

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

11.00am 14 JULY 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Davis (Opposition Spokesperson – Labour)

PART ONE

12. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

12a Declarations of Interests

12.1 There were none.

12b Exclusion of Press and Public

12.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), the Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Tourism considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press or public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100(I) of the Act).

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

13. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

13.1 There were none.

14. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

14.1 **RESOLVED** – That item 21 be reserved for discussion.

15. PETITIONS

15.1 There were none.

16. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

16.1 There were none.

17. DEPUTATIONS

17.1 There were none.

18. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

18.1 There were none.

19. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

19.1 There were none.

20. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

20.1 There were none.

21. THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OWNED GOLF COURSES AT HOLLINGBURY AND WATERHALL

21.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Environment which set out the options for the future management of the two council owned municipal golf courses at Hollingbury and Waterhall and sought Cabinet Member approval to pursue option 3 as detailed in the report (for copy see minute book). Option 3 recommended the appointment of a management company to manage both courses on behalf of the council. Consultation had taken place with staff affected by the potential change in management arrangements including greenkeepers and golf assistants. In addition, consultation was ongoing with the golf professional at Hollingbury and with representatives of the two clubs. Consultation had also taken place with the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a report to the meeting on 2 July 2009.

21.2 The Head of Sport & Leisure reported that the purpose of the proposals was to secure the long term future of both public golf courses. The aim was to attract investment and improve the overall service provision. At the moment there were fragmented arrangements. The proposal was to have an operator who had one overall arrangement.

21.3 The Head of Sport & Leisure explained that the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee had noted that the intention of the proposal was to try and simplify arrangements at the clubs. They had asked for details about levels of usage. With regard to Season Ticket Holders, in 2007 there were 747 ticket holders. In 2008 there were 693. With regard to Green Fee Rounds, there were 11,524 in 2007 and 10312 in 2008. The Scrutiny Committee had noted that integrated management arrangements were needed to sort out this decline. They had asked if it was the intention for the external operator to work in partnership with the council. It was the desire of the Scrutiny Committee to have more junior and

women members. They considered that there should be better marketing of the golf courses and better promotion of the service. The Scrutiny Committee had asked about the possibility of a third sector partner or leisure trust operating the courses.

- 21.4 With regard to the accommodation on the courses, the Principal Solicitor reported that a colleague was investigating the position of occupancy on the golf courses. This could be explained in more detail if the meeting moved into confidential session.
- 21.5 The Head of Sport & Leisure explained that the staff currently employed on the courses would be protected by TUPE regulations (The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations).
- 21.6 The Cabinet Member asked about the difference between a company and a trust. The Head of Sport & Leisure replied that a trust could make savings on rate relief. Councillor Davis commented that there were a number of successful trusts in operation. Greenwich was one such example. She hoped this option could be explored further and that leisure trusts could be encouraged to make a bid. The Head of Sport & Leisure replied that Greenwich and other leisure trusts were primarily managing sport centres but he was aware that a couple of golf courses in Kent were managed by a Leisure Trust. Golf courses operated in a specialist market. By going out to tender it would be interesting to see if a Trust made a bid.
- 21.7 Councillor Davis stressed that the views of the Scrutiny Committee had been cross party. The golf courses were a big asset for the City. They were large green spaces and needed investment. The scrutiny members would have liked to have seen more options explored for the courses. There was no evidence that anyone had thought how to use these two green spaces and market them better. They should be as open and accessible to the local population as possible. Councillor Davis expressed surprise that the notes from the Scrutiny Committee had not been made available for the Cabinet Member Meeting. Concern had been expressed about staff and the people living on site. She hoped that the suggestion of a not for profit trust would be explored. The emphasis on partnership should be made stronger. Finally, Councillor Davis stated that she would like to see the matter referred back to scrutiny for further discussion.
- 21.8 The Head of Sport and Leisure replied that he would be happy to see if he could draw the tendering process to the attention of the main leisure trusts and not for profit operators. The Head of Service Improvement & Review stated that there was nothing to stop officers encouraging leisure trusts and not for profit operators from tendering. It would be important to fully consider the specification for the tender and include matters such as marketing.
- 21.9 The Principal Solicitor suggested that option 3 be amended to state – Appoint a management company or leisure trust to manage both courses on behalf of the council. He suggested there could be an opportunity for scrutiny to have a report on the evaluation process before going to Cabinet. The Head of Service Improvement & Review informed the Cabinet Member that the tenders were scheduled to be evaluated by 16 November 2009. There could therefore be a

report to the Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2009. Invitations for tender would be sent out by 21 September 2009.

21.10 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That approval is given for the Council to prepare tender documents and carry out a procurement process based on option 3 of the report as amended below, in accordance with the timescales set out in paragraph 5.1.

Option 3 to read “Appoint a management company or leisure trust to manage both courses on behalf of the council.” It is further agreed that the officers shall actively encourage leisure trusts as well as management companies to bid for the management of the golf courses to be operated in partnership with the City Council.

- (2) It is agreed that the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have the opportunity of receiving further updates at their meetings on 7 October and 19 November 2009.

The meeting concluded at 11.53am

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of