

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 30 JULY 2020**

**VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Druitt (Joint Deputy Chair), Platts (Opposition Spokesperson), Allcock, Clare, Hugh-Jones, Miller, Moonan, Osborne, Wares and Yates

**PART ONE**

**39 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

- 39.1 The Head of Democratic Services called the meeting to order and explained that in the absence of the Chair, Councillor Mac Cafferty and Joint Deputy Chair, Councillor Gibson he needed to seek nominations for a Chair for the Special Meeting. He noted that Councillor Mac Cafferty was a member of the Royal Pavilion Trust Board and with the item on the agenda felt it was more appropriate to not take part in the meeting. Whilst Councillor Druitt was shown as a Joint Chair on the agenda papers, it had become apparent that there had been some discrepancy in the addendum papers that had been published for last week's full Council meeting and to avoid any doubt, it was prudent for the committee to appoint a Chair for today's meeting.
- 39.2 The Head of Democratic Services then sought confirmation of was present at the meeting.

**(a) Declarations of those Present and Substitutes**

- 39.3 Councillors Allcock, Clare, Druitt, Hugh-Jones, Miller, Moonan, Osborne, Platts, Wares and Yates confirmed that they were present.
- 39.4 Councillors Hugh-Jones, Osborne and Wares declared that they were substituting for Councillors Mac Cafferty, Gibson and Bell respectively.
- 39.5 Councillor Wares also noted that Councillor Bell was a member of the Royal Pavilion Trust Board and had also decided it was not appropriate for him to take part in the meeting.

**Appointment of Chair**

- 39.6 The Head of Democratic Services then sought nominations for the Chair for the current meeting.

- 39.7 Councillor Hugh-Jones put forward Councillor Druitt to be appointed as Chair for the current meeting.
- 39.8 Councillor Wares formally seconded Councillor Druitt's nomination.
- 39.9 The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that there were no other nominations and put forward Councillor Druitt to be appointed as Chair for the current meeting.
- 39.10 **RESOLVED:** That Councillor Druitt be appointed as Chair for the current meeting.

**(b) Declarations of Interest**

- 39.11 Councillor Druitt thanked the Committee and asked if there were any declarations of interest in the items contained in the agenda.
- 39.12 The Chair noted that there were no declarations of interests in matters listed on the agenda.

**(c) Exclusion of Press and Public**

- 39.13 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.
- 39.14 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items contained in the agenda.

**40 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 40.1 Welcome to this virtual meeting of the Council's Policy & Resources Committee, and can I remind everyone that this meeting is being webcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing.
- 40.2 To assist with the management of the meeting I would ask that Members ensure their connection is working and that microphones and video links are turned off when you are not speaking. It is important that everyone can be heard, and you will therefore need to unmute your microphone and enable your video link when you are speaking.

Can I ask that Members wishing to speak in any of the debates should indicate their intention by registering their request through the instant messaging facility. You will simply need to type may I speak or the word hand. I will then call you as appropriate.

I would remind you that the instant messaging facility should only be used for this or to raise a point of order and please note it is visible to all those present in the session.

- 40.3 I realise that the political make-up of the Council has changed very recently, and I would like to set out some general principles about how the new Administration will continue to support the city and rebuild the economy. We will look to work across the political divide to achieve this and to enable the city to recover and will continue to support our officers to ensure services are delivered in the best interests of the city.

We will create a culture of partnership working and develop systems for meaningful engagement with residents, businesses, community organisations and our city's unions. This will take time, but it will be a process of continuous improvement and in this way, we aim to harness the creativity of the city to provide the best possible chance of a healthy recovery for our local economy and high-quality public services for our residents.

- 40.4 We recognise the work already done by the outgoing Labour administration to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and tackle the financial and economic crisis that we find ourselves in and look forward to working closely with Labour wherever possible to find the best way forward to return the city to financial health. In the spirit of engagement and partnership working we also invite ideas and involvement from politicians across the spectrum where they are aligned with Green values.
- 40.5 For those of you who follow the council's democratic arrangements, you will have seen several councillors appointed as Joint Chairs of the various committees. The aim is to enable post-holders to job-share roles so that they can maintain a work/life balance and gain experience in their areas of interest and take on responsibilities for specific areas of policy.
- 40.6 The role of Finance Lead is one of these Joint roles and I'm delighted to share this role with my colleague Cllr Gibson. Cllr Gibson will lead on the work of the Governance and Finance directorates, as well as Housing, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Transport. I will lead on Economy, Environment and Culture; Families, Children and Learning; and Health and Adult Social Care. Responsibility for overall financial strategy will be shared.

#### **41 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

- 41.1 The Chair noted that no public items had been received for the meeting.

#### **42 ROYAL PAVILION AND MUSEUMS SERVICE - FINANCIAL UPDATE AND SERVICE PLANS**

- 42.1 Prior to the consideration of the item, the Chair noted that a point of order had been raised by Councillor Yates regarding the lack of call over of the items to be considered at the meeting.
- 42.2 The Executive Lead Officer explained that whilst call over was usually undertaken at ordinary meetings, it was not a requirement under the procedural rules. Whilst it was not listed as an agenda item, it was within the Chair's discretion to determine whether there was a need for it on this occasion.
- 42.3 The Chair stated that as a point of order had been raised he was happy to meet the request and asked the Head of Democratic Services to undertake a call over of the items.
- 42.4 The Head of Democratic Services undertook the call over and noted that the following items as listed on the agenda had been called:

- Item 42 Royal Pavilion and Museums Service – Financial Update and Service Plans
- Item 43 Adult & Community Learning
- Item 44 Step by Step
- Item 45 Get Socially Active
- Item 46 Becoming an Anti-Racist Council

- 42.5 The Chair noted that all the items listed had been called and invited the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture to introduce the report on the Royal Pavilion and Museums.
- 42.6 The Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture introduced the report which detailed the proposed transfer of the Royal Pavilion & Museums to Trust with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. He noted that the proposed transfer had been set for the 1<sup>st</sup> April but due to the pandemic this had been delayed. The report outlined the financial package and support that would be put in place to enable the transfer and to give the Trust time to build a foundation going forward. He noted that the Trustees would have a duty to act in the best interests of the Trust and should the recommendations be agreed, negotiations would then be held to finalise the agreement for the transfer. He stated that the Trustees had asked for a grant of £3.7m rather than the additional cash-flow offer outlined in the report, however, officers had to take into account the council's financial position and believed this was a better option for both the council and the Trust. It was also hoped that the Trust would then be able to access external funding such a grants from the Arts Council.
- 42.7 He also wished to thank the staff at the Royal Pavilion and Museums for all their work during the lock-down period and for getting back to a position to be able to open. He drew the committee's attention to the welcome back video that staff had created which had been recognised nationally and thanked the Trustees for their commitment and willingness to work towards a viable outcome.
- 42.8 Members of the committee welcomed the report and felt that an excellent package of support was being offered and it was an example of good practice. It was the culmination of many years of work and it was hoped that it could be brought to fruition. It was noted that the Trustees had yet to give their views on the proposed package as officers required the approval of the committee to take it forward and discuss it with the Trustees. Whilst the Trustees preference had been for a significant level of grant funding, it was hoped that the support package that had been drawn up would be seen as a suitable alternative. The committee also noted that further consultation in regard to the transfer of staff would be undertaken prior to the transfer on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- 42.9 Councillor Miller stated that the Conservative Group had some reservations over the proposals and would therefore wish to abstain on voting.
- 42.10 The Chair noted the comments and put the recommendations to the vote which were carried with 8 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.

**42.11 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the transfer of the RPM to RPMT on 1st October, subject to agreement between the council and the Trustees on the recovery package outlined in this report be noted;
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture and the Executive Lead Officer Strategy Governance, & Law to offer RPMT a recovery package and agree the terms of legal agreement necessary to implement the measures outlined;
- (3) That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director, Environment & Culture and the Chief Finance Officer to determine the repayment terms of the proposed cashflow facility, if drawn down, up to a maximum period of 10 years;
- (4) That the delegation at (3) above shall be subject to the requirement to consult Group Leaders prior to agreeing any measures which are not outlined in the report;
- (5) That if RPMT and council officers are unable to reach agreement on a recovery package to enable transfer on 1<sup>st</sup> October, a further report would be brought to the committee;
- (6) That it be noted that the financial model of RPMT will be reviewed annually at the beginning of each year. The financial position will be kept under continuous review by the Council and the Trust during the Covid-19 recovery period.

**43 ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING**

- 43.1 The Interim Director for Families, Children & Learning introduced the report, which provided an update and further recommendations on the future delivery model of the Council's Adult & Community Learning offer. She noted that the council had been unable to secure the necessary arrangements with the Friends Centre and therefore could not support the intentions previously agreed to take the service in-house.
- 43.2 Councillor Clare moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which sought to provide support to those affected by the situation and to enable lessons to be learnt from the process so that matters could be dealt with more effectively in the future.
- 43.3 Councillor Hugh-Jones formally seconded the amendment and reserved her right to speak.
- 43.4 Members of the Committee expressed their concern about how the situation had progressed having come to committee previously with an intention to provide a solution that had then become unviable. It was felt that there was a clear need to look at the lessons to be learnt from this matter and how critical projects can be sustained. There was a need to consider how more could be done in regard to working with the Community & Voluntary Sector so that available funding was utilised effectively rather than various organisations/groups chasing the same limited resources.

- 43.5 Councillor Hugh-Jones noted that both the Labour and Conservative Groups had expressed their support for the amendment and for it to be taken as a cross-party amendment. She stated that she was happy to accept the request to make it a cross-party amendment and welcomed the approach of collaboration.
- 43.6 Councillor Clare stated that she was also willing to revise the amendment so that it was a cross-party amendment and sought the committee's agreement to the change.
- 43.7 The Chair noted that the Committee wished to accept the revision to the amendment and therefore put the cross-party amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 43.8 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.

**43.9 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the family learning element of the adult education budget which supports the city's vulnerable families will be delivered directly by the tutors currently employed by the council using online or distanced based learning methods where possible. This will involve the TUPE of relevant staff from the Friends Centre;
- (2) That in order to retain and secure the council's ESFA grant for adult education for the academic year 2020/21 sub-contracting arrangements should be put in place. This will provide a suitable timeframe in which to plan and implement measures which will deliver a sustainable service for the council going forward;
- (3) That it be noted that the £61,030 allocated by committee to support the transition to an in-house adult and community learning service will not be required unless alternative delivery premises are secured;
- (4) That the committee request officers to urgently explore with Adult and Community Learning partners in the city what provision can be put in place for some of our city's most vulnerable learners as of September 2020, with consideration to the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery; and
- (5) That given the practical, financial and legal implications, the committee requests the Audit & Standards Committee, by way of additional assurance, to request officers to undertake an audit into why it was not possible to implement the decision agreed at the April 30 meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

**44 STEP BY STEP**

- 44.1 The Interim Director for Families, Children & Learning introduced the report, which provided an update and further recommendations on the provision of the Step by Step literacy and numeracy service previously provided under contract by the Friends Centre. She noted that there was also a report on Get Socially Active which was another service that had been contracted to the Friends Centre. The Friends Centre had informed the Council that it could not continue to provide the service beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and officers in Health & Adult Social Care had confirmed that no further funding to support the project could be identified. It was therefore recommended to

withdraw the project from the 31<sup>st</sup> July and that a comprehensive review be undertaken, and a report submitted to the Housing Committee.

- 44.2 Councillor Clare moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which sought to explore what could be offered in place of the Step by Step programme ahead of the wider review.
- 44.3 Councillor Hugh-Jones formally seconded the amendment and reserved her right to speak.
- 44.4 Members of the Committee thanked officers for the report and felt that it was a regrettable position that had been reached, although everything had been done to sustain the service. It was important to be able to provide the core skills for everyone and particularly those who were homeless, and it was hoped that a solution could be found to meet these needs.
- 44.5 Councillor Hugh-Jones noted that both the Labour and Conservative Groups had expressed their support for the amendment and for it to be taken as a cross-party amendment. She stated that she was happy to accept the request to make it a cross-party amendment. It was important service for the city and there was a need to look at whether it could be mainstreamed or should continue as a separate provision.
- 44.6 Councillor Clare stated that she was also willing to revise the amendment so that it was a cross-party amendment and sought the committee's agreement to the change.
- 44.7 The Chair noted that the Committee wished to accept the revision to the amendment and therefore put the cross-party amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 44.8 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.
- 44.9 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Step by Step project be withdrawn from 31 July 2020 and that ASC consult with relevant stakeholders as part of a comprehensive review of the service; and
  - (2) That the committee request officers urgently explore what can be offered in place of the Step by Step programme ahead of the wider review into education provision for those living in supported Accommodation who were previously homeless.

## **45 GET SOCIALLY ACTIVE**

- 45.1 The Interim Executive Director for Families, Children & Learning introduced the report which provided an update on the Get Socially Active project that the Friends Centre had given notice could not be continued after the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. She stated that having reviewed the situation and taking due diligence into account, it was not felt that the project could not be brought in-house as previously intended.

- 45.2 Councillor Osborne moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group and noted that it was not an ideal situation and the amendment sought to protect services in the city and ensure help was offered to those affected.
- 45.3 Councillor Clare formally seconded the amendment and noted that should the other Groups indicate their wish to support it, she would be happy for the amendment to be treated as a cross-party amendment.
- 45.4 Councillor Osborne stated that he was also willing to revise the amendment so that it became a cross-party amendment and asked that the committee accept the revision.
- 45.5 The Chair noted that the Committee was willing to accept the revision to the amendment and put the cross-party amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 45.6 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.
- 45.7 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the option to bring in-house the Get Socially Active Project be not taken forward due to the resources required to manage the project and the risks attached to the funding requirements;
  - (2) That the Council asks the Friends Centre that before the close of business on 31 July the Centre sends a communication to all those enrolled on the Get Socially Active Project to inform them of the situation and advise them to get in touch with their DWP work coach or the National Careers Service if they need support accessing opportunities; and
  - (3) That officers are requested to bring a report to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee on the skills and employment offer in the City that may be helpful in filling the gaps that will exist following the demise of the Project.

## **46 BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST COUNCIL**

- 46.1 The Interim Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities introduced the report which detailed the immediate actions that the council was taking to become an anti-racist council. She stated that there was an intention to work with the Black, Asian and minority ethnic community to tackle racial inequality. She noted that the report had been considered at the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee at its meeting the evening before and that an extract from the meeting had been circulated with the addendum papers.
- 46.2 The Committee welcomed the report and the concrete actions that had been identified and were being implemented. It was noted that there had been an extensive discussion at the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture (TECC) Committee and the intention to have a BAME co-optee on the Policy & Resources Committee was welcomed. It was hoped that an anti-racist strategy for schools would be developed and a report brought to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee in due course. It was also felt that the Council's website should be updated as soon as possible so that the banner bar directly linked to the Anti-Racist Strategy. The committee also

recognised that political groups needed to take positive action to enable councillors to be more representative of their communities across the city.

46.3 The Chair noted the comments and that the report was for information and moved that it should be noted along with the extract from the TECC committee.

46.4 **RESOLVED:** That the extract from the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee and the report of the Interim Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities be noted.

#### **47 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL**

47.1 **RESOLVED:** That no items be referred to the full Council meeting in October for information.

#### **48 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**

48.1 The Chair noted that there had been no items taken in closed session and therefore all items remained open to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 5.46pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

8<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020

