

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2.00pm 23 MARCH 2015
HOVE TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mitchell (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Janio (Deputy Chair), Brown, K Norman, Wilson, Bowden, Hawtree, Powell and Davey

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

49 SUBSTITUTES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 49.1 There were no substitutions or declarations of interest and the press & public were not excluded from the meeting.
- 49.2 Cllr Summers sent her apologies for this meeting.

50 MINUTES

- 50.1 RESOLVED** – That the draft minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2015 be approved as an accurate record.

51 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

- 51.1 Cllr Janio stated that, since the Conservatives were the official opposition, and also because they presented an alternative view from the left-wing consensus that pervades the Labour and Green groups, a Conservative member should have been chairing OSC. This notwithstanding, Cllr Mitchell should be thanked for her patient and even-handed chairing of the committee.

52 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 52.1 There were no items.

53 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

- 53.1 There were no items.

54 REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL ON THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

- 54.1 This item was introduced by Giles Rossington, the Acting Head of Scrutiny, who informed members that the panel had been established in response to a request from CAB. The panel was chaired by Professor Darren Smith of Loughborough University, and its other members were Cllr Chaun Wilson and Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty.
- 54.2 Cllr Wilson thanked everyone who had spoken to the panel. This was a huge issue, and it was unfortunate that the panel had to operate in a very restricted time-frame. It was also important that 'scrutiny' of the private housing sector was maintained: the sector is changing rapidly at the same time as its influence is growing.
- 54.3 Cllr Mitchell commended the "brilliant" report, noting that its findings had worrying implications for the city going forward.
- 54.4 RESOLVED** – that the scrutiny panel report on Private Sector Housing be endorsed and referred to the relevant policy committee(s) for consideration.

55 UPDATE ON SHORT TERM LETS SCRUTINY PANEL

- 55.1 This item was introduced by the Acting Head of Scrutiny.
- 55.2 Cllr Bowden noted that, although it was stated that there was no record from Environmental Health of recent complaints about 'party houses', this should not necessarily be taken to imply that residents were not complaining about them. They could, for example, be complaining directly to the Short Term Holiday Lets Trade Association. Cllr Bowden was personally aware of at least one serious ongoing problem with a party houses operator.
- 55.3 Cllr Mitchell agreed, noting that when there had been problems with a party house in her ward, the route of complaints had been to the council's Planning team rather than to Environmental Health.
- 55.4 RESOLVED** – that the report be noted and a further monitoring report be considered at a later meeting.

56 FUTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

- 56.1 This item was introduced by the Acting Head of Scrutiny, who explained that under future arrangements there would be one Overview & Scrutiny committee (OSC). This committee would discharge the council's statutory scrutiny obligations, mainly in terms of health scrutiny; and would also monitor the implementation of previously agreed scrutiny panel recommendations. A programme of cross-party member-led task & finish reviews would continue, but these would principally be supported by officers from the relevant directorates rather than by an independent Scrutiny team. The OSC would have some role to play in co-ordinating this task & finish review work programme, although reviews would originate from the council's policy committees.
- 56.2 RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of