

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
4.00PM 2 DECEMBER 2008  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL  
MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Mitchell (Chairman); Pidgeon (Deputy Chairman), Alford, Mrs Cobb, Meadows, Morgan, Older, Randall, Rufus and Watkins

**PART ONE**

**55. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

55.1 The Chairman stated that the meeting was being webcast and an archived version should be available on the Council's website within 48 hours. Colleagues were asked to speak clearly into the microphones.

55.2 She welcomed Mr Childerhouse of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the meeting.

**55A Declaration of Substitutes**

55.3 Councillor Sven Rufus was substituting for Councillor Wakefield-Jarrett and Councillor David Watkins was substituting for Councillor Paul Elgood

**55B Declarations of Interest**

55.4 There were none.

**55C Declarations of Party Whip**

55.5 There were none.

**55D Exclusion of Press and Public**

55.6 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.

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

**56. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

56.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**57. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

57.1 There were none.

**58. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

58.1 There were none.

**59. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

59.1 There were none.

**60. NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL**

60.1 There were none.

**61. BUDGET UPDATE FOR BUDGET SETTING 2009 - 2010**

61.1 The Head of Strategic Finance and Procurement outlined the report giving some background to the issues relating to the budget setting in 2009-2010 and referred to the Members' budget seminars that had been held in November.

61.2 At paragraph 3.1 of the report, the Head of Strategic Finance and Procurement confirmed that the details as expected of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2009-2010 had now been announced.

61.3 In the pre-budget statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer there were two important areas that would affect the council:

- Rises in national insurance contributions, due to increase from 2011, which would need to be built into the Council's budget
- The future of public spending

61.4 There was a typographical error in paragraph 3.19 paragraph [3.10] should read 3.13.

61.5 The Committee heard that the announced cut in VAT was likely to be cost-neutral for the Council.

61.6 The Chairman congratulated the officers for arranging such successful budget seminars

**RESOLVED** – (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the budget assumptions in setting the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2009-10 and the changes that have affected budget projections.

(2) The Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the budget reports that will be presented to Cabinet on 12 February 2009 will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 3 February

## **62. TARGETTED BUDGET MANAGEMENT MONTH 6**

62.1 The Head of Financial Services (Corporate and Environment) presented the report on Targetted Budget Management (TBM) Month 6 setting out the forecast outturn position on the revenue and capital budgets as at the end of September 2008. The report was presented to Cabinet on 20 November.

62.2 The Council's financial position was improving following the financial recovery plans, particularly in areas such as Adult Social Care and Children and Young People's Trust.

62.3 Answers were provided to questions about sales from the right to buy [para 3.21]; risk share agreement regarding mental health and substance misuse [p29, bullet point 1]; underachieved income on major works recharges to leaseholders [p 31]; capital budget reprofiling [p36]; and park rangers [p26];

62.4 Further information would be supplied regarding: additional numbers of clients using older peoples' services and physical disability services; empty property repair costs; reopening a home care service base in Woodingdean; and breakdown of on-street and off-street parking income.

62.5 Members were concerned about the difficulties with the heating system to Leach Court and Patching Lodge and the Council's energy costs. There was also a question on tenants' 'central' gas heating service charges.

62.6 The Chairman thanked the officers and said that replies to these queries would be forwarded to the Adult Social Care and Housing or Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

62.7 The Chairman reminded Members that they could indicate if they wished to ask questions in specific service areas at future meetings, and the relevant invitations could then be extended.

62.8 **RESOLVED;** (1) That the Commission note the report.

(2) That further information is provided to members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees as minuted above.

## **63. DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORK**

63.1 The Head of Human Resources introduced the report on progress in developing an effective approach to bullying and harassment at work. He said the first meeting of the working group was due shortly.

63.2 Answering questions, the Head of Human Resources said this was a low-level issue for the council but where it happened it was not necessarily dealt with effectively. There had been

17 cases this year; two of which had been proven and the employee dismissed. One employment tribunal had taken place, which found in favour of the Council.

63.3 The Chairman said she was disappointed not to see a draft policy at this stage and would like to follow up the matter.

63.4 Noting the proposed consultation process for developing the policy [report paragraph 4.4], the Commission agreed it would be appropriate for Members to be involved at an earlier stage in drafting the policy.

63.5 Following discussion it was agreed that the Commission would establish a short-term scrutiny panel as part of its policy development role. The Head of Human Resources welcomed this.

**63.7 RESOLVED** – (1) That a 4-Member scrutiny panel be established to make recommendations regarding the Draft Dignity and Respect at Work Policy.

(2) That the Acting Head of Scrutiny be notified of group nominations, and progress the establishment of the Scrutiny Panel.

#### **64. WORKING RELATIONS WITH OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL**

64.1 The Chairman referred to the report on working relations with the Older People's Council (OPC) which had been considered by the Governance Committee on 18 November and Cabinet on 20 November.

64.2 She said it was important for the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen to discuss with Members of the OPC, issues relating to older people that could be suitable for overview or scrutiny.

64.3 Councillor Morgan, Chairman of Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee said that the Scrutiny Panel established to consider community safety included an OPC co-optee.

64.4 Members considered other ways in which OPC Members might be more closely involved with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

64.5 At report paragraph 3.4.1 it was noted that 'streamlining points of contact' did not make reference to Scrutiny Members. The Commission felt that there should be regular contacts between Scrutiny Chairmen also and the Older People's Council.

64.6 Officers were asked to ensure that despatch lists for overview and scrutiny agendas were kept updated to include the relevant Member(s) of the Older People's Council

**64.7 RESOLVED** – (1) That there be regular contact between the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen also, and the Older Peoples Council.

(2) That subject to (1) above, the resolutions of the Governance Committee and Cabinet be agreed and actioned by the Commission

**65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

65.1 The Commission's work plan was noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.55pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

