

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
STRATEGY, FINANCE & CITY REGENERATION COMMITTEE

4.00pm 22 JUNE 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sankey (Chair) Taylor (Deputy Chair), Shanks (Opposition Spokesperson), Cattell, McNair, Muten, Robins, Rowkins, Williams and Winder (Substitute)

Also present: Dr Anusree Biswas Sasidharan (Standing Attendee)

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Winder substituted for Councillor Pumm.

(b) Declarations of Interest

1.2 There none for this meeting.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

1.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Part Two items of the agenda.

2 POLICY & RESOURCES URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

2.1 The Chair requested the committee to note the decisions taken the Policy & Resources Urgency Sub Committee held on 30 March 2023.

2.2 The committee agreed.

RESOLVED:

2.1 To receive the minutes extract and note the decisions taken by the Policy & Resources Urgency Sub-Committee held on 30 March 2023.

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

4 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 The chair addressed the committee and stated the following: I am delighted to leading this new administration and honoured that the city has given us a clear mandate to lead and implement our manifesto to build a better Brighton and Hove.

I would like to extend our thanks to all Brighton and Hove council staff for their warm welcome, support and work we have already started on our shared endeavours and in particular in preparing for this committee I would like to thank Will Tuckley, Donna Chisholm, Nigel Manvell, Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis, Deb Austin, Rima Desai and Angela. I would like to welcome Dr Anusree Biswas Sasidharan who is joining us online.

I would also like to record that today is Windrush day, a hugely proud day in our nation's history when HMS Windrush docked in Tilbury and welcomed a pioneering generation of black Britain's who answered the call. In keeping with the name of our committee they regenerated post war Britain and rebuilt its economy. It is the greatest scandals of our time that Windrush survivors are left destitute by the soulless government. I would like to pay particular tribute Brighton resident Burt Williams MBE who faithfully collected the black history of Brighton and Hove, and to all our community with Windrush roots.

This committee has been renamed to make clear our laser focus on taking a strategic approach to council functions, upholding financial probity and re-generating this place in a way that is in keeping with our city's unique cultural heritage flamboyant character and forward looking vision.

Today's agenda covers finance, corporate parenting, Kingsway to the sea and eco towns funding. With regards to finance, this committee will receive a targeted budget monitoring report which details the final outturn position 2022/23 financial year. Today's report confirms that Brighton and Hove City Council has an overspend of over £3m, the first time the council has overspent in recent memory. This underlines the seriousness of the financial position faced by Brighton and Hove City Council. That overspend will need to be paid back to the working balance over the next three years, which only adds to the difficulty of this administration to balance the books during our term in office. We have agreed with officers that our budget setting process for the next financial year should start right away, and we will work with residents, trade unions, officers and council workers to try and find ways to close the budget gap, while maintaining vital frontline services and being ambitious for our city.

On corporate parenting, today we receive a report and as well as chairing this committee I am co-chair of the corporate parenting board which has already met earlier this month. Since this committee last met there has been a significant legal development with the family court confirming that unaccompanied asylum seeking children put by the Home Office into hotels are potentially children in need and fall within the legal responsibility of local authorities. This accords with what the Labour group have said all along, and the basis of our emergency council meeting in March 2023. We are

desperately worried about the 50 people who remain missing from the last time the Home Office housed unaccompanied children in this city, including 11 children under 18 years old, and we continue to co-operate with Sussex Police and the national police in efforts to find these children. This administration is now using every means possible to stop this unlawful and shameful practice and one of our first acts was to put the Home Office on notice that we consider their actions unlawful. This week we have been informed that a hotel is being got ready to receive more unaccompanied asylum seeking children, against our views and with almost no notice, because of the complete failure on the part of the government to make the arrangements necessary to care for these children in appropriate settings. There is now the prospect of immediate litigation, so I have been advised not to say too much, but what I can say is that we are seeking to stop this from happening and we are committed to ensuring that any asylum seeking child in this city gets the services they are entitled to and deserve.

The next item on our agenda is Kingsway to the Sea, and we will be discussing our exciting new park on Hove seafront. Due to inflationary pressure and Brexit shortages the project is now over budget, and we are asking the committee how to proceed. Officers have made a number of suggestions on how to come in on budget, but the purpose of today's discussions is not to make any final decisions on particular facilities and will continue source additional funding options. As a listening administration we have asked residents to contact us with their views on facilities and we will take all these into account. Residents and community groups have inspired this project and will continue to help us to define its purpose.

Lastly, we be discussing eco towns funding and a proposal for £460,000 of grant funding to be released to support climate change and biodiversity projects in the Shoreham harbour regeneration area. The exiting redevelopment of Shoreham harbour will provide real benefits to the local community and economy. We are resolutely committed to making Brighton and Hove a carbon neutral city by 2030. Projects that address climate change and biodiversity will be prioritised for this funding, helping to create a Shoreham harbour corridor from east to west through the regeneration area.

5 CALL OVER

5.1 All the agenda items were called for discussion by the committee.

6 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

6.1 There was no public involvement for this meeting.

7 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

7.1 There were no items referred from Full Council for this meeting.

8 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

8.1 There was no Member involvement for this meeting.

9 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS: STRATEGY, FINANCE & CITY REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- 9.1 The Executive Director Governance People & Resources introduced the report to the committee.
- 9.2 Following questions the committee Members were informed that extraordinary, extra and additional committees were allowed and should be attended by all committee Members. Reports can come late, however, five working days would be the protocol, but not always possible. The meetings are covered by the council constitution and the Local Government Act 1972. Should a review of the constitution be undertaken, then the process can be looked at.

Vote

- 9.3 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed unanimously to agree the recommendations.

9.4 **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the Committee's terms of reference, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be noted;
- 2.2 That the Committee approves the establishment of an Urgency Sub-Committee consisting of the Chair of the Committee and two other Members (nominated in accordance with the scheme for the allocation of seats for committees) to exercise its powers in relation to matters of urgency on which it is necessary to make a decision before the next ordinary meeting of the Committee;
- 2.3 That a Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee of Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee be established to deal with dismissal and grievance matters in accordance with the Council's constitution and HR Procedures.

10 UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

- 10.1 The Executive Director - Families Children & Learning introduced the report to the committee.
- 10.2 Following questions the committee were informed of the following: after recent court cases have had an impact, the council has a duty to 'children in need' and unaccompanied children in hotels will be assessed and transferred to care if required; virtual engagement has been welcomed by many and younger people have preferred as it is more accessible. Virtual will continue until a change is requested; the anti-racists practitioner looks at working with council staff and black/people of colour. Weekly drop-ins to talk with the anti-racists group are continuing; the corporate parenting board welcome all directors and recognise that housing is an important/key partner.

Vote

10.3 A vote was taken, and the committee agreed unanimously to agree the recommendations.

10.4 **RESOLVED:**

2.1 Approve the new Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board in line with the requirements in the Council's Constitution.

11 TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2022/23

11.1 The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report to the committee.

11.2 Following questions the committee Members were informed of the following: the working balance is the only budget available in the reserves and all reserves are committed; the net budget has not changed much since 2006/7; currently there is a high inflation period and therefore high risk, however these are taken into account; there has been no overspend since 2010, until now; 60% of grant process is retrieved from national government eventually; savings will be 3m out of working balance and paid back over 3 years; Orbis partnership is ongoing with some services like Human Resources and Business Operations. East Sussex withdrew from Orbis, and this has weakened the partnership, and lost the economy of scale. The different IT systems remove the potential to share.

11.3 A vote was taken, and by 9 to 1 abstention the committee agreed the recommendations.

11.4 **RESOLVED:**

2.1 That the Committee note that the provisional General Fund outturn position is an overspend of £3.020m and that this represents an improvement of £1.553m compared to the projected and planned resource position at Month 9 and taken into account when setting the 2023/24 budget.

2.2 That the Committee note the provisional outturn includes an underspend of £0.562m on the council's share of the NHS managed Section 75 services.

2.3 That the Committee approve General Fund carry forward requests totalling £7.912m as detailed in Appendix 5 and assumed within the provisional outturn.

2.4 That the Committee note the provisional outturn for the separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is a break-even position.

2.5 That the Committee note the provisional outturn position for the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant, which is an underspend of £0.368m.

2.6 That the Committee note the provisional outturn position on the Capital Programme which is an underspend variance of £2.661m.

2.7 That the Committee approve the capital budget variations and re-profiling requests set out in Appendix 7.

2.8 That the Committee approve the new capital schemes requested in Appendix 8.

2.9 That the Committee approve the creation of a 10-Year Lease Dilapidations Provision as set out in paragraph 9.10.

12 PROCEDURE FOR ALLOCATING SHOREHAM HARBOUR ECO-TOWNS FUNDING

12.1 The Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture introduced the report to the committee.

12.2 Following questions the committee Members were informed of the following: the committee are the decision makers and there is effective cross boundary working with Adur council; the community funding will be spent on sustainable projects in the joint area. The green corridor is on the Kingsway in South Portslade; the complicated scheme started in 2012, with funding being affected by the Pandemic; local community groups to submit representation to the council for inclusion.

Vote

12.3 A vote was taken, and the committee unanimously to agree the recommendations.

12.4 **RESOLVED:**

2.1 That Committee agrees the procedure set out in paragraph 3.7 to allocate £460k of Eco-towns capital funding across the Shoreham Harbour Area.

2.2 That Committee agrees to amend the July 2022 resolution to delegate authority to the Assistant Director for City Development and Regeneration to agree the detail of spend in consultation with the Chair of Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee.

13 KINGSWAY TO THE SEA

13.1 The Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture introduced the report to the committee.

13.2 Following questions the committee Members were informed of the following: the current omissions are indicative only. Ward councillors are in the Action Group and will move the scheme forward. Approval is required for the high level budget. Sponsorship is being looked at; the out door sports complex will involve a new bowls club and new toilets with a disability room, usable as a quite space. The café will be accessible. The toilets at Hove lagoon will be refurbished; all Ward councillors have been supportive, and Garry Peltzer-Dunn has been remembered at the King Alfred sports centre, however, naming a part of the scheme after the councillor is being looked at; there will be plenty of opportunity to look at public art as the council is talking to the community. Public art will be looked at in later in the funding process.

13.4 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

- 2.1 Approves the reduction in scope of the project to fit within the total budget outlined in paragraph 3.8 below and delegates authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture to take all steps necessary to re-commence the project.
- 2.2 Agrees that the total project budget has increased to £13.76m as set out in paragraph 3.8 below. Also agrees that there is a further opportunity to return to this committee in July 2023 if additional funding becomes available to deliver an increased scope.
- 2.3 Agrees that paragraph 3.13 is an indicative schedule of omissions from the project and that some items may be changed or substituted to reach the target budget figure.
- 2.4 Notes the target completion of the Levelling Up Fund spend by the 31st March 2024.
- 2.5 Notes that receipt of next and future payments from the Levelling up Fund is subject to their acceptance of a change request detailing the proposed omissions. A further report may be required to this Committee depending on the view from Government.

14 ITEMS REFERRED TO FULL COUNCIL

- 14.1 There were none from this meeting.

15 PART TWO

16 SCHOOLS' FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCUREMENT (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

- 16.1 The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report to the committee.
- 16.2 The committee were given answers to questions and discussed the report in closed session.

Vote

- 16.3 A vote was taken, and the committee unanimously agreed the recommendations.

17 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 17.1 The committee agreed that the information and decisions on the items listed in Part Two of the agenda should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 6.02pm

