BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 19 JANUARY 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Davey, Davis, Drake, Smart, Wells and Taylor

Also present: Councillor Dee Simson

PART ONE

38. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

36a Declarations of Substitutes

36a.1 Councillor Taylor was substituting for Councillor Rufus; Councillor Janio had given his apologies.

36b Declarations of Interests

36b.1 There were none.

36c Declaration of Party Whip

36c.1 There were none.

36d Exclusion of Press and Public

36d.1 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.

36d.2 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

39. SCRUTINY OF DIRECTORATE BUDGET STRATEGIES

39.1 This budget scrutiny meeting had been rearranged at short notice, following the ice and snow on 18 December 2009 that led to postponement. Comments on this report would

be forwarded together with comments from the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to 26 January 2010 Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

39.2 The Chairman welcomed everyone including the Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion and Internal Affairs, who introduced the report on the Scrutiny of Directorate Budgets. The Cabinet Member for Environment was unable to be present.

39.3 Members asked for more information on a wide range of budget proposals.

39.4 The Committee asked about investment in the seafront railings, shelters and work on Hove Lagoon (paragraph 3.5 refers) and how this related to the 're-investment' paragraphs in the Appendix. There was a question on the need to invest and alternative sources of funding such as Heritage Lottery fund and Section 106 agreements, which the Committee wished to forward to the Commission.

39.5 The Chairman asked whether the £100,000 at bullet point 5 of the main report was for consultants. The Director of Environment assumed it was. This needed to be confirmed by the Director of Finance and Resources.

39.6 Costs of the transport model were questioned including the on-going costs to sustain it. The Assistant Director, Sustainable Transport explained that the model replicated traffic conditions and assessed demand, enabling robust decisions to be made on major projects. It was essential to keep the model validated and 'live' with local data. Officers were asked for more information on the business case.

39.7 The Committee were pleased that Castleham Industries would be kept open and that new beach huts would be built subject to planning permission.

39.8 The Head of Finance answered a question on the King Alfred Leisure Centre by referring to the capital investment programme summary at Appendix 2.

39.9 Regarding concessionary fares funding the Head of Finance confirmed that £9.3 Million (report paragraph 3.13) was proposed to be allocated in 2010/2011 for all bus operations in the City. Members asked for an update on final allocations when available.

39.10 The Director clarified that 'Staff posts affected' in the Environment summary table at Appendix 1, referred to jobs at risk or a significant change to jobs and there had been a reduction in this number (20) since the report was written. No compulsory redundancies were proposed and updated figures would be provided to the Committee.

39.11 Answering a question on the possible effect of last year's savings in CityClean service area in the Council's response to the recent icy conditions the Director told the meeting that the combination of CityParks and CityClean services had made it quicker and easier to mobilise a large workforce to deal with ice and snow.

39.12 The effect on the budget of potholes created by the ice was being investigated.

39.13 Asked about the rise in parking charges the Head of Finance said that a general rise of 2% to allow for inflation was part of the overall budget strategy, although on average parking charges would rise by around 3%. Many individual charges would remain

frozen, others are proposed to reduce and some would rise by significantly more than 3%. Individual charges were being reported to the 26 January Environment CMM meeting.

39.14 The range of other opportunities to improve value for money and generate additional income, as stated in the fourth paragraph of the 'Strategic Response to this Context' referred to efficiency savings regarding maintenance of parking machines, reduced number of Assistant Directors, lower advertising costs, management arrangements for the two golf courses and beach huts, the Director told the meeting.

39.15 Councillor Simson described the 'Turning the Tide' pilot programme which supports families regarding anti-social behaviour that was starting in the East of the City.

39.16 Members expressed concern about savings within 'Public Safety' and asked about the meaning of the tabulated 'Public Safety' budget proposals summary. It was agreed that clarification of the 'efficiency' and 'other' savings in Public Safety would be forwarded to the Committee.

39.17 The Committee heard there were five hate crime caseworkers in the Community Safety Team. One such post had already been vacant for more than 12 months would not be filled; there would be no reduction in service.

39.18 The Assistant Director, Public Safety detailed the range of roles of the case workers. She said that the management changes included her own post and a senior management position.

39.19 In City Services, because the growth in waste had not been as large as projected the savings of £290,000 were proposed to be used to smooth the cost of waste disposal.

39.20 The Committee discussed subsidised bus services with the Assistant Director of Sustainable Transport who confirmed that the enhanced service 27 is included in the £1.5 million subsidised bus routes. Mindful of statutory notice periods and contractual obligations he said that public consultation may be required before re-prioritising. Some contracts were able to run on a commercial basis and could be removed from subsidy.

39.21 The Committee asked about the process for deciding on which level of service to propose as savings and requested that this specific matter be taken forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

39.22 Officers replied to further queries on gum removal, environmental standards of operational vehicles, Local Transport Plan capital funding.

39.23 **RESOLVED:**

(a) The Committee supported proposed investment in Castleham Industries and additional beach huts.
(b) That updated information be requested on; affected staff posts and Concessionary fares final allocations if available.

(c) That the following areas of concern be forwarded to 29 January 2010 OSC:

- Need for investment in sea-front maintenance and possible alternative sources of funding
- Business case for transport model
- Process for agreeing subsidised bus services
- Possible effect of vacant Hate Crime worker post remaining unfilled

The meeting concluded at 5.30pm

Signed Chair

Dated this day of