CABINET	Agenda Item 159(b) Brighton & Hove City Council

DRAFT EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 12 JANUARY 2010

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

4.00PM 12 JANUARY 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Councillors Oxley (Chairman), Simpson (Deputy Chairman), Brown, Elgood, Fallon-Khan, Mears, Mitchell, Randall, Simson and Taylor

65 TWELVE MONTH REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

65.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the outcome of the consultation on the twelve month review of the Constitution and proposals for amendments (for copy see minute book).

65.2 The Head of Law explained the recommendations and that, if approved, the new arrangements would be implemented following the Annual Council meeting in May.

65.3 The Chairman advised that copies of the Forward Plan would be made available in the city's libraries. He also explained that he had met with 'Eco-logically' environmental consultants in relation to the comments they had submitted; they had now been fully briefed on the various methods for interacting with the Council.

65.4 Councillor Taylor reported that he was pleased to see a deadline for executive responses to scrutiny reviews, however, he would have liked to have seen the detailed responses from the political parties and community groups. He explained that, while, he had accepted a genuine error had been made in omitting the Green Group request to increase the number of council meetings, some of their other ideas had not been registered. He advised that the Green Group would be putting amendments forward at other meetings and would not be supporting the report.

65.5 The Chairman explained that he had specifically requested the inclusion of the detailed responses to the consultation, but that it was not felt necessary to assign the comments individual respondents.

65.6 The Head of Law advised that the non-inclusion of some ideas in the proposals in the report did not preclude their consideration elsewhere.

65.7 Councillor Simson stated that recommendation five within the report showed that the Council had made significant progress with community groups for Hollingbury Community Groups to put forward such strong views. She also highlighted the newly established Equalities Working Group, which together with the Equalities Coalition and City Inclusion Partnership made a firm base for tackling equalities issues across the council and the city. She was pleased to report that Brighton and Hove had become the first city in the country to sign up to a single Equality and Human Rights Charter.

65.8 Councillor Mitchell welcomed the proposals and was grateful for the inclusion of a number of ideas put forward by the Labour Group.

65.9 Councillor Elgood stated that he was pleased that issues in relation to the Forward Plan were being addresses and that he hoped Members would continue to be involved in taking the proposals forward. Although he welcomed the Equalities Working Group, Councillor Elgood explained that he still supported the need for a city wide forum as part of the Council's constitution. He added that the report did not discuss issues around neighbourhood forums and that there was a need for more neighbourhood decision-making.

65.10 The Chairman advised that the comments made in relation to neighbourhood working would be addressed in a separate report to be considered by the Committee in March.

65.11 In response to concerns from Councillor Simpson around a lack of opportunity for community involvement and a decrease in the amount of community development across the city, Councillor Simson contended that significant effort had been made to increase community involvement and development despite cuts to funding.

65.12 Councillor Mears stated that this was the second review of the constitution and that all councillors had been given the opportunity to respond. She hoped that Members were pleased that their views were being considered and taken forward.

65.13 Councillor Randall supported Councillor Elgood's views in relation to neighbourhood working; he contended that if the Council wished to involved people in their neighbourhoods they needed to be given responsibility and spending power.

65.14 **RESOLVED** –

(1) That recommendations 4, 6 and 12 in the report be noted and recommendations 3, 7 and 11be agreed.

(2) That the proposals set out at paragraph 1, 2, 5, 9, 10 and 14 of the report be recommended to Cabinet.

(3) That the proposals for amendments to the Constitution set out at paragraphs 8 and 13 of the report be recommended to Full Council.

(4) That the Head of Law be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution to reflect the above proposals once approved by the relevant body.