

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

4.00pm 2 MAY 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor J Kitcat (Chair) Councillors Littman (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Mitchell (Opposition Spokesperson), Hamilton, Mac Cafferty, A Norman, K Norman, Shanks and West.

Other Members present: Councillors Morgan and Hyde.

PART ONE

179. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

179.1 Councillors Mac Cafferty and K. Norman declared that they were attending the meeting as a substitute for Councillors Wakefield and Peltzer Dunn respectively.

(b) Declarations of Interest

179.2 There were no declarations of interest.

(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

179.3 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.

179.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

180. MINUTES

180.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the last meeting held on the 21 March 2013 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

181. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

181.1 The Chair stated that he had a number of communications to make today, the first of which was to pay tribute to Councillor Mitchell following her announcement that she would be stepping down as Leader of the Labour & Co-Operative Group. It had been

a pleasure to have Councillor Mitchell question and quiz him as Leader of her Group at these meetings; her methodical preparation and iron sure grasp on the minutiae made her a formidable presence on any committee, but particularly here and at Council she had shown real skill, determination and passion to represent her constituents and her group and, on behalf of his Group he thanked her for her dedication and wished her well for the future.

- 181.2 The Chair stated that last Tuesday he attended the 'topping out' ceremony at Portslade Aldridge Community Academy which marked the completion of the first stage of a £11.2m building and refurbishment project. The ceremony celebrated the completion of the main structure of a new sixth form centre, as well as marking the internal refurbishments which are being carried out to existing buildings. He was pleased to attend alongside staff and students and with representatives from the Aldridge Foundation, colleagues from the council and regeneration specialist 'Keepmoat', who were carrying out the building work.
- 181.3 On the topic of education; he noted that last term there were 10 full Ofsted inspections; of those, six schools were judged to be good - all improving from satisfactory. They were Moulsecoomb Primary, St Joseph's Primary, Blatchington Mill, Patcham High, Hove Park and ACE. 80% of schools in the city were now judged to be good or outstanding.
- 181.4 The Chair stated that at our last meeting we resolved that officers consult on the possible withdrawal of the 96 bus service with the parents / carers of current users; including on possible funding of alternative transport solutions. We asked that they provide a report to a future meeting. A brief consultation paper was issued to parents and carers and to the two schools on 19 April, with a request for comments to be returned by the thirtieth. The paper included six options to be considered:
1. Students are provided with a 24 / 7 bus pass subsidised by the Council;
 2. Parents organise a local minibus service which would be subsidised by the Council;
 3. Blatchington Mill and Hove Park provide minibus transport for these students subsidised by the Council;
 4. The Council negotiates an extension to an existing bus route and meet any additional cost.
 5. Social care to provide transport and funded by the Council;
 6. Extending or retiming the 14 bus combined with giving people a bus pass.
- 181.5 The Chair noted that by the requested response date of 30 April, four responses from parents had been received. These and any others that may be received would now be considered in consultation with the schools and representatives of the parents, and an update would be provided to the committee on 13 June 2013.
- 181.6 The Chair stated that he would like to formally offer his congratulations to Chief Superintendent Nev Kemp on becoming the new Police Commander for Brighton and Hove. The council and the police had parallel responsibilities when it came to the safety and lawfulness of the city and our work together, though challenging had proved fruitful. He expected that they would share more challenges and he looked forward to working with the new Commander to resolve them.

181.7 The Chair stated that he wished to offer his congratulations to the Albion for reaching the playoffs; and hoped that it would lead to further success and a much sought place in the Premiership League. He also offered congratulations to Whitehawk FC who had achieved promotion from the Ryman Premier to the Conference South, League.

181.8 Finally he was delighted to confirm that the city had been successful in its bid to host some games of the 2015 Rugby World Cup. It looked set to be hosting matches at the Amex between South Africa and a team from Asia and Samoa versus a team from America. Winning this bid was a huge achievement and he wished to thank the Albion, officers and colleagues who helped shape and submit the bid. He also extended a warm invitation to Rugby fans from around the globe, particularly to those whose countries would be playing here; he was sure Brighton and Hove would provide them with enjoyable times in and out of the stadium.

182. CALL OVER

182.1 The Chair proposed that no call over be taken in view of the lightness of the agenda and this was agreed.

183. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(a) Petitions

183.1 The Chair noted that there were no petitions to be presented by members of the public.

(b) Written Questions

183.2 The Chair noted that there were no written questions from members of the public.

(c) Deputations

183.3 The Chair noted that no deputations had been submitted by members of the public for the current meeting.

184. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

(a) Petitions

183.4 The Chair noted that there were no petitions to be presented by Members.

(b) Letters

183.5 The Chair noted that two Members' letters had been submitted for inclusion on the agenda and invited Councillor Hamilton to speak to his letter and outline his concerns in relation to Portslade Town Hall Car Park.

183.6 Councillor Hamilton thanked the Chair and stated that in regard to the proposed redevelopment of Portslade Town Hall he was concerned about the impact on the

available parking spaces that would be decreased and therefore have a detrimental affect on the use of the facilities. He believed that there were no bus services along Victoria Road and that on-street parking was severely limited. He therefore sought an assurance that this would be looked at and adequate parking provided to enable the new development to be used effectively.

183.7 The Chair thanked Councillor Hamilton for his letter and stated that he had a detailed response a copy of which he would ensure was sent to Councillor Hamilton, but noted that it was intended to provide a new community hub with additional housing and employment opportunities as well as a new bowling pavilion. It would need to be attractive to the market and have sufficient frontage and space to appeal to developers, their funders and homeowners. As such officers were exploring the potential use of the car park opposite to off-set some of the loss of spaces following the redevelopment. He then proposed that the letter be noted.

183.8 **RESOLVED:** That the letter be noted.

183.9 The Chair then invited Councillor Morgan to come forward and speak to the joint letter from him and Councillor Rufus, regarding the role and work of the overview and scrutiny process.

183.10 Councillor Morgan thanked the Chair and stated that both and Councillor Rufus had wanted to highlight the role of scrutiny and the benefits it offered under the committee system to enable research and policy development work to be undertaken and reported back to committees. He believed that the council had an excellent scrutiny team and that this should be utilised to undertake work on behalf of the policy committees and to then report back on its findings. The process enabled the use of co-optees and experts from various fields to be involved and help to develop ideas and solutions that could then be considered by the council and free up time for committees to concentrate on their general responsibilities. It also enabled work to be undertaken outside of party political lines and therefore act as a critical friend and policy developer.

183.11 The Chair thanked Councillor Morgan for attending the meeting and welcomed the highlighting of the work that could be undertaken by the scrutiny process in helping to review and develop policy. He believed it had an important part to play within the decision making process and hoped that all committees would give consideration to using it effectively. He would ensure that a copy of the letter was passed to all the Committee Chairs and that they were encouraged to think about how scrutiny could be used. In the meantime he proposed that the letter be noted.

183.12 **RESOLVED:** That the letter be noted.

(c) Notices of Motion

183.13 The Chair noted that two notices of motion had been referred to the committee from the Council meeting held on the 28th March 2013. In regard to the first which related to the 'Bedroom Tax' and the impact of welfare changes, he suggested that it should be noted as it was the subject of a separate report that was due to be considered by the Housing Committee.

- 183.14 The Chair then referred to the second notice of motion which concerned the proposed National Evacuees Memorial and the donation of £1,000 towards the costs of the memorial that was to be placed in Lichfield. He stated that he wished to welcome Mrs. Maureen Blakey to the meeting and to invite her to address the committee as she was involved in the campaign for the memorial.
- 183.15 Mrs. Blakey thanked the Chair and stated that she had been an evacuee and had spent her time during World War Two in Goring, having been sent down from London with her sister and other children. It had been a very difficult time for them and their families as well as those involved in moving the children and the families who took them in. The campaign sought to give recognition to the story of the great evacuation and the memorial would take the form of a group of 11 children on a base and she hoped that the council would be able to support the campaign and help to enable the recognition of all concerned to be made permanent with the siting of a national memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum at Lichfield.
- 183.16 The Chair thanked Mrs. Blakey for coming to the meeting and addressing the committee, which could clearly see how important it was to her to have a national memorial. He therefore moved that a donation of £1,000 from the council be made as detailed in the report.

183.17 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Notice of Motion concerning 'Bedroom Tax' be noted; and
- (2) That the Notice of Motion concerning the National Evacuees Memorial be noted and a donation of £1,000 to the campaign for the memorial at Lichfield as detailed in the report be approved.

185. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

- 185.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report which outlined how applications to the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) would be assessed in the future following various changes to welfare reform by the Government. She noted that as a result of the changes it was anticipated that there would be a greater demand for support from the DHP and that individual cases would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 185.2 Councillor Littman welcomed the report and stated that he hoped it would provide the basis for cross-party understanding of the parameters of the scheme and noted that for 2013/14 the reduction in housing benefit that people in the city would receive was £11-12 million less than it was in 2010/11. The DHP was intended to provide temporary financial assistance to people who were experiencing particular difficulties or hardship.
- 185.3 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and what she felt was a fair and balanced scheme.

- 185.4 Councillor Mitchell thanked the officers for the report and stated that it was difficult to estimate the lasting effects of the welfare reform changes; however she fully supported the recommendations. She also noted that there was a question mark over the proposed use of HRA monies to support the fund that was detailed in the report that was due to be considered by the Housing Committee.
- 185.5 Councillor K. Norman asked for clarification in regard to the Housing Committee report and the use of £70k from the HRA budget; as he believed the restrictions associated with the use of HRA funding may be called into question. He also noted that there were a number of exemptions that needed to be taken into account with regard to who was likely to be affected by the changes.
- 185.6 The Chair noted the comments and stated that he was sure that these issues would be considered by the Housing Committee. He also noted that it was estimated that 500 households would be in need of support as a result of the changes and that £13m was being taken out of the DHP next year for local authorities. He also suggested that the questions in relation to the HRA budget were more of a matter for the Housing Committee.
- 185.7 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that the proposed use of £70k was part of the General Fund and would only be accessible to council tenants who would also be able to access the core funding that would be available. The report did recognise that there were possible legal constraints in relation to the HRA and therefore advice was being sought from the Secretary of State by a number of authorities as to whether this was an option.
- 185.8 Councillor Hamilton stated that the reductions in Housing Benefit and the DHP fund as a result of Government action would put pressure on a number of families and it was likely that people would not use their housing benefit to pay their rents as they would be faced with less income and other pressures that they felt were more pressing. In which case it would only add to the problems faced because of rent arrears and the increased likelihood of being made homeless and therefore more pressure on the council.
- 185.9 Councillor G. Theobald noted that the Government had inherited a budget deficit and action was required to address that and therefore changes were necessary.
- 185.10 The Chair noted the comments and put the recommendations to the vote.
- 185.11 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the principles for the administration of the DHP be agreed as set out in paragraph 3.12 of the report;
 - (2) That the proposed scheme for assessing applications to DHP as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed; and
 - (3) That the Executive Director of Finance & Resources, the Head of City Services and other appropriate officers exercising relevant functions be authorised to take all appropriate steps to administer the scheme.

186. COASTAL DEFENCE STRATEGY - BRIGHTON MARINA TO RIVER ADUR

- 186.1 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing introduced the report which detailed the need for a risk-based management strategy for coast defence to ensure that the city's coastline was not adversely affected by coastal erosion and sea flooding. He noted that the preparation of a draft strategy had started last year and working with Adur and Worthing Councils a further information gathering exercise was being undertaken by officers, in accordance with DEFRA requirements.
- 186.2 Councillor West stated that it was an important report and that whilst funding was available for some works that may result from the review, there could be costs associated with improvement works as recommended by review which would fall to the council unless other government funding was made available. He suggested that consideration needed to be given to this possibility and to how areas outside of the study could be accounted for and whether costs would be shared across those authorities affected. He also noted that the emerging seafront strategy would need to take account of key environmental aspects as well as sea defences. It was likely that the council would be faced with some difficult choices in the near future.
- 186.3 Councillor Mitchell stated that it was a crucial report both ecologically and environmentally and there costs of works against assets had to be given due consideration e.g. the A259 which was an important route but in need of repair. She hoped that further studies outside the initial one referred to in the report would be made and welcomed the intention to work with Lewes District Council.
- 186.4 Councillor G. Theobald welcomed the report and stated that he would like further information in due course in relation to those areas of works that were likely to be required and would have a significant cost e.g. at the mouth of the River Adur and therefore how these would be met across the authorities affected.
- 186.5 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing stated that it was not yet possible to identify the financial liabilities for such aspects at this time, but he hoped it could be included in future reports to committee.
- 186.6 The Chair noted the comments and proposed that an amendment be made to recommendation 2.2 so that the results of the consultation were reported back to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee rather than to Policy & Resources.
- 186.7 The amendment was accepted by the committee and the Chair put the recommendations to the vote.
- 186.8 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the officers be authorised to undertake consultation on a number of management options for coastal defences within the 3 defined sections of the coast between Brighton Marina and the River Adur as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report; and

- (2) That the results of the consultation be reported back to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee, in order that a preferred option for the defence of this section of the city's coast can be considered and agreed.

187. RESPONSE TO TRANS SCRUTINY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 187.1 The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report which detailed the Executive's response to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations following its review of the challenges and inequalities faced by transgender people in the city. She noted that there had been a thorough review and the Panel's report had been published in January. She stated that the response to the recommendations which cut across all areas both within and outside of the council, was to accept all the recommendations in principal and she noted that a number had already been taken forward, whilst others required discussions with partner organisations.
- 187.2 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that she had been designated as the Equalities Champion for the Leadership Team and would be responsible for championing aspects of the recommendations and supporting the trans community.
- 187.3 Councillor Mac Cafferty as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel stated that he wished to thank his fellow Panel Members for their support and receiving all the evidence that was submitted, some of which was heart-breaking. He believed that the Panel's recommendations would go a long way to improving the understanding of the trans community and their needs and he hoped would see an impact in the delivery of services to that community. He also hoped that all other agencies would take on board their responsibilities and that this would lead to improved relations. He also hoped that further reports would be made to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on how matters had been taken forward and what changes had been made.
- 187.4 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and stated that the review was a clear example of how well the scrutiny process worked. She hoped that the recommendations would be taken forward and that the trans community would be able to see a change in the delivery of services.
- 187.5 Councillor Mitchell stated that it was an excellent piece of work and that she wished to pay tribute to the Scrutiny Panel and to those that came to give evidence, as well as the Scrutiny Team who supported the review. She also welcomed the involvement of the Executive Director which she felt was important and hoped that update reports would be brought to the scrutiny committee in due course.
- 187.6 The Chair noted the comments and stated that he wished to thank the Scrutiny Panel and that the report would be shared with the Local Government Association so that other authorities could learn from it and take action as necessary. He then put the recommendations to the vote.
- 187.7 RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the excellent process undertaken by the scrutiny team, assisted by the communities and equality team, to produce the Trans Equality Scrutiny Report be noted;

- (2) That the scrutiny report be welcomed and the significance of its findings be noted;
- (3) That the recommendations relevant to the city council be accepted and the responses to the individual recommendations as detailed in appendix 1 to the report be agreed;
- (4) That those recommendations that are for either other or all public sector organisations or third sector partners be noted, and it be agreed that the council would work in partnership to implement these recommendations; and
- (5) That the Trans Equality Report and the committee report be shared with the Local Government Association and other appropriate local government peer groups/forums.

187.8 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: That the Council be recommended to note the response to the Trans Scrutiny Panel's recommendations.

188. RE-PROCUREMENT OF CORPORATE PRINT & COPY DEVICES

- 188.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report which detailed the proposed procurement exercise for the continued provision of corporate print & copy devices following the expiry of the current contract in December 2013. She noted that the new contract was intended to provide greater flexibility and to lead to further improvements in relation to the number and use of devices so as to lead to even greater economies of scale.
- 188.2 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and hoped that options for joint provision e.g. through the SE7 group would be explored and that further opportunities to reduce paper usage would be considered e.g. via the use of tablets etc...
- 188.3 The Chair noted the comments and stated that such considerations would be taken into account and suggested that Members would need to consider how they could improve their own use/demand for paper. He was happy to explore alternative avenues to reduce costs and improve services and therefore put the recommendations to the vote.
- 188.4 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the procurement of a corporate contract for the supply and maintenance of MFD equipment through a framework agreement be approved;
 - (2) That the re-tendering of the contract for an initial term of 3 years with an option to extend for periods of up to 24 months (possible maximum 5 year term) be approved;
 - (3) That the timetable and process for procurement, as detailed in section 3 of the report be approved; and

- (4) That the Executive Director for Finance & Resources be granted delegated authority:
 - (i) to award and let the contract following evaluation of tenders; and
 - (ii) to extend the initial 3-year term of the contract by up to 24 months, should the Director consider it appropriate, and subject always to satisfactory performance by the appointed contractor.

189. ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

189.1 No items were referred to the next council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 5.20pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2013