

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2.00pm 15 JULY 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mitchell (Chair), Councillor Janio (Deputy Chair), Brown, Davey, Kennedy, K Norman, Phillips, Wilson and Bowden

PART ONE

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

Councillor Gill Mitchell the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1a Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Bowden was substituting for Councillor A Kitcat.

1b Declarations of Interests

There were none.

1c Declaration of Party Whip

There were none.

1d Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was 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 section 100I (1) of the said Act.

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

2. MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 There were none.

3.2 Deputy Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Janio stated, that a Member of the Conservative Group (being the largest opposition group) should take the position as Chair of OSC; and he would be pursuing this.

4. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL ON PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE TOILETS

4.1 The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel on Publicly Accessible Toilets Councillor Amy Kennedy introduced the Panel's report.

4.2 On behalf of the Panel Councillor Kennedy expressed her particular thanks to all those taking part and giving evidence. The Panel found that the service was provided by different council teams, so the knowledge and experience of Jenny Cooke of CityClean who had worked and managed the service for many years had been invaluable.

4.3 Councillor Kennedy thanked her fellow Panel Members, Councillors Denise Cobb and Alan Robins plus John Eyles, Older Peoples' Council co-optee. Recommendations were set out in section 3 of the report and OSC was asked to endorse the report.

4.4 A member of the public who had posed as a 'mystery shopper,' tourist at Brighton and Hove Town Halls told the meeting he was disappointed that a list of publicly accessible toilets was not easy to find. It was agreed that an additional sentence would be added to the report.

4.5 OSC Members discussed issues including the Late Night Levy, disposal of sites, Changing Places provision, assessing the costs of the service, the possible use of s106 planning obligations and the council's power, rather than its duty, to provide toilets.

4.6 Councillor Kennedy said the Panel were all agreed there should be more, not fewer, publicly accessible toilets. The Panel had noted the various council teams and external organisations that provided the service. An Action Plan as recommended would be more coherent and would involve a business plan for toilets directly owned by the council.

4.7 OSC Members were pleased with the clear layout of the report and thanked the scrutiny officer Karen Amsden for her brilliant work.

4.8 Resolved; Subject to the addition of a sentence (minute 4.4 refers) that OSC endorse the report and recommendations and refer it for consideration to the relevant decision-making bodies.

5. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY PROGRESS REPORT

5.1 The Equalities Coordinator, Sarah Tighe-Ford, introduced the report on Equality and Inclusion, part of the regular commitment to report progress against the corporate action plan.

5.2 The report set out areas of good practice, including the review of the Equality Steering Group and Workforce Equality Group, and re-establishment of Directorate equality groups. This progress report has also been shared with Community and Voluntary organisations.

5.3 The review of the Workforce Equalities Action Plan had been agreed at 11 July Policy and Resources Committee. That report was included as an annexe on today's agenda.

5.4 Answering questions on the balance between addressing major equalities issues for small groups of people, compared with smaller issues for larger groups the Equalities Coordinator pointed out the Council's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. There are nine groups with 'protected characteristics' under the Act which we are legally obliged to pay 'due regard' to. However our Equality Impact Assessment process is also helpful in considering other social inclusion groups.

5.5 Equalities monitoring questions need to be asked in the appropriate way, to increase response rates, help reduce barriers and enable us to make best use of the information.

5.6 Regarding the Age-Friendly City initiative, that had clearly defined WHO criteria, the Communities and Equality Team had a place on the steering group. 'Age' is a protected characteristic and covered in all Equality Impact Assessments; positive use can be made of the monitoring data gathered by services across a range of activities, including this project.

5.7 On resourcing equalities issues, the Equalities Coordinator pointed out that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process has been revised and streamlined. EIAs had to evidence 'due regard' to enable the council to meet its legal equality duties. Consideration of equality issues should be a usual part of service activity.

5.8 Resolved: that OSC note:

- 1) Progress and good practice within the equality action plan
- 2) Areas of challenge and work in progress to address these
- 3) The new Equality Impact Assessment process and the council's commitment to this as the process for meeting our equality duties
- 4) The review process for the action plan

6. OSC WORK PROGRAMME: UPDATE

6.1 The Acting Head of Scrutiny Giles Rossington introduced the report on the OSC work programme, and the factors to be taken into account in selecting topics for scrutiny. This report made recommendations against each scrutiny request as set out in Appendix 2.

6.2 Members who had Chaired or attended scrutiny workshops said these were an effective means of scrutiny. Different approaches to any topic for scrutiny were considered – whether via a panel, workshop or other means.

6.3 OSC discussed the requests for scrutiny (Appendices 1 and 2), bearing in mind available resources, corporate and citywide priorities and the potential for scrutiny action to have a positive effect on the matter.

6.4 It was agreed to establish scrutiny panels on Party Houses, Seafront Infrastructure and Models of Service Delivery. Workshops would be set up for Credit Unions/Payday Lenders and BHCC interactions with Debtors.

6.5 Regarding possible scrutiny action on the Community Engagement Framework and Community Use of School Playing Fields, it was agreed to ask for an officer report with further information to the next OSC.

6.6 RESOLVED:

- 1) that the information on the OSC work programme be noted (Appendix 1)
- 2) that the recommended actions in relation to each scrutiny request be agreed. (Appendix 2), as summarised above at minute 6.4.
- 3) that reports on Community Engagement Framework and Community Use of School Playing Fields be brought to a future OSC.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of