

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
TOURISM, EQUALITIES, COMMUNITIES & CULTURE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 7 MAY 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robins (Chair) Ebel (Opposition Spokesperson), Nemeth (Group Spokesperson), Childs, Evans, Mears, Powell, Rainey and Simson

Other Members present: Anusree Sasidharan, Joanna Martindale, Lola BanJoko and Nick May.

PART ONE

62 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

62(a) Declarations of substitutes

62.1 Councillor Appich was present as substitute for Councillor Grimshaw.

62(b) Declarations of interest

62.2 *(Councillor Powell indicated an interest as she was employed by Sussex Police.)* - check

62(c) Exclusion of press and public

62.3 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.

62.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items contained in part two of the agenda.

63 MINUTES

64 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

64.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“On Saturday 2 May the Children’s Parade, the traditional curtain opener to the Brighton Festival, took place - on line. SameSky, our local innovative arts organisation, invited all to take part from their living rooms, gardens, balconies and front steps. Hundreds of people used costumes and props they had spent hours making in the run up to the

event. The event was set on its way by a local samba band. Demonstrating the creativity for which the city is known this will hopefully be the first of many ways our once thriving events sector keeps itself at the forefront of the UK's arts scene.

Royal Pavilion & Museum have focused their efforts on engaging more people online during lockdown. Over 30 members of staff, including some who usually work in front of house roles, are contributing and learning new skills. To date this includes a brand new Close Look Collections website, online jigsaw puzzles, a second season of its podcast, and more content on its blog and social media. This work has been featured on Radio Sussex, ITV Meridan and the BBC's Culture in Quarantine programming.

VisitBrighton have secured £19k grant from the Destination Management Organisation Resilience Fund administered by Visit Britain. They have been liaising extensively with Tourism South East, Tourism Alliance and Visit Britain, ensuring Brighton is represented locally, regionally and nationally. The team are actively disseminating government guidance and advice via a daily e-newsletter to tourism businesses and are working collegiately with Brighton and Hove stakeholders to prepare a post-lockdown marketing campaign, as well as promoting and supporting Brighton & Hove businesses who are offering delivery services. They are working with conference and event's organisers to re-schedule events, ensuring business is retained in the City for the recovery period and have secured press coverage in 20 region newspapers highlighting Brighton as top 5 destination to visit post-lockdown

VisitBrighton launched Big BrightonONline Weekender to be virtually hosted from 8 – 10 May, bringing together the best of Brighton's festival performances, to enjoy from the safety of your armchair which has already secured 13k followers."

65 CALL OVER

65.1 The following items were called:

- 69 Adoption of Brighton & Hove Community Infrastructure
- 70 Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-2023
- 71 Brunswick Square & Terrace Repainting 2020
- 72 Pride 2021

66 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(A) QUESTIONS

(i) Operational Measures and Tourism Marketing Strategy

66.1 The Democratic Services Officer submitted the following question on behalf of Ms Julia Weeks:

"If as Nicola Sturgeon has said "Social distancing and limiting our contact with others will be a fact of life for a long time to come. Certainly, until treatments and ultimately a vaccine offer different solutions. So that means possibly for the rest of this year or even

beyond" what operational measures will be put in place, eg on our beaches/seafront, and what will our (responsible) Tourism marketing strategy for the city be?"

66.2 The Chair provided the following response:

The operation of the Seafront will continue to be guided by the requirements as issued by Central Government. The council continues to work closely with Sussex Police on the operational requirements of the Seafront for this very important outdoor recreational area for the city.

As part of the Council's corporate approach to the city's recovery, VisitBrighton are currently working with City Stakeholders to develop a joined-up Visitor Economy plan, which includes marketing, and would be initiated at the appropriate moment as and when Government guidance is clear on the easing of lockdown. Full consideration as to how to promote travel and tourism in a responsible way will be a key part of this initiative. VisitBrighton are also engaged with various Regional and National bodies such as Tourism South East and VisitBritain to be involved and included in any recovery campaigns as they develop."

67 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

(B) QUESTIONS

(i) Madeira Terraces

67.1 Councillor Nemeth put the following question:

"With hindsight, (i) what alternative actions should have been taken to prevent the collapse of Waterhall Golf Club after nearly 100 years in operation and (ii) to ensure that Waterhall Golf Course did not close without a tenant in place?"

67.2 The Chair gave the following response:

- (i) "There were not alternative actions that should have been taken. The membership of the Golf Club had declined significantly over the years and unfortunately Waterhall Golf Course was not financially viable to operate as a golf course.
- (ii) The lack of financial viability for Waterhall as a golf course meant it was unrealistic for the course to keep operating at the end of the Golf Management Contract.

There is a strong desire from the TECC Committee for a rewilding option to be established at Waterhall Golf Course. Due to the need for grant applications to be developed for this use, alongside ecological surveys to assess the feasibility of the various grants it is unrealistic to expect a tenant to be in place immediately the golf course closed. Preferred leaseholder status was approved by Policy & Resources committee to allow further dialogue and negotiation."

67.3 Councillor Nemeth put forward the following supplementary question:

“Can assurance be given that land won’t be (check audio)

67.4 The Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport gave assurances that there was no intention to let the club house out separately and that BHCC were currently in negotiations with a view to bringing a report back to TECC Committee in June.

(ii) Holiday Lets

67.5 Councillor Nemeth put the following question:

“How many standard residential units – flats, houses or otherwise – have been registered to pay business rates rather than Council Tax (i) in total and (ii) annually since 2015?”

67.6 The Chair gave the following response:

“In answer to the first part of your question, the number of standard residential units that have registered to pay business rates rather council tax in 2020/21 is 290. At this time of great difficulty for many, the rates team have prioritised paying out business rates grants to the remaining 1300 eligible organisations in the city. For this reason, they will respond directly to you Councillor Nemeth on the second part of this question regarding previous annual numbers, because this requires some research into five years of records.”

67.7 When invited to put a supplementary question, Councillor Nemeth expressed concern regarding efforts being undertaken by some to exploit a loophole to evade Council Tax and enquired if there was discretion to stop this.

67.8 The Chair noted that the rates team were currently busy with the processing of grants for 1300 people.

(iii) Tourism Business Grants

67.9 Councillor Nemeth gave the following question:

“Why is Brighton & Hove behind other local authorities when it comes to providing local Tourism Businesses with corona virus grants from Central Government and what urgent actions are being carried out to rectify the situation?”

67.10 The Chair gave the following response:

“Council officers have been working seven days each week to process and release grants to thousands of businesses across the city. This is being completed within the guidance issued by government and according to the Council’s financial procedures. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that public funds are granted to businesses which were actively trading and occupying premises in March 2020. There are over 30 officers working to distribute grants to eligible businesses, and the final group of difficult-to-reach small businesses are being contacted - in many cases for the second or third time - by the end of next week. Additional resources have been deployed to enable this.”

“

67.11 When invited to provide a supplementary Councillor Nemeth enquired of the reason for being behind.

67.12 The Chair stated that it was difficult to reach smaller businesses.

67.13 The Assistant director Culture, Tourism & Sport agreed noted the large number of start-up companies in Brighton and Hove and stated that given the level of turnover in premises leasing compared to other areas such as Chichester was an unfair comparison. The Committee were reassured that a large number of personnel were working on this.

(iv) Tourism Business Resilience

67.14 Councillor Nemeth gave the following question:

“What studies, if any, have been carried out to analyse the resilience of Tourism Businesses in Brighton and Hove in light of the Corona Virus crisis and what follow-up actions have resulted?”

67.15 The Chair gave the following response:

“The All Party Parliamentary Group for Hospitality and Tourism has gathered evidence as part of an urgent inquiry into the measures that businesses in this vital part of the UK’s economy will need in order to successfully reopen, recover, and thrive in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The key focus of the inquiry is to assess what is needed to get businesses in these sectors back on their feet at the appropriate time, providing forward-looking recommendations to guide Government as they move to planning recovery. The consultation asked businesses to provide details relating to their resilience in handling the current crisis, and what actions they would like to see from Government. It also consulted on the internal and operational challenges that businesses will face when looking to reopen. Details of this consultation was shared with over 1000 tourism stakeholders / businesses in Brighton & Hove and we anticipate using the published results, anticipated later this month, to inform the Council’s Recovery Plan.”

(B) NOTICES OF MOTION

(i) Compulsory Nature Checklist

67.16 Councillor Nemeth moved the following Conservative Notice of Motion:

“This Committee was very generous in the past in supporting Conservative proposals on swift boxes and bee-bricks and Full Council was similarly generous in agreeing to lock at other conservation features during the City Plan part 2 process. As everyone know Swift boxes and bee brick are now compulsory in new developments including extensions, the purpose of making this compulsory was in the congregated negotiations during the planning application there was not time to individually negotiate every single item like this. The idea for the two features was that nobody disagreed with them. As Conservatives we believe there are 4 or 5 other features that could be easily incorporated in to the cost.

Therefore, this committee resolves:

- 1) To update SPD11 to refer to a range of other low-cost nature conservation features that can be secured through new development.

67.17 The Chair provided the following response to the Notice of Motion:

“Thank you for your Notice of Motion. I can confirm that an update to the Nature Conservation SPD is a piece of work already identified by the Sustainability and Planning Policy Teams and in the pipeline for this year. The Notice of Motion can be supported as it is resourced and will help to deliver the priorities of the City Council.”

68 COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE VISITOR AND EVENTS ECONOMY - UPDATE

- 68.1 The Committee considered an update which sought to brief members on the impact of Covid 19 on the Visitor and Events economy. This was provided by the Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport. It was noted that Covid 19 had affected many areas such as retail and small businesses. It was stated that in the past 2 months sectors involved with selling directly to customers had been affected the most. The committee were informed of the expected long term impact with regard to festivals and the arts and culture sector.
- 68.2 Councillor Ebel enquired of BHCC’s response with regard to businesses that were closely related to the tourism sector but which fell through as they were not guarded,
- 68.3 The Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport stated that BHCC were awaiting further clarification from the Government.
- 68.4 Councillor Powell enquired of the impact on the third sector and voluntary partners.
- 68.5 The Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport acknowledged that this sector was struggling as the normal route in which to raise funds had dried up. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.
- 68.6 **RESOLVED** – that the Committee noted the update.

69 ADOPTION OF BRIGHTON & HOVE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY CHARGING SCHEDULE

- 69.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture which sought to seek formal approval for the first Brighton & Hove Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), summarised the preparations process required for the CIL Charging Schedule and receive approval for the constitutional changes required to administer CIL and other developer contributions. The report was provided by the Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport.

69.2 **RESOLVED:** That committee:

1. Noted the receipt of the CIL Examination Inspector's Final Report recommending approval for the Brighton & Hove CIL Charging Schedule is approved.
2. Recommended that the CIL Charging Schedule was referred to Full Council for formal adoption.
3. Recommended that the constitutional changes required to administer CIL and other developer contributions as set out in section 4 and Appendix 3 of this report be referred to Full Council for approval.

70 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY 2020-2023

70.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities which sought to inform members on measures taken to address crime and disorder in Brighton & Hove. The report was presented by the Head of Safer Communities.

70.2 On behalf of the Conservative Party, Councillor Simson moved a motion to add a recommendation 2.3 and 2.4 as shown in bold italics below:

2.3 *Authorises officers to prepare an addendum or briefing note in advance of Full Council to outline the implications of the ongoing Corona virus crisis on the Strategy.*

2.4 *Requests an Officer report on the specific issue of anti-social behaviour on Hove seafront for the next meeting of this committee. The report will detail, but not be limited to, vandalism of beach huts and other seafront structures and by-law contraventions.*

70.3 Introducing the motion, Councillor Simson noted that this motion was to take stock of upcoming changes during an era which would see a decrease in retail crime and burglaries while homelessness and reoffending would change.

70.4 Councillor Nemeth formally seconded the motion.

70.5 On behalf of the Green Group, Councillor Rainey moved a motion to add recommendation 2.3 as shown in bold italics below:

2.3 *That committee notes this Strategy was developed prior to Covid19, and therefore asks that officers discuss with the partners to this strategy how together we can respond to the impact of Covid19 on community safety, crime and policing, in areas such as;*

- ***changes in domestic violence reporting and incidences during 'lockdown,' and the changing nature of support that may need to be provided***
- ***reports indicating increased incidences of abusive behaviour directed at essential workers, and support available***
- ***concerns regarding enforcement in the community, support for officers and the consistent application of government guidance***

and requests that officers report back to this committee on the work going on in this area.

- 70.6 Introducing the motion, Councillor Rainey noted the issues experienced within her ward and stated that new crime hotspots had emerged while drug related crime was spreading out of the city centre. It was stated that this motion was to look at the unprecedented measures that were explored and activated where needed.
- 70.7 Councillor Powell formally seconded the motion.
- 70.8 Councillor Carmen expressed support for the Green Group amendment.
- 70.9 Ms Sasidharan-Biswas welcomed the depth of research included in the report along with the work on modern slavery.
- 70.10 Councillor Nemeth sought legal guidance on whether the proposed amendments from both parties were at risk of seeking to achieve the similar conclusions.
- 70.11 The Head of Commercial Law clarified that the amendments were aiming in the same direction to address the crime strategy during the Covid 19 pandemic. It was noted that the Conservative amendment sought to request a briefing note to Full Council while the Green Group amendment requested a report back to TECC committee following consultation with partners. It was concluded that both amendments could be agreed on technical grounds or Members could decide to seek approval for one.
- 70.12 Nick May gave a brief overview of the crime status in Brighton & Hove, it was noted that general crime had decreased by 20% during this period. It was noted that this had slowly risen since the outbreak. It was further stated that reported domestic abuse was below what was expected as were the rate of burglaries. Offences were down partly due to the emptiness of streets however efforts were being undertaken to prepare for an expected rise in crime in line with the potential prominence of economic hardship. A rise in bicycle theft was among the most prevalent crimes as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 70.13 Councillor Simson referred to the crime figures and enquired if this referenced against the Government guidelines.
- 70.14 Nick May clarified that the crime figures were of Sussex as a whole. It was further noted that 530 fixed issue penalty notices had been served with slightly fewer than 200 specifically in Brighton and Hove.
- 70.15 Councillor Evans noted the decline in crime numbers and noted the necessity for re-examining the domestic violence figures later in the year.
- 70.16 Councillor Powell noted the increase in shoplifting and requested further insight in to current figures regarding domestic violence. Councillor Powell sought further information as to measures taken to protect key officers and if Sussex Police could confirm that PCSOs had received the correct PPE. Further clarification was sought with regard to the Police's action in regard barbers opening in the City.

- 70.17 Councillor Ebel referred to the fixed penalty notices and requested rough numbers and enquired if there was an issue with people still travelling in to the City during the lockdown period. Further clarification was sought as to whether the Police had changed how victims of domestic abuse could report crime.
- 70.18 Nick May stated that there was an under-reporting of domestic abuse and that there may be more cases following review in future. It was stated that police officers took a robust stance when called out and looked to take offenders to court when evidence was attained. In response to an enquiry regarding St James' street drug use it was stated that further robust action had been taken on this and that 2 significant operations regarding county lines had been carried out. It was noted that Sussex Police wanted to focus on this to stop drugs coming in to the city and that, where possible, PCSOs were encouraged to patrol St James' street.
- 70.19 Ms Sasidharan-Biswas expressed concern regarding the drop of reported domestic violence during the lockdown.
- 70.20 Nick May stated that other ways of reporting domestic abuse was being considered such as PCSO's being placed in stores to provide a visible presence.
- 70.21 Councillor Powell noted that the BBC had reported a national rise in calls regarding domestic abuse to 49%. Confirmation of the correct provision of PPE for PCSO's was sought.
- 70.22 Nick May stated that Sussex Police had obtained the correct PPE and that all officers had been provided with the necessary equipment.
- 70.23 The Head of Safer Communities stated that there as an increase in calls to national domestic hotline however this was not the case locally. It was noted that campaigns were being considered in the area and that a pan Sussex campaign was being launched. It was noted that in regard to barber shops opening up within the city, this would be an issue for trading standards to deal with and not just Sussex Police. It was clarified that a lot of work was being undertaken to communicate with businesses to notify them of the guidelines.
- 70.24 Nick May further stated that a large number of staff were out on patrols across the City and seafront and encouraged officers, where possible, to visit other open spaces and communities. It was noted that a vast majority of the public were very understanding.
- 70.25 The Chair put the Conservative motion to the vote that passed.
- 70.26 The Chair then put the Green Party motion to the vote which passed.
- 70.27 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote that were agreed.
- 70.28 **RESOLVED:** That committee:
1. Recommended to Full Council that it adopted the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-2023 attached at Appendix 2.

2. Noted this Strategy was developed prior to Covid19, and therefore asked that officers discuss with the partners to this strategy how together we can respond to the impact of Covid19 on community safety, crime and policing, in areas such as;
 - changes in domestic violence reporting and incidences during 'lockdown,' and the changing nature of support that may need to be provided
 - reports indicating increased incidences of abusive behaviour directed at essential workers, and support available
 - concerns regarding enforcement in the community, support for officers and the consistent application of government guidance

and requested that officers reported back to this committee on the work going on in this area.

3. Authorised officers to prepare an addendum or briefing note in advance of Full Council to outline the implications of the ongoing Corona Virus crisis on the strategy.
4. Requested an Officer report on the specific issue of anti-social behaviour on Hove seafront for the next meeting of this committee. The report would detail, but not be limited to, vandalism of beach huts and other seafront structure and by-law contraventions.

71 BRUNSWICK SQUARE & TERRACE REPAINTING 2020

- 71.1 The committee considered a report of the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture which sought to defer the requirement for owners or occupiers to complete the repainting of their properties as required by the Hove Borough Council Act 1976 and to recommend that the quinquennial repainting cycle be realigned so that future cycles require completion by 31st December 2026, December 2031 and so on. The report was provided by the Service Development Manager.
- 71.2 The Service Development Manager noted the impact of Covid 19 and stated that works needed to be undertaken through spring and summer to ensure paint was robust and able to withstand weathering.
- 71.3 Councillor Ebel enquired if there was possibility to reduce costs and for lease and freeholders to be included in the decision process.
- 71.4 The Chair stated that this would be entirely down to residents not the Council. It was noted that the cost of paint was the same for everybody thus providing an even playing ground from large contractors and small businesses.
- 71.5 The Service Development Manager stated that it was feasible for works to be undertaken this year and next year.
- 71.6 The Chair stated clarified that every property in Brunswick Terrace had been surveyed and subject to detailed analysis with regard to a series of factors such as the effect of wind angles.

71.7 **RESOLVED:** That committee:

1. Agreed that, due to restrictions being placed on labour, access to materials (all consequences of the current Covid-19 outbreak), and the requirement to undertake the works during clement periods of weather the timescale to complete the current repainting requirement is extended by 12 months to 31st December 2021.
2. Agreed to defer the deadline for subsequent quinquennial repainting requirements specified under the Act to 31st December 2026, 31st December 2031 and so forth.

72 PRIDE 2021

- 72.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities which sought to reaffirm Brighton & Hove City Council's commitment to work in partnership with Pride CIC to ensure delivery of the event in the City. The report was provided by the Head of Safer Communities.
- 72.2 Councillor Mears enquired if it would be extended to other events which were booked yearly to ensure that they had an opportunity to success as well.
- 72.3 The Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport confirmed that all events would be invited and that a diary for all organisations who had cancellations this year would be kept open.
- 72.4 Councillor Powell moved a motion to amend recommendation 2.3 and to add a recommendation as shown below in bold italics:

2.3 That the above June report sets out the estimated costs to the Council of supporting the event in 2021, and in ***recognition the context*** of the significant financial ***drain losses likely to affect all council, community events and community and voluntary services*** following the Covid 19 crisis, ~~and how such costs will be recovered both in 2021 and in subsequent years~~ that such a report will also:

- ***make clear the council's continued commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community and the annual Pride event, with acknowledgement given to the work of Pride CIC, costs absorbed by both the council and event organisers***
- ***detail the significant revenue allocated to the Rainbow Fund, and which is subsequently given to smaller LGBT+ organisations and HIV projects across the city***
- ***explore how the Council can continue to support Pride while recovering any necessary costs, to ensure the event can continue in challenging times***

2.4 ***That in light of the cancellation of Pride 2020, that the Council continues to explore ways in which diversity and inclusion can still be celebrated through positive communications, in collaboration with LGBTQIA+ organisations in the city***

- 72.5 Councillor Ebel formally seconded the motion.

72.6 The Chair put the amendment to the vote which was carried.

72.7 The Chair then put the substantive vote as amended which was carried.

72.8 **RESOLVED:** That committee:

1. Agreed in principle to Pride CIC running the event for a further year in 2021. (Subject to consideration of the financial implications at committee in June).
2. Noted that a report would be presented to committee on June 2020 covering proposals for the operation and development of Pride from 2021.
3. Note that the above June report set out the estimated costs to the Council of supporting the event in 2021, and in recognition of the significant financial losses likely to affect all council community events and community and voluntary services following the Covid 19 crisis that such a report would also:
 - (i) Make clear the council's continued commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community and the annual Pride event, with acknowledgement given to the work of Pride CIC, costs absorbed by both the council and event organisers
 - (ii) Detail the significant revenue allocated to the Rainbow Fund, and which was subsequently given to smaller LGBT+ organisations and HIV projects across the city
 - (iii) Explore how the Council could continue to support Pride while recovering any necessary costs, to ensure the event could continue in challenging times
4. Continue to explore ways in which diversity and inclusion could still be celebrated through positive communications, in collaboration with LGBTQIA+ organisations in the city in light of the cancellation of Pride 2020.

73 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

73.1 No items were referred to the next Full Council.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of