and the implications for Brighton & Hove.
- 16.2 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That the proposal to explore the feasibility of an International Exhibition to showcase Brighton & Hove businesses be supported.

**16 .A INTERREG IV A 2 MERS SEAS ZEEEN, GRADUATE & APPRENTICESHIP
PLACEMENT SCHEME (GAPS) PROJECT & AVANTA WORK PROGRAMME
CONTRACTS**

- 16.3 The Cabinet Member considered an urgent report of the Strategic Director, Place concerning the need to enter into a legal agreement, as a sub-contractor, to deliver Job Seeker work placements as part of the government's Work Programme initiative and to match fund the contract value with INTERREG IV A 2 Mers Seas Zeeen programme funding.
- 16.4 Councillor Kennedy apologised for the lateness of the paper and gave assurances that wherever possible opposition councillors would be informed of the need for an urgent report and given copies as early as possible. Unfortunately, in this instance it had not been possible to finalise the report until the day of the meeting and she had wanted to bring it to the meeting to maintain openness.

- 16.5 The City Employment Initiatives Manager introduced the report and explained that an interreg bid had been submitted which required match funding and whilst it had proved difficult to achieve the match funding, the ability to do so via the programme funding detailed in the report had come about. It was a new way of matching the funding for officers and had taken time to finalise the agreements, which had delayed bringing the report to the Cabinet Member. It also required the council to act as a sub-contractor to comply with the contractual elements of the process. Having secured agreement with the various parties involved he was hopeful that, if approved, the Strategic Director would be able to sign-off the contract in the next week.
- 16.6 Councillor Morgan noted the information and queried whether an equalities impact assessment had been completed and whether the council faced any financial liabilities.
- 16.7 The City Employment Initiatives Manager stated that as a sub-contractor the council was not able to undertake the Equalities Impact Assessment and the financial liability was spread across the 6 partners involved, with the council receiving funding in arrears. Should one of the partner agencies fail, their Regional Government would have to meet the liability.
- 16.8 Councillor Kennedy thanked the Initiatives Manager for the information.
- 16.9 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Employment, Economy & Regeneration authorises the Strategic Director, Place to enter into the INTERREG IV A 2 Mers Seas Zeeen programme agreement and, subject to the final issues set out in section 5.2 being agreed between the Council and Avanta, the AVANTA Work Programme contract.

PART TWO SUMMARY

17. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

- 17.1 The Cabinet Member considered a verbal update from officers concerning progress on the city's major projects.
- 17.2 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

18. PART TWO ITEMS

- 18.1 The Cabinet Member considered whether or not the above item should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.
- 18.2 **RESOLVED** – That item 17 contained in Part Two of the Agenda, and the information provided during the closed session, remains exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Cabinet Member

Dated this

day of