

## BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

### FINANCE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00PM, 21 JULY 2008

ROOM 1 – HOVE TOWN HALL

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Young, Cabinet Member for Finance.

**Also in attendance:**

Cabinet Members: Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

**Other Members:**

Councillor Hamilton, Opposition Spokesperson.

#### PART ONE

#### 14 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 14a Declarations of Interests

14.1 There were none.

##### 14b Exclusion of Press and Public

14.2 The Committee 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

14.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

#### 15 MINUTES

15.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member.

#### 16 CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

16.1 There were none.

**17 ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION**

17.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

**18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

18.1 There were none.

**19 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

19.1 There were none.

**20 PETITIONS**

20.1 There were none.

**21 DEPUTATIONS**

21.1 There were none.

**22 LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

22.1 There were none.

**23 NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL**

23.1 There were none.

**24 MATTERS REFERRED FOR RECONSIDERATION**

24.1 There were none.

**25 REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

25.1 There were none.

**26 INCOME COLLECTION AND RECOVERY 2007/08**

26.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of The Director of Finance & Resources on income collection and recovery performance for 2007/08 as at quarter 4 (March 2008). The report highlighted improvement and best practice actions. The quarterly reports would ensure that the Cabinet Member for Finance was aware of the Council's current performance and arrangements for continually improving income collection and recovery (for copy see minute book).

26.2 The Cabinet Member stressed the strong focus on income collection and recovery and was pleased to report that the two services had achieved Charter Mark Status. The services would help those in severe hardship but be tough on those people who don't pay.

26.3 The Opposition Spokesperson referred to paragraph 3.5 relating to BVPI 79bii Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding. He asked if this related to overpayments made to council tenants only or covered all categories of housing benefit claimants. The

Assistant Director, Financial Services confirmed that it related to all categories of claimants.

26.4 The Opposition Spokesperson referred to paragraph 8.5 in relation to Risk and Opportunity Management Implications. He asked if the risk assessment was a one off exercise or carried out on a continuous basis. The Assistant Director, Financial Services replied that it was carried out on an annual basis. Officers reviewed all budgets across the council. The Director of Finance & Resources confirmed that in addition to the annual review, officers could review individual budgets at any point, if there were concerns.

26.5 **RESOLVED** – That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:

(1) That the contents of the report be noted.

## **27 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT (INCORPORATING THE ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY) 2007/08 – END OF YEAR REVIEW**

27.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of The Director of Finance & Resources concerning the action taken during the second half of the financial year 2007/2008 on the Treasury Management Policy Statement, including the investment strategy. The action for the first half year was reported to the Financial Management Sub-Committee on 23 November 2007 (for copy see minute book).

27.2 **RESOLVED** – That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

(1) That the action taken during the second half year to meet the treasury management policy statement and practices (including the annual investment strategy) be endorsed.

2) That it be noted that the authorised limit and operational boundary set by the Council have not been exceeded.

## **28 ANNUAL VALUE FOR MONEY & EFFICIENCY REPORT**

28.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources which provided an update on the council's value for money programme and performance against government efficiency targets as reported in Annual Efficiency statements submitted to central government. The report also provided a framework for action planning to improve the council's use of its resources and reported on its delivery against those plans (for copy see minute book).

28.2 The Opposition Spokesperson referred to paragraph 3.5. He asked if there was scope in working with other local authorities to bulk buy. The Director of Finance and Resources replied that there were opportunities to buy goods and services through the Sussex Consortium and a national framework. The council were increasingly involved in joint procurement work.

28.3 The Opposition Spokesperson referred to paragraph 5.6 in relation to the Transformation Fund. He asked if this was used by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The Assistant Director Financial Services replied that the Transformation Fund did not fund PricewaterhouseCoopers. The fund built capacity. Outside expertise might be brought in or it might simply be used to bring in extra officer capacity, including temporary staff. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the fund was used for pump priming projects each year. One example was providing additional capacity for improving corporate debt collecting.

28.4 **RESOLVED** – That having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

(1) That the achievement against the 2007/08 efficiency target reported in the “backward look” Annual Efficiency Statement submission be noted.

(2) That the actions taken in 2007/08 to improve the council’s use of its resources be noted.

(3) That the actions planned for 2008/09 to improve the council’s use of its resources be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 4.24 pm.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008