

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2.00pm 21 OCTOBER 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mitchell (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Janio (Deputy Chair), Brown, Davey, Kennedy, K Norman, Simson, Morgan and Bowden

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

7. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

7.1 Councillor Gill Mitchell Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

7. 1a Declarations of Substitutes

Councillor Bowden was substituting for Councillor Ania Kitcat.

Councillor Ian Davey was substituting for Councillor Alex Phillips.

Councillor Warren Morgan was substituting for Councillor Chaun Wilson.

7.1b Declarations of Interests

There were none.

7.1c Declaration of Party Whip

There were none.

7.1d 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.

8. MINUTES

8.1 Councillor Amy Kennedy pointed out that under item 4, the scrutiny report on provision of publicly accessible toilets; at minute 4.5 'and community infrastructure levy' should be added.

8.2 Subject the amendment above, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July were agreed and signed by the Chair.

9. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

9.1 The Chair said this was a short agenda as much new work had been agreed at the previous meeting. Scrutiny resources were being stretched but it was important to carry out thorough and balanced reviews.

9.2 OSC Deputy Chair Councillor Tony Janio stated that a member of the Conservative Group, not the Labour Group, ought to take the position of OSC Chair.

10. BUDGET SCRUTINY (2014-15)

10.1 Giles Rossington, Acting Head of Scrutiny, introduced the report. The report proposed a Budget Scrutiny process focusing on a high-level overview of how the budget strategy links with strategic thinking (as detailed in the Corporate Plan). It was also proposed that there should be two additional panel meetings focusing on key aspects of the budget (as set out on paragraphs 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 of the report).

10.2 Councillor Mitchell asked OSC Members for their suggestions on particular issues that they would like to see scrutinised.

10.3 Members made several suggestions for scrutiny, including:

- Public Health and "Health & Wellbeing" budgets – particularly in terms of how these were cross-cutting issues (e.g. that PH could potentially support a wide range of services), but also in terms of unanticipated costs (it was suggested that the Council might be responsible for un-budgeted expenses in terms of some prescription charges)
- Community commissioning/Community Grants/Support for the 3rd sector
- A focus on income generation in addition to a focus on savings plans.

10.4 Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis, the Council's Monitoring Officer and Head of Law, told members that the Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) supported the proposed budget scrutiny process, particularly in terms of the focus on outcomes rather than looking in detail at every service.

10.5 Members also noted that budget scrutiny needed to recognise that budget setting is cross-cutting, meaning that a department by department approach to scrutiny would likely be inadequate. Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis agreed, pointing out that ELT had approached its work by thinking about outcomes, which necessarily involves cutting across departmental boundaries.

10.6 Mr Ghebre-Ghiorghis averred that his role, and that of other ELT members, was to support the budget scrutiny process and that he was happy to provide suggestions, advice and feedback.

10.7 Head of Finance James Hengeveld described the external budget consultation process. This includes 3,000 questionnaires to randomly-selected residents; an on-line consultation including a 'setting our budget' tool; the cross-party internal budget review group; consultation with the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum; and consultation with businesses.

10.8 Brian Doughty, Head of ASC Adults Assessment, told members that contrary to an assertion that ASC had failed to realise previously agreed budget savings, ASC had in fact recorded an under spend in the last financial year. Mr Doughty also told members that he welcomed budget scrutiny focusing on ASC planning – this was necessary given the relative size of the ASC budget.

10.9 Members agreed that CVSF should again be invited to take part in budget scrutiny as a co-optee. The scrutiny panel members should be free to determine whether additional co-optees were required.

10.10 In response to a question on the ultimate purpose of the budget scrutiny process, Mr Rossington told the committee that the intention, as in previous years, was to bring cross-party members together in a non-party political environment to offer constructive comments on the 14/15 budget plans. The Budget Scrutiny Panel will report to 27 January 2014 OSC for endorsement and an approved report will be referred to decision-makers in order to inform the drafting of the budget report to be presented at 13 February 2014 Policy & Resources Committee.

10.13 **RESOLVED**

1) That the proposed format for budget scrutiny be agreed as detailed in Part 3.

2) That the budget scrutiny panel should agree topics for the 2nd and 3rd meetings of the 2014-2015 budget scrutiny process taking into account the following OSC members suggestions:

Income streams

Public Health and 'Health & Wellbeing' services (including any unexpected negative impact of prescription charges)

Services with a history of unachieved savings (if such services exist)

High spending services

Welfare reform – and mitigatory steps

Community commissioning/community grants/3rd sector support

11. **OSC DRAFT WORK PLAN/SCRUTINY UPDATE**

11.1 The Acting Head of Scrutiny Giles Rossington gave an update on the scrutiny panels in progress and answered questions.

11.2 An officer group on the seafront infrastructure had now been established and the role of scrutiny was being developed in symbiosis with this group.

11.3 Councillor Geoffrey Bowden, Chair of the Party Houses Scrutiny Panel said a scoping report was being taken to Queen's Park and other Local Action Teams and a blog was about to start. It is thought there are around 300 such enterprises involved that can 'blight' people's lives. Residents and residents associations would be asked their views.

11.4 The Committee heard that the new Director of Children's' Services had asked the Youth Justice Scrutiny Panel to consider some additional national issues. The scope of the panel has therefore been revised.

11.5 The Social Value Scrutiny Panel – to start early 2014 - has been timed to dovetail with timetables of work being done by the Clinical Commissioning Group, Communities and Equality Team and Procurement.

11.6 Realistically, the findings of the Adults Future Care service delivery models Scrutiny Panel were likely to impact on the 2015 – 2016 budget rather than the 2014-2015 budget.

11.7 Regarding action on the Adults with Autism Scrutiny Panel Giles Rossington said there had been a report to Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and another report would be presented to the November Health and Wellbeing Board on implementing the Strategy for Adults with Autism. This was a 3-year implementation plan and some of the scrutiny recommended actions had been promised for years 2 and 3.

11.8 The Chair Councillor Gill Mitchell said more monitoring reports of previous scrutiny reviews, would be included in future OSC agendas.

The meeting concluded at 2.50pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of