

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 23 JANUARY 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chair); Sykes (Deputy Chair), Cobb, Gilbey, Hawtree, Janio Jones and Deane

PART ONE

34. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

34a Declarations of Substitutes

Councillor Deane was substituting for Councillor Littman.

34b Declarations of Interests

There were none.

34c Declaration of Party Whip

There were none.

34d Exclusion of Press and Public

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.

35. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2011

35.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

36. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

36.1 The Chair Councillor Warren Morgan welcomed everyone to the meeting. To keep the meeting within a reasonable time, he asked that discussion be kept to around half an hour for each item.

**37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM
COUNCIL/LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

37.1 There were none.

38. TAXI LICENSING AND THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE OFFICE

38.1 The Head of Regulatory Services Tim Nichols introduced the report on Taxi Licensing and the Hackney Carriage Office.

38.2 Regulation of Taxis was largely out of date and the government would be consulting on draft legislation this year, with a draft Bill expected in late 2013.

Some key provisions of the Equality Act 2010 such as taxi access and control of taxi numbers did not yet have commencement dates.

38.3 There had been significant developments since the request for scrutiny was considered by ECSOSC in September. Licensing Committee in November had: reviewed the terms of reference of the Taxi Forum (the Fed Centre for Independent Living was a formal member of the Forum); agreed additions to the Blue Book, that gave guidance to drivers on providing services to people with disabilities, copies of which were available to Councillors on request.; and commissioned a survey of taxi provision compared with other authorities. There was now a 'shadow' list of designated wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) and officers were trying to achieve the right proportion of WAVs, he said.

38.4 Chair of Licensing Committee Councillor Lizzie Deane highlighted some of the challenges around gaps in the law and explained that drivers are self employed. She told the Committee that the Taxi Forum held regular meetings that were well attended and its Members included drivers, union reps and the Fed Centre for Independent Living. She said there was a lot of goodwill to work well in partnership.

38.5 Councillor Deane, the Head of Regulatory Services and the Hackney Carriage Officer answered questions on the Local Government Ombudsman 2011 decision not to investigate a complaint; how WAVs are designated and allocated (in view of a wide range of saloons and other vehicles, plus a wide range of disabilities); longer waiting times for users of WAVs; the role of the taxi driver in handling wheelchairs; driver training, especially covering the change from saloon to WAV; and estimating the level and proportion of use of accessible taxis.

38.6 Regarding risk assessments, drivers are self-employed and have a duty to operate safely. Training is provided by two local providers, the meeting heard.

38.7 Geraldine Des Moulins of the Federation of Disabled People said there were concerns about the types of accessible vehicles, and the voice of the FDP had been 'drowned' for years. There were difficulties for disabled people in accessing taxis in some out of town areas and at

some times of day eg during school runs. There should be more consultation with stakeholders; more benchmarking; better information on numbers of drivers trained and on the content of learning modules to ensure safe transfer and travelling, she said.

38.8 Geraldine Des Moulins said other local authorities provided better taxi services for disabled people despite the legal situation so research on best practice elsewhere would be invaluable to be applied in Brighton & Hove, she said. Asked about positive experience from elsewhere, Geraldine Des Moulins gave Bath and London as examples.

38.9 Councillor Cobb said there had been a lot of consultation and the Taxi Forum worked well. Driver training and equalities work was continuing and officers worked pro-actively.

38.10 After further discussion and a vote Members did not agree to a scrutiny review.

38.11 **RESOLVED:** That the matter be submitted to the Licensing Committee to continue to develop taxi licensing policy to improve services for disabled passengers.

39. WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

39.1 The Head of Strategy and Projects introduced the report on the Waste Management Strategy Review. The 8 December Cabinet had given permission to consult on the revised Strategy.

39.2 The main aims were to increase the recycling rate of dry recyclables and to consider work on food waste which represented around one third of waste thrown away. Recycling of dry materials could potentially be increased through existing services; officers were continuing to look at other dry recyclables from the point of view of demand for materials and facilities. A waste audit was in progress.

39.3 Regarding food waste, evidence appeared to show that collecting food waste separately results in waste minimisation and an increase in dry recycling rates. An updated Life Cycle Analysis based on local data found marginal benefits.

39.4 The Chair Councillor Warren Morgan queried the possible changes in markets for recyclables, the potential for tetrapak kerbside recycling, the main issues for industrial waste in Brighton & Hove and the timeframe for works at Brighton Household Waste Recycling Site.

39.5 The Head of Strategy and Projects said the current recycling rate was approximately 27% – 29%. He outlined the current collections and destinations of recyclables and some potential options for the future such as aluminium foil and various plastics. Members were interested to know the breakdown of the estimated 37% recycling rate that would be achieved if everyone recycled all the materials for which a kerbside collection service already existed, and the extent to which this would be practicable.

39.6 Some Members questioned the justification for a food waste collection trial in the 'suburbs,' that would cost around £500k and could unduly disrupt waste and recycling

collection rounds and residents' routines - because households here were more likely to be able to compost waste food than in 'central' areas of the City.

39.7 The Head of Strategy and Projects set the context for work on food waste, starting with the 2010 Waste Strategy including home composting and initiatives by the Food Partnership. He gave reasons why food waste collections had been modelled only for 'suburban' areas; for instance space for food waste containers was more limited and communications with residents to encourage participation were more difficult in 'central' areas where there were more HMOs.

39.8 He also clarified that commercial and industrial waste collection by the council had not been considered in detail though it might be feasible from 2013 when the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme was due to be scrapped, with potential demand particularly from smaller businesses in central areas of the City. Overall, household waste comprised only a small part of the total waste produced he said.

39.9 Councillor Ollie Sykes, Deputy Chair asked about the validity of the life cycle analysis methodology. Anaerobic Digestion had additional economic and environmental benefits that had not been modelled, he said. It was 'the way forward' and more sustainable. This was a good start in his view.

39.10 Answering a question the Head of Strategy and Projects said current research had cost £26k.

39.11 Members noted an apparent reduction in overall waste arisings that was possibly due to the economic downturn and initiatives such as work with the Food Partnership.

39.12 There was discussion on food waste schemes elsewhere, health and safety and regulation of food waste processing.

39.13 Some Members felt that more could be done to encourage composting including for allotments, and reduce overpackaging of goods.

39.14 RESOLVED: That comments be referred to the Executive.

40. EAST SUSSEX, SOUTH DOWNS AND BRIGHTON & HOVE WASTE AND MINERALS PLAN

40.1 The Head of Planning Strategy Rob Fraser introduced the report together with East Sussex County Council Head of Planning Tony Cook. The Waste and Minerals Plan was being developed jointly between the three separate waste planning authorities and was due to be discussed at full council on 26 January. This Plan was not site specific; it would be the next stage that would bring forward areas of search.

40.2 Mr Cook referred to a correction at paragraph 3.5; the consultation period had been changed following legal advice. Consultation was now from 24 February to 10 April 2012.

40.3 Councillor Warren Morgan the Committee Chair asked whether local authority collection of commercial refuse or recycling could significantly affect landfill disposal (paragraph 3.3 refers).

40.4 Members asked questions on the local sourcing of clay bricks and the use of local materials in construction projects.

40.5 Asked about Hangleton Bottom and Hollingdean Depot, the Head of Planning Strategy confirmed there were no current development proposals although the allocations in WLP8 policy were saved on the basis that they would potentially be viable for waste facilities. This would be reconsidered by the sites allocation document. Brighton & Hove was responsible to deal with its own waste as far as possible.

40.6 **RESOLVED** that comments be referred to the Executive.

41. CITYWIDE PARKING REVIEW

41.1 The Project Manager Owen McElroy gave the Committee a progress report on the Citywide Parking Review including current and planned contacts with stakeholders such as adjoining authorities, ward councillors, local action teams and residents' associations.

41.2 The Project Manager said cashless/mobile phone transactions were being considered. He clarified that parking charge 'holidays' meant bank holidays and one or two days before Christmas, rather than longer periods. Tickets were not transferable between tariff bands but it was legal to transfer a ticket between different areas if they were within the same band and this was not widely known.

41.3 Members asked questions on permits for vehicles that were both for trade and residential use, transferring tickets between vehicles, visitor parking, straight-line distance measurements for travel to work; and introducing 'one hour' parking periods where currently there are only 30 minutes or two hours. Members also discussed parking on verges/pavements; damage to trees from on-road parking and the use of cars for travel whilst at work.

41.4 The Project Manager noted that some of the survey data was up to 10 years old, so not to be heavily relied upon. He said that suggestions were being considered by a working group. All Ward Councillors were asked to encourage local groups to be involved in the review.

41.5 The Chair Councillor Warren Morgan said it was important that parking restrictions were clear.

41.6 He thanked officers for their on-going work on the consultation and their involvement in the scrutiny workshops on the citywide parking review.

41.7 **RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

42. ECSOSC WORK PLAN

42.1 Members noted the Committee Work Plan.

43. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR CABINET MEMBER MEETING

43.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.05pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of