

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
POLICY & RESOURCES (RECOVERY) SUB-COMMITTEE

4.00pm 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mac Cafferty (Chair) Allcock, Druitt, Miller and Yates

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

17 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

17.1 Councillors Allcock and Druitt declared that they were attending the meeting as substitutes for Councillors Platts and Gibson respectively.

(b) Declarations of Interests

17.2 There were no declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda.

(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

17.3 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items appearing in part two of the agenda.

18 MINUTES

18.1 The minutes of the last meetin held on the 24 June were approved as a correct record.

19 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

19.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

This is the third meeting of the Recovery Sub-Committee and I hope we can see how the city is working on an economic recovery and tackling the issues caused by the pandemic.

We have a reports to consider today on the recovery programme, emergency food and essential supplies.

I am also mindful that there are reports listed at items 24 and 25 concerning the proposed acquisition of a vacant building to enable a company to offer additional employment opportunities in the city. However, having consulted with the Opposition Spokespersons, I have decided to withdraw the reports from today's meeting and for them to be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on the 8th October to allow time for further discussions to take place.

One of the important items we will discuss talks about the amazing efforts of so many organisations in the city brought to ensure food kept being distributed to the most needy in our city. And how we have been successful winning more government funding to continue the work. Next week I will be visiting the council-run food hub which serves 30 households and, in a few weeks, Fareshare. But there has been an enormous amount of work done especially by the relevant council officials and the fantastic Food Partnership. We are lucky to have such an amazing organisation as the partnership and I would like to thank them for their unstinting work throughout the crisis and especially the work of Vic Borrill and Emily O'Brien.

We will have seen with great concern the local lockdowns being imposed in areas across the United Kingdom, and indeed the resurgence of the pandemic around the world. As schools reopened to all pupils over the past two weeks, I remain acutely aware that the challenges associated with the pandemic are far from over. Schools, colleges, nurseries and childminders across our city have worked hard to ensure effective infection control measures are in place to help reduce the risks posed by Covid-19. But the risks are still with us: and as our city continues to manage the pandemic, guidelines to combat the virus, including hand washing and social distancing, are more vital than ever. What happens outside school is as important as what takes place inside, so we must all double our efforts to prevent infection in the community which will help our whole city to recover. Although our figures are thankfully still low, the experience of Bolton should teach us that the pandemic can grow frighteningly quickly- in just two weeks the rate there grew from just 15 people per 100,000, it's now 120 people per 100,000 infected.

We are continuing to ask government for greater flexibility to target support to local businesses and I continue to work across our region for as much cooperation to help bring investment to the city and keep us focused on the important work on recovery. There was brilliant news this week for the Royal Pavilion as the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £235,000 to support the re-opening and a new Chief Executive has been announced for the new Trust.

Keep Britain Tidy is organising the Great British September Clean, running from 11 to 27 September. This is a national event, and this year we want to make Brighton and Hove's contribution stronger than ever.

As part of the campaign, the council will therefore be launching its own initiative by carrying out a series of 'deep cleans' in parts of the city centre with high footfall. This means we will be removing graffiti from public property, jet washing paved areas and cleaning bins in key city centre streets. I wrote in the Argus about the tidy up two weeks ago and will be writing further about this asking Councillors and staff to play their part too.

We are also inviting residents to 'Dust Up Their Door Step' and tidy up in their own neighbourhoods. There are already a number of residents, community groups and the Tourism Alliance who have confirmed they will be organising deep clean activities in their local area, on the beach or in the city centre during Keep Britain Tidy fortnight.

So, with all of this activity going on, we are now reaching out to many organisations in the city to ask them to consider what kind of contribution they are able to make towards the Great British September Clean in our city. I have written to many companies and organisations in the city over the last few days to ask them to help out. I want our city to be successful and confident, especially as we take the important steps to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and cleaning up our city is an essential part of that.

Today is 999 Day, when we show our huge gratitude & support for all those working in emergency services. SECoast Ambulance service, East Sussex Fire and rescue service, Sussex police, or the Coastguard, they work tirelessly- often with the council- to keep our city's communities safe. Thank you to them.

20 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

20.1 The Cahir noted that there were no public items for the current meeting.

21 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

21.1 The Chair noted that there were items raised by Members for the current meeting.

22 COVID-19 RECOVERY & RENEWAL PROGRAMME - UPDATE

22.1 The Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture introduced the report which provided an update on the progress of the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Programme. He noted that due to the fast-moving nature of the pandemic aspects of the report may have been superseded by events by the time of the sub-committee's meeting.

22.2 The Sub-Committee welcomed the report and raised queries in relation to:

- The closure of the testing centre at the Amex;
- The need for information in relation to the 'R' number;
- The lack of a financial update, albeit a report had been considered by the P&R Committee;
- Support for Small Businesses

22.3 The Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture stated that officers were looking at potential sites for walk-in test centres within the city. These would need to be approved by the service that would manage the site and, in the meantime, a temporary walk-in unit was based at the Withdean Stadium. He noted that the Health & Wellbeing Board would receive regular reports on the Local Outreach Control Plan which would take account of the 'R' number. He also noted that the re-start for local businesses had begun well and access to support was being made available e.g. bids to the Arts Council and cases would be looked at on an individual basis.

- 22.4 The Acting Chief Finance Officer stated that he would provide a copy of the TBM 4 report that could be accompany the minutes so that Members and interested parties had access to the information. He noted that the business rate relief funding by Government had been distributed and that anything above that would have to be met by the Council and thereby add to its own financial position/deficit. He stated that offers of support such as deferred payments had been made, but there was a need to be mindful of not stacking up debts.
- 22.5 The Chair noted the comments and put the recommendation to note the report to vote.
- 22.6 **RESOLVED:** That the update report be noted.

23 LOCAL AUTHORITY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR FOOD AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- 23.1 The Acting Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which detailed the allocation of £0.321m by the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the council to use to assist those struggling to afford food and other essentials. He noted that paragraph 3.4 of the report outlined the proposed distribution of the funding to organisations across the city.
- 23.2 The Sub-Committee welcomed the report and the positive approach taken by officers to work with the voluntary sector to ensure that food and other essentials could reach those in need. Members queried whether the £71k identified for the Local Discretionary Fund was sufficient.
- 23.3 The Revenue & Benefits Manager stated that there was £180k in the Fund for the year and the £71k would provide flexibility for any emerging needs/projects not yet identified and an ability to respond quickly.
- 23.4 The Cahir noted the comments and wished to record the Sub-Committee thanks to the officers for the work undertaken to date and put the recommendation to the vote.
- 23.5 **RESOLVED:** That the proposal for the distribution of the Local Authority Emergency Assistance grant funding as shown at paragraph 3.4 of the report be agreed.

24 ACQUISITION AND LEASEBACK OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AT MOULSECOOMB WAY

- 24.1 **Note:** The item was withdrawn.

PART TWO SUMMARY

25 ACQUISITION AND LEASEBACK OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AT MOULSECOOMB WAY - EXEMPT CATEGORY 3

Note: The item was withdrawn.

26 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 26.1 **RESOLVED:** That the item contained in part two of the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 5.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of