

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL SERVICES CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.30pm 4 JUNE 2008

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Fallon-Khan (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Marsh (Opposition Spokesperson)

Other Members present: Councillors Harmer-Strange and Young

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1a Declarations of Interests

1a.1 There were none.

1b Exclusion of Press and Public

1b.1 The Cabinet Member 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).

1b.2 **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 relating to the Terms of Reference for the Central Services Cabinet Member Meeting (for copy see minute book).

2.2 The Cabinet Member indicated that this Cabinet Member Meeting would focus on three keys areas: the quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness of Central Services whilst also ensuring value for money across all corporate services.

- 2.3 Councillor Marsh sought clarification about the finance function, which was specified in the Terms of Reference for the Cabinet Member Meeting for Central Services, and whether it differed from the function of the Cabinet Member Meeting for Finance.
- 2.4 The Cabinet Member clarified that the functions allocated to the Cabinet Member Meeting for Finance and Central Services would overlap in places. In terms of the finance function, the Director of Finance and Resources further clarified that whereas the Finance Cabinet Meeting is responsible for the overall financial arrangements for the organisation, i.e., for the whole Council, every Cabinet Member Meeting had a budget within their services and areas. The Cabinet Member for Central Services had such budget designated to it and this is where its finance remits lies.
- 2.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Terms of Reference for the Cabinet Member Meeting for Central Services be noted.

3. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member welcomed Members, officers and members of the public to the first meeting of the Cabinet Member Meeting for Finance, and introduced Councillor Harmer-Strange as the Lead Councillor supporting him at the Cabinet Member Meetings for Central Services.
- 3.2 The Cabinet Member indicated that the core services of the organisation were important to all and, therefore, involvement from all was also important. In view of this, he indicated that he intended to chair the Cabinet Member Meetings for Central Services in an open way, promoting openness and transparency. He clarified that he intended to conduct the business of this Cabinet in open discussion with the opposition and was keen to keep all groups involved and informed of the decisions. The Cabinet Member further indicated that he also intended to access the skills of all other Members and, thus, invited them to share of their expertise and knowledge.
- 3.3 The Cabinet Member appealed to Members' appropriate behaviour at the Cabinet Member Meetings for Central Services. He indicated that rudeness would not be tolerated at these meetings.
- 3.4 The Cabinet Member indicated that he would also propose that the Cabinet Member Meetings for Central Services met quarterly. He intended to keep the next meeting scheduled for July 2008, subject to a slight change to the date originally listed, and followed by the October 2008 and February 2009 meetings. If it was thought that further meetings were needed, these could be organised accordingly.
- 3.5 The Cabinet Member indicated that the next meeting would be considering a number of property related decisions, including feedback on Badger management on Council Farmland, and some specific lease decisions.
- 3.6 In terms of matters being considered at the Cabinet Member Meetings for Central Services, the Director of Finance and Resources clarified that those would be property related decisions. Any decision relating to big corporate matters, which affected other areas, would be taken to Cabinet. All others would be brought to the Cabinet Member Meeting for Central Services.

4. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Councillor Marsh enquired how she, or any Member, could reserve matters for discussion.
- 4.2 The Director of Strategy & Governance clarified that she could address the Cabinet Member and raise any issues with him directly. Their discussions might result in the matters being brought to the Cabinet Member Meeting. If the Cabinet Member's view were that those matters were not appropriate, she had other ways to raise them up, such as via questions and letters.
- 4.3 The Cabinet Member requested that Members who wished to speak at these meetings made use of the 24 hours notice requested of them, although he was happy to take questions at meetings, subject to answers being provided at a later stage where it had not been possible to answer questions raised at the meeting.
- 4.4 Councillor Harmer-Strange pointed out that, under the previous Constitution, there existed the possibility of referring matters to Council. He noted that this item no longer existed in the current agenda format.
- 4.5 The Director of Strategy & Governance clarified that any items which would not be dealt with at these meetings would go directly to Cabinet. He further clarified that in the event of a matter being raised on the day, where a decision could not be made, the Cabinet Member could defer such matter to the next meeting or refer it elsewhere, as considered appropriate.
- 4.6 Councillor Hamilton further enquired whether a Member could put a notice of motion to Council to overturn a Cabinet Member decision.
- 4.7 The Director of Strategy and Governance clarified that the only process to seek to challenge or review a Cabinet Member decision was via scrutiny and the call-in procedures, which were still in place. The Cabinet Member further clarified that the reason behind the decision to hold open meetings and keep other political groups involved was so that the opposition would have the opportunity to scrutinise any decision before it reached Cabinet Member Meetings.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 5.1 There were none.

6. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 6.1 There were none.

7. PETITIONS

- 7.1 There were none.

8. DEPUTATIONS

8.1 There were none.

9. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

9.1 There were none.

10. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

10.1 There were none.

11. MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION

11.1 There were none.

12. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

12.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of