

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 4 DECEMBER 2014**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors J Kitcat (Chair), Sykes (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Morgan (Group Spokesperson), Lepper, A Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Randall, Robins and Shanks

**PART ONE**

**83 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**(a) Declarations of Substitutes**

83.1 Councillor Robins was present in substitution for Councillor Hamilton.

**(b) Declarations of Interest**

83.2 Both Councillors Shanks and Peltzer Dunn declared an interest in respect of Item 92 Council Tax Empty Property Discounts 2015/16 as they both owned property which they rented out.

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

83.3 The Chair noted that there were no items listed in Part 2 on the agenda.

**84 MINUTES**

84.1 The minute of the meeting held on 16 October 2014, and the minutes of the special meeting held on 17 November 2014 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

**85 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

85.1 The Chair gave the following Communications:

*"Today's meeting will be web cast live and will be capable of repeated viewing.*

*There will be a change to the ordering of the agenda and Item 98 Hostels & Homeless Provision will be taken as the first report together with the associated public and Member items.*

*I would like to welcome you all to our penultimate P&R of 2014. Much has happened over the last year, much hard work has been done, many tough decisions taken and a lot has been achieved by this council and the city and some of these achievements have been since our last meeting so I would just like to fill you in on some of those. Firstly I would like to thank all those involved in organising the many services around the city for Remembrance Sunday last month. It is always a huge undertaking and it was carried off splendidly and certainly did our service men and women proud. So thank you to all those involved for your hard work.*

*Congratulations to John and Mark Gapper at Stanmer Nursery and all the volunteers for their work in creating butterfly havens around the city over the last seven years and winning the 'Promotion of Lepidoptera Conservation Award'. Their wonderful work has been helping to bring some of the smaller wildlife of the Downs into our city for us all to enjoy.*

*Well done to everyone at SoundCity, Brighton and Hove's musical education hub, for winning a Diploma of Merit from the National Music Council for their fine work in inspiring the children and young people of the city into music and providing valuable opportunities for them through artistic programming across Brighton and Hove.*

*Congratulations to the team at Brighton Housing Trust and QED Property for winning 'Innovation of The Year' at the 24housing Awards for their work in creating the container homes at Richardson's Yard. The housing problem in the UK will not go away without us all embracing inventive ways to tackle it and this project has been a fine example of how we can succeed in doing just that.*

*And lastly, as we are heading into the festive season and there are only limited shopping days left until the big day, I would like to remind everyone that we will be marking Small Business Saturday this weekend with a series of events across the city to promote our independent businesses. There will also be free parking available at a number of our car parks. I urge everyone to enjoy what the day has to offer and support our city's businesses by buying local this Christmas."*

## **86 CALL OVER**

86.1 The Following items were reserved for discussion:

- Item 89 Draft Brighton & Hove City Council Corporate Plan 2015-19
- Item 90 Budget Update and Savings 2015/16
- Item 91 Council Tax Reduction Review
- Item 93 Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2014/15 – Month 7
- Item 95 Corporate Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan 2014-2018
- Item 97 New Homes for Neighbourhoods – Developing New Homes on General Fund Sites
- Item 98 Hostels & Homeless Provision

- 87.1 The Acting Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the items listed above had been reserved for discussion, and that the following reports of the agenda, with the recommendation therein, had been approved and adopted:

Item 92 Council Tax Empty Property Discounts 2015/16  
Item 94 Treasury Management Policy Statement 2014/15 (Mid Year Report)  
Item 96 2014-15 – 6 Month Performance Update  
Item 99 Traffic Signal & Control Equipment Contract  
Item 100 Annual Surveillance Report 2014

**87 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

- 87.1 The Chair noted that there was one petition, as listed in the agenda papers, from Mr David Walker concerning Local Taxation.
- 87.2 Councillor Sykes stated that he was view the content of the petition had merit, and moved that a full Officer report be bought to a future meeting on this topic.
- 87.3 Councillor Randall seconded the proposal.
- 87.4 The Chair then put the proposal to the vote, and this was **carried**.
- 87.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee calls for an Officer report on the matter to give consideration to a range of options.
- 87.6 Item 87 (c) Deputation from Mr Cameron concerning Homeless Policy was considered with Item 98 and is detailed at minute Item 98.
- 87.7 The Chair noted that no other petitions, public questions or deputations had been received for the meeting.

**88 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

- 88.1 The Chair noted that there was one petition referred from Council on 23 October that had been submitted by Councillor Duncan in relation to Palestine. The Chair provided the following response to the petition:

“This petition was presented by Councillor Duncan at the Council meeting on 23 October 2014.

Members may be aware that we received a similar proposed petition and notice of motion on this issue during the Gaza conflict. These were not accepted because:

The issue of the Gaza conflict was primarily a matter concerning international relations, which is the responsibility of national government rather than local authorities like Brighton & Hove;

The Council’s constitution provides: “Every motion shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the authority, the area of Brighton & Hove and/or its inhabitants.” The proposed notice of motion did not

satisfy this requirement. This requirement is reinforced in the Council's guidance to Notices of Motion;

There is a statutory limitation on taking non-commercial considerations into account in the awarding of contracts; and

Most importantly, the Council has a duty to promote good community relations. Given polarity of views and the strength of opinion held by members of the community on both sides, debating the motion at a time when tensions were already high due to the conflict in Gaza would not have been conducive to promoting good community relations.

That was some 3 months ago. Since then the conflict in Gaza has subsided or at least it is not as live as it was when the original petition and notice of motion was presented. This petition was also presented at Full Council with no prior notice of its exact contents. It would have been unusual to disallow a petition after it after it has been presented. It is for these reasons that the Council agreed to accept this petition and include it on the agenda for this committee.

However, the reasons I mentioned above regarding matters relating to international relations, the restriction on taking non-commercial considerations into account and the need to promote good community relations are still relevant. Taking those considerations into account, I propose that we simply note the petition."

88.2 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee agree to note the petition.

88.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked that his decision to not take part in the vote on the matter be recorded as he was of the view the consideration of the petition was not allowed under the Council's Constitution.

88.4 Item 87 (a) (ii) Petition from Councillor A. Kitcat concerning the West Pier Project was considered with Item 98 and is detailed at minute Item 98.

88.5 The Chair noted that no other petitions, written questions, letters or notices of motion had been received for the meeting.

## 89 **DRAFT BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2015-19**

89.1 The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive in relation to the Draft Brighton & Hove City Council Corporate Plan 2015-19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The corporate plan was part of the Council's Policy Framework, and the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 set the overall direction for the Council over the coming four years. The document also set the vision, principles and priorities which were shared with Brighton & Hove connected – the city's public community and private sector partnership. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been developed alongside the corporate plan; this aligned principles and priorities with strategic investment in Council services. Both documents were produced to address the severe financial challenges facing the Council and how these would be met through service modernisation and prioritisation.

- 89.2 Councillor Sykes stated that this was an excellent piece of work that also addressed the political uncertainty associated with the 2015 Local Election. The plan related appropriately to the funding challenge all local authorities faced. He added that the outlook for both Adult and Children's services remained difficult, but hoped the document would receive cross-party support.
- 89.3 Councillor Morgan welcomed the work that had been put into the Plan, and felt it captured the challenges faced by the organisation.
- 89.4 Councillor G. Theobald noted that he agreed with some of the comments made by the Chief Executive in her introduction; however, he felt that the assumed increase in Council Tax, outlined in the Plan, was at odds with the position of the Administration in the budget preparation for 2015/16. He went on to state that there should be reference in the plan to working with the independent sector – which he felt was a valid option for the organisation, and that the Council could learn more lessons from things that other authorities were doing.
- 89.5 The Chair stated that he hoped all political parties could support the document.
- 89.6 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote.
- 89.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee:
- (i) Approve the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 and draft Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
  - (ii) Direct that the final version of the Corporate Plan 2015-19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy be referred back to Policy & Resources Committee after Budget Council in February 2015, for consideration.
  - (iii) At its meeting on 19 March 2015 approve the final version of the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and refer the final version of the Corporate Plan 2015-19 to Council for approval.

## 90 BUDGET UPDATE AND SAVINGS 2015/16

- 90.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Finance & Resources in relation to the Budget Update and Savings 2015/16. The report set out the draft budget proposals for 2015/16; the proposals were made in the context of a very challenging financial position with an estimated £102m savings required by 2019/20. The proposals were a balanced package of efficiency measures and Value for Money improvements, including income generation, as well as service redesign, re-commissioning and de-commissioning decisions. As the Committee had been unable to agree the recommended Council Tax level in July, for planning purposes, the report set out all options ranging from a Council Tax freeze to a rise that would trigger a referendum.
- 90.2 Councillor Sykes thanked Officers for the huge amount of work that had been undertaken, and added that most other local authorities were in a similar situation. Local government had been forced to take on a disproportionate amount of the cuts

imposed by Central Government. The scope for further efficiency savings was questioned, and the proposed 5.9% Council Tax increase would give some protection for services. Councillor Sykes made reference to a consultation in which 60% of those that responded favoured a Council Tax rise were it was justified. It was also clarified that there were still further proposals to come forward.

- 90.3 Councillor G. Theobald stated that the difficult choices outlined in the report were the result of the Administration being unwilling to take difficult decisions. Other Local Authorities nationally had been changing how they provided services; creating greater value for money and looking at more shared services. He was of the view that these options had not been seriously explored by the Administration as they were ideologically committed to state-run services. Greater levels of savings were required than those outlined in the report, and these could only be delivered through strong political leadership. Councillor G. Theobald concluded that it would be the position of the Conservative Group to abstain from the vote.
- 90.4 Councillor Morgan stated that Local Government was facing 40% cuts – far higher than other areas of the public sector, and he noted that other Conservative controlled authorities had been openly critical of the position of Central Government, and he noted that the Labour Group had called for reviews of services over the last few years. The position of the Group would be to support a threshold increase in Council Tax, and they did not support the holding of a referendum with the associated costs that it would involve. The Group would be reserving its position until the full budget was published in 2015.
- 90.5 Councillor Shanks noted that this was not the position the Administration wished to be in, but the national direction of travel was unlikely to change regardless of the outcome of the 2015 General Election. The proposed 5.9% increase would not be a full solution, but would serve to protect some services.
- 90.6 Councillor A. Norman noted that some central services were being asked to make much smaller levels of savings, and made example of the Communications Service whilst noting that the Able & Willing Service was being asked to save a much greater amount. In response the Chair clarified that the Able and Willing Service was working towards financial independence from the authority – as previously agreed, and the Communications Service was being protected to ensure that the authority could change the relationship with residents and service users which was currently challenging. He also added that there were currently 70 shared service projects, and drew example of recent decisions made by the Committee, and noted the challenge the Administration had faced when they took office.
- 90.7 The Chair then put the recommendations to the vote.
- 90.8 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- (1) Notes the updated forecasts for resources and expenditure for 2015/16 and an estimated budget savings requirement for 2015/16 based on a range of council tax propositions.

- (2) Notes the approach taken to identifying savings in the context of the council's draft Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (3) Notes the detailed proposals for savings in 2015/16 based on a council tax increase of 5.9%, which would trigger a referendum in accordance with Chapter IVZA of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and associated regulations ("the Referendum Budget").
- (4) Notes options for further savings that could form part of the "Substitute Budget" that would be required in addition to the proposals at 2.3 or alternatively to support a budget based on a threshold rise in the council tax (the "Threshold Budget") or a council tax freeze (the "Freeze Budget").
- (5) Directs that all of the savings proposals be subject to further consultation, engagement and scrutiny alongside the draft Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (6) Notes the indicative allocations of one-off resources for 2015/16 set out in table 1 subject to the identification of sufficient further one-off resources to fund the proposed allocations.
- (7) Notes the update on the HRA budget set out in paragraphs 3.31 to 3.34.
- (8) Notes the Capital Investment Programme update set out in paragraphs 3.35 to 3.36.

## **91 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION REVIEW**

- 91.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Finance & Resources in relation to the Council Tax Reduction Review. The Council had introduced a local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme from April 2013 as a result of national changes localising the previous Council Tax Benefits system. Under legislation the CTR scheme had to be reviewed each year, and the report set out this review and the resulting recommendations. The report proposed no change to the existing 8.5% level, but gave options for other variants.
- 91.2 Councillor Sykes thanked Officers for the report, and also those that had contributed to the consultation. He referenced the proposed amendment from the Labour & Co-Operative Group and stated that it would increase inequality within the city, and impact on some of the poorest residents. He stated that maintaining the current level of Council Tax would prevent additional costs for the Council in other areas caused by increasing the Council Tax burden.
- 91.3 Councillor Morgan proposed the amendment on behalf of the Labour & Co-Operative Group and stated that the amendment was a response to the decision of Central Government to give responsibility for this area to Local Government without sufficient funds to undertake the work. The amendment would provide a small and affordable amount, and still keep the authority in the top 12 of unitary authorities nationally in terms of support to low income families. The amendment would also provide additional support for disabled people and those that were carers, and the scheme would be one

of the subjects of the 'fairness commission' that a future Labour administration would set up. Councillor Morgan added that there should have been greater discussion around this issue with Opposition Parties to gain greater cross-party support.

- 91.4 Councillor Robins seconded the amendment.
- 91.5 The Chair noted his disagreement with the points raised by Councillor Morgan, and highlighted that the CTR Scheme had to be set this month – ahead of the formal budget. It was the view of the Administration that the burden should not be placed on the poorest, and the proposed 5.9% increase to Council Tax was considered to be the most progressive approach in terms of the increasingly difficult financial position.
- 91.6 Councillor Robins added that the very poorest in the city could often be individuals that worked full time, and an increase above the threshold in Council Tax would have an impact on them.
- 91.7 In response to Councillor A. Norman the Executive Director for Finance & Resources explained that there were options around limiting the award of CTR by Council Tax band, but it was felt this would be unworkable given the profile of houses in the city, and instead having a minimum contribution was the preferred option. There had also been no feedback to change this aspect of the scheme.
- 91.8 Councillor Randall stated that he shared the concerns expressed by Councillor Robins in relation to the working poor. He noted that 172 employers in the city were now signed up to pay the 'living wage', and he hoped to begin another drive to increase these numbers.
- 91.9 The Chair then put the proposed amendment from the Labour & Co-Operative Group to the vote. The amendment was **not carried**.
- 91.10 The Chair then put the substantive recommendations to the vote.
- 91.11 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- (1) Note that the council undertook informal and formal consultation as a part of this review and that as a part of the formal consultation a draft scheme was published and people were invited to give their views on that draft scheme.
  - (2) Note the outcome of that consultation as set out in section 5
  - (3) Note that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken on the proposed changes in the draft scheme (appendix 1) which has been summarised in section 7
  - (4) Notes that the Executive Director Finance & Resources will, prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, exercise her delegated powers to increase the appropriate calculative elements of the scheme, to give effect to national changes.

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**



- (5) That Policy & Resources Committee recommends to Council that:
- (a) That the changes set out in section 3.17 are made to The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Persons who are not Pensioners) (Brighton & Hove City Council) 2013 to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.
  - (b) Council note the consequence of the decision in 2.5.1 will mean the option to generate £1.7million through a more widely revised scheme included within the savings proposals elsewhere on this agenda cannot form part of the package for setting the 2015/16 budget and therefore alternative savings proposals will need to be identified. There is no further opportunity to revisit this scheme to support setting the 2015/16 budget.

## **92 COUNCIL TAX EMPTY PROPERTY DISCOUNTS 2015/16**

**92.1 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:** That the Committee recommends that Council -

- (1) Approves the reduction of the Class C (empty and unfurnished) Council Tax discount to zero (i.e. full withdrawal) with effect from 1 April 2015.
- (2) Approves the reduction of the Class D (uninhabitable) Council Tax discount to zero (i.e. full withdrawal) with effect 1 from April 2015.
- (3) Approves a discretionary Council Tax 4-week discount to cover exceptional circumstances.
- (4) Agree appendix 1 which sets out the formal determinations and decisions for the financial year commencing 1 April 2015 and in subsequent financial years.
- (5) Grants delegated authority to the Executive Director of Finance & Resources to take all appropriate steps to implement and administer the recommendations in 2.1 - 2.3, including the publishing of any related data or information in accordance with statutory requirements.

## **93 TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) 2014/15 MONTH 7**

93.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Finance & Resources in relation to Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 2014/15 – Month 7. TBM was a key component of the Council's overall performance monitoring and control framework; the report set out the forecast outturn position (Month 7) on the Council's revenue and capital budget for the financial year 2014/15. Month 7 showed an improvement to the position overall at just past the mid-point in the year, but there remained significant pressures and forecast risks to manage across the General Fund Revenue Budget.

93.2 In response to Councillor Sykes the Executive Director for Children's Services explained that the underspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant related to the schools themselves and the early years fund. Where schools had underspends that were greater than reasonable there was a mechanism to challenge this, and even withdraw funds if the local authority considered this necessary. Councillor Shanks added that this was considered by the Schools Forum and there was also a role for school

governors in challenging budgets. In relation to GCSE performance it was noted that whilst there was some disappointment with the performance this year; the primary school attainment had been very strong.

- 93.3 In response to Councillor A. Norman the Chair explained that close work was being undertaken with health partners to progress work in relation to the Better Care Fund, and Councillor A. Norman noted that the new governance arrangements for the Health & Wellbeing Board allowed for cross-party work with health partners for the advantage of residents.
- 93.4 In response to further questions from Councillor A. Norman the Executive Director for Finance & Resources explained that the review of trade union facility time had been started, and this would include mapping out the costs of the work place reps. The deduction for strike pay would be forecast into budget holders' TBM forecast so the funds could not be spent elsewhere. The uncertain elements of the VFM programme were a reflection of the challenges in managing the demand of services in both Adult and Children's Services.
- 93.5 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing responded to Councillor A. Norman that staff sickness in City Clean was being closely monitored; where the service would be directly affected it could be necessary to use temporary agency staff. One of the key issues in the City Clean service redesign would be to strengthen the local management team and build confidence with the workforce. It would also be important to make it clear that sickness imposed additional costs to the service, and the intention of the service redesign was to create the right motivation with staff to reduce sickness. In relation to the Horsdean site; the water drainage had been a requirement from the Environment Agency; the solution should be available in the new year, and there was a condition in the planning consent to consult with the local amenity society.
- 93.6 The Chair then put the recommendations to the vote.
- 93.7 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Committee note the forecast outturn position for the General Fund, which is an overspend of £4.368m. This consists of £4.052m on council controlled budgets and £0.316m on the council's share of the NHS managed Section 75 services.
  - (2) That the Committee note that there is a further £1.890m of as yet unallocated risk provision that could be used to mitigate against this overspend.
  - (3) That the Committee note the forecast outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is an underspend of £0.156m.
  - (4) That the Committee note the forecast outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant which is an underspend of £1.115m
  - (5) That the Committee note the forecast outturn position on the capital programme.

- (6) That the Committee approve the capital programme variations and reprofiles in Appendix 3 and new capital schemes in Appendix 4.

#### **94 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2014/15 (MID YEAR REPORT)**

##### **94.1 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Policy & Resources Committee endorses the key actions taken during the first half of 2014/15 to meet the treasury management policy statement and practices (including the investment strategy) as set out in this report.
- (2) That Policy & Resources Committee notes that the approved maximum indicator for investment risk of 0.05% has been adhered to and the authorised limit and operational boundary have not been exceeded in the first half of the year.

#### **95 CORPORATE PROPERTY STRATEGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2018**

95.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Finance & Resources in relation to the Corporate Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan (AMP) 2014/2018. The report sought approval for the Council's refreshed AMP; the document set out the property context for the city and the Council's holdings linking these to the Council's corporate priorities and strategic goals. It provided a strategic overview of the Council's property assets and the systems, processes and policies in place or being progressed to manage and maintain them. It also provided a framework for challenging and reviewing the reasons for continuing to hold Council assets.

95.2 Councillor Sykes welcomed this as an excellent report, and it served as a reminder of the fortunate position of the Council in terms of the size of its property portfolio, and the excellent value for money service the in-house team provided.

95.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn welcomed the report and the detail of knowledge that Officers had in this area. In response to a query in relation to the level of return the Chair clarified that the strategy was clear there were some areas to exit to allow for reinvestment in others with better returns.

95.4 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote.

95.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee approve the Corporate Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan (AMP) 2014-2018 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

#### **96 2014-15 - 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

96.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee:

- (1) Note areas of highlighted performance and endorse the improvement actions detailed in Appendix 2.
- (2) Support and challenge lead officers across the council to continually improve performance and tackle issues of concern highlighted in the report.

**97 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - DEVELOPING NEW HOMES ON GENERAL FUND SITES**

- 97.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing in relation to New Homes for Neighbourhoods – Development of New Homes on General Fund Land. The report included the findings of two business case studies of potential development sites on General Fund land for the programme, and sought approval for agreement in principle for the transfer of these sites to the HRA and their development for new housing through the Council's Sustainable Futures strategic construction partnership. The report also requested the transfer of the car parking site at Frederick Street to the HRA.
- 97.2 Councillor Randall thanked the other Members on the Estates Regeneration Board, and noted that the two sites in Whitehawk had been the largest the Board had considered so far; Councillor Randall thanked the Officers for the work they had undertaken. Similar work was being undertaken by other local authorities, and it was important the Council used all of its land assets to their full potential.
- 97.3 Councillor Morgan noted that it was important that schemes were well thought through to give assurance to residents on estates. It was also important to ensure that contractors worked to high standards, and that all wards be considered to ensure there was a mix of tenure across the city to include private, affordable and social housing. Councillor Morgan suggested some stronger wording at paragraph 3.23 in the report to ensure more was achieved at the site.
- 97.4 Councillor Peltzer Dunn welcomed the roundtable approach of the Board with Officers, and noted how Officers had ensured the work stayed focused.
- 97.5 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote.
- 97.6 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee:
- (1) Note the initial design and viability modelling and agree in principle that each of the following sites is appropriated to the Housing Revenue Account for the development of new housing, subject to Housing and Policy & Resources Committees agreeing a further report detailing the final feasibility and design and associated financial implications:
    - (i) Former library site, Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk, Brighton and,
    - (ii) Wellsbourne site, Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk, Brighton.
  - (2) Agree that the Estate Regeneration team, in conjunction with the council's Sustainable Futures strategic construction partnership, undertake final feasibility studies, design and development of new housing on sites (i) and (ii).
  - (3) Agree to initial feasibility/viability studies, consultation, analysis and research to identify potential wider regeneration opportunities in the vicinity of site (i).
  - (4) Approve the transfer of a sum of £1.3M from the HRA to the General Fund for sites (i) and (ii) for best consideration for the land value (as detailed in paragraph

3.8-3.9) as and when the final scheme is approved by Policy & Resources and the land appropriated to the Housing Revenue Account.

- (5) Agree that the Estate Regeneration team explore opportunities and options for the delivery of new housing on the car parking site at 7-9 Frederick Street with a view to seeking agreement to appropriate the land for housing purposes if suitable housing development is subsequently agreed by Housing Committee and Policy & Resources Committee.

## 98 HOSTELS AND HOMELESS PROVISION

- 98.1 The Chair noted there was a deputation associated with this item from the Regency Square Area Society, and called Mr Cameron forward to present his deputation for up to five minutes.
- 98.2 Mr Cameron stated that the Society fully supported the Homeless Strategy, but felt that the West Pier Project were not achieving their objectives, and made specific reference to the report and the suitability of Regency Square for the facility. He added that many of the hoteliers were against the way the facility operated and felt it was too large. The project had no links with the community, and Mr Cameron was of the view that the facility was bad for both residents and local businesses – he also noted that Councillor A. Kitcat had submitted a petition on behalf of the local hoteliers which was also due for consideration.
- 98.3 Mr Cameron went on to state that the gardens attracted friends of the residents and problems associated with drug dealing; as well as other anti-social and criminal behaviour that had been witnessed first-hand by residents and business owners. He added that the additional 5 years proposed in the report was ‘worrying’, and felt the service should not continue whilst the review was taking place. The action outlined in the appended scrutiny report demonstrated the need for urgent action, and it was requested that the Society be offered a role in the proposed review.
- 98.4 The Chair provided the following response:

“Thank you for your deputation and for highlighting your concerns about the West Pier Project. The service was recently redesigned with the model of support developed in collaboration with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The project separately accommodates 25 people in one part of the service and 16 people in another. The size of the hostel is by far not the largest in the city and personalised models of support are achievable in services of this size.

The Council believes that the service at West Pier Project is fit for purpose and providing a good level of support. While accepting that the premises is not ‘purpose built’, staff work with colleagues in our Health & Safety team and with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, to ensure that risk management and fire safety measures meet with current standards.

The Council work closely with colleagues in Sussex Police to manage any issues related to misuse of illegal drugs. Sussex Police are fully aware of the service’s Harm

Reduction policy and the West Pier Project team have been trained to operate within the law and best practice in this approach.

We welcome the Regency Square Area Society's offer to work with us to ensure that Antisocial Behaviour is managed and minimised and in the sharing of information from hoteliers with the Council. This will help inform any review undertaken of West Pier which may be agreed, as detailed in the Hostels update report we are considering today."

- 98.5 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee agree to note the deputation.
- 98.6 The Chair noted there was a petition associated with this item from Councillor A. Kitcat.
- 98.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee agree to note the petition.
- 98.8 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Adult Services in relation to Hostels and Homeless Provision. The report highlighted that Housing Related Support contracts for homelessness were due to end on 31 March 2015, and, as part of the plan to re-commission services, 2015/16 would be a transitional year with multiple service reviews and phased retendering processes. This would include: street outreach for people rough sleeping; hostel accommodation and floating support services. The three Council run hostel services were: Glenwood Lodge Project (GLP); New Steine Mews (NSM) and West Pier Project (WPP). GLP and WPP were leased buildings and the leases were due to expire in April and May 2015.
- 98.9 Councillor Randall noted that he agreed with some of the points raised in the deputation about the quality of the service provision at the WPP, but noted that the situation was very difficult in terms of the complexity of problems service users had. Agencies in the city worked with approximately 150 people in the street population, and he felt the city should be proud of the service offered to the homeless. Councillor Randall welcomed the review and the proposed increase in partnership working, and felt that there was value to be added by involving health partners.
- 98.10 Councillor G. Theobald stated he was disappointed that this matter had not been looked into earlier – given the uplift within the lease, and he queried if the Council's asset portfolio was being properly reviewed. He stated his preference would be to look at a three year break clause to prevent the current unsuitable arrangements continuing for another five years. He also stated that he welcomed the reference in the report to involvement from the independent sector. In response the Executive Director explained that it was her understanding a lease of less than 5 years would incur greater costs, and there would also be options to look at using the site differently if the service was moved out as result of the review work.
- 98.11 Councillor Morgan stated that he had met with Mr Cameron and shared his concerns; he added that hostel provision in the city should not be discouraging people from using the service. He noted there had been similar problems with other facilities in the past which had been improved through better management. In response to a query the intention of wording of recommendation 2.2 in the report was clarified.

98.12 In response to Councillor Shanks the Executive Director explained that the review process would take some months, and this would then be followed by a procurement exercise.

98.13 Councillor Randall made reference to the facility that Councillor Morgan had highlighted and stated that it worked very well, and was an example of good practice.

98.14 The Chair then put the recommendations to the vote.

98.15 **RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the Committee note the contents of the report and agree to continue to operate in-house hostels, while the whole system review of the supported housing Integrated Support Pathway is undertaken and future service delivery options are developed.
- (2) That the Committee agree in principle to entering into leases for Glenwood Lodge Project and West Pier Project from April / May 2015, with break clauses not exceeding five years.
- (3) That the Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Services to negotiate and enter into new leases with premises' landlords following consultation with the Executive Directors of Environment, Development & Housing and Finance & Resources and the Monitoring Officer.

**99 TRAFFIC SIGNAL & CONTROL EQUIPMENT CONTRACT**

99.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee:

- (1) Approves the procurement of a framework agreement for the maintenance, installation and supply of traffic signal and associated control equipment for a term of 4 years.
- (2) Grants delegated authority to the Executive Director Environment Development and Housing -
  - (i) to carry out the procurement of the framework agreement referred to in 2.1 above including the award and letting of the framework agreement; and
  - (ii) to enter into any subsequent call-off contracts to the framework agreement referred to in 2.1 above should he/she consider it appropriate at the relevant time.

**100 ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT 2014**

100.1 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee approve the continued use of covert surveillance an enforcement tool to prevent and detect crime and disorder investigated by its officers, providing the activity is in line with the Council's Policy and Guidance and the necessity and proportionality rules are stringently applied.

- (2) That the Committee note the surveillance activity undertaken by the authority since the report to Committee in December 2013 as set out in Appendix 2.
- (3) That the Committee approve the continued use of the Policy and Guidance document as set out in Appendix 3.

**101 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL**

101.1 **RESOLVED** – That the following items be referred to the Council meeting on 11 December 2014 for information:

Item 96 - 2014-15 – 6 Month Performance Update.

The meeting concluded at 5.59pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of