

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

4.00PM 9 MARCH 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Oxley (Chairman), Simpson (Deputy Chairman), Brown, Elgood, Fallon-Khan, Mears, Mitchell, Randall, Simson and Taylor

PART ONE

69. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

69a Declaration of Substitutes

69a.1 There were none.

69b Declarations of Interest

69b.1 There were none.

69c Exclusion of Press and Public

69c.1 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act'), the Committee 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 business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information (as detailed in Section 100A(3) of the Act).

69c.2 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 87 onwards.

70. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

70.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 be approved as a correct record.

71. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 71.1 The Chairman welcomed a representative from Public Concern at Work and members of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the meeting.
- 71.2 The Chairman advised that officers had been in contact with Communities and Local Government (CLG) regarding the secondary legislation expected in relation to bye-laws under the Local Government Act and could report that the regulations bringing the new provisions into force would not be made this side of the General Election. He added that it was, however, reasonable to expect that regulations would be laid before Parliament later in the year, regardless of which Party was in power; therefore, officers would update the Committee on any developments.
- 71.3 The Chairman reported that following discussions amongst the membership of the Civic Awareness Commission and a subsequent discussion with the Chairman, Adam Trimmingham, work would begin on looking at giving the Commission 'working group' status whilst ensuring it continued to report its activities through the Committee. Group Leaders would be consulted with on any proposals and the status of the Commission would remain cross-party, with councillors or supporters of all Groups on the council being actively represented.

The Chairman explained that the Commission had decided to create three work streams:

1. To investigate ways in which civic awareness could be brought to the attention of people visiting Council offices and to schools.
2. To consider how best the historic assets of the Council, such as pictures and memorabilia, could be displayed in the Town Halls, Kings House and elsewhere.
3. The commissioning of a picture of Henry Allingham.

All of the work areas were continuing and the Committee would receive updates as work progressed.

72. CALLOVER

- 72.1 The Chairman explained that as guest speakers would be contributing to the meeting he intended to amend the agenda item order; Items 87 and 80 would be considered immediately following Item 78 before returning to the original agenda.
- 72.2 The Chairman advised that Item 84 would go forward to the Full Council meeting on 18 March, along with two other reports from the meeting, rather than the April Full Council meeting.
- 72.3 Councillor Taylor raised concerns that Members had not been informed earlier that Item 84 would be considered at the March Full Council meeting, particularly as he had made enquiries with Democratic Services about the issue.
- 72.4 The Chairman noted Councillor Taylor's concerns and explained that as two other reports from the meeting would be considered at the March Full Council meeting, it followed that Item 84 should not be held back.

72.5 **RESOLVED** – That all the items be reserved for discussion.

73. PETITIONS

73.1 There were none.

74. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

74.1 There were none.

75. DEPUTATIONS

75.1 There were none,

76. WRITTEN QUESTIONS, LETTERS AND NOTICES OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLORS

76.1 There were none.

77. WHISTLEBLOWING - PUBLIC CONCERN AT WORK

77.1 The Chairman welcomed Shonali Routray from Public Concern at Work (PCaW) to the meeting to make a presentation to the Committee.

77.2 Ms Routray explained that PCaW was an independent charity set up in 1993 to provide confidential legal advice to individuals in a work environment following several large scale health and safety disasters where staff had been scared to voice concerns or where their concerns had been lost in middle management. PCaW played a leading role in putting whistleblowing on the governance agenda and in developing legislation in the UK and abroad.

Ms Routray reported that one third of all calls received to the PCaW helpline came from the care and health sectors, with a large number of calls also received from the financial and education sectors.

The council had been subscribing to PCaW's basic package for organisations since 2005, which included helpline subscription, the compliance toolkit, promotional materials and either one hour's consultancy or a place at an expert whistleblowing training workshops.

Ms Routray explained that a whistleblowing policy was a deterrent in addition to being a tool for detecting malpractice. It would also assure staff that it was safe to speak up early and encourage manager to address concerns effectively and focus on risks. Good whistleblowing arrangement would have a clear lead from the top on the organisation.

PCaW could give independent advice and raise concerns on behalf of staff whilst ensuring confidentiality was upheld, but could not investigate concerns. Staff were also able to raise concerns with trade unions and professional organisations.

Ms Routray advised that it was important for the council to actively promote its whistleblowing policy and regularly review it.

- 77.3 The Chairman thanked Ms Routray for the clear presentation.
- 77.4 In response to a question from Councillors Elgood regarding appropriate promotion of the policy Ms Routray advised that it was important to strike a balance. The policy ought to be easily accessible to all staff and the council could consider printing messages on payslips and publishing whistleblowing stories, both from inside and outside of the organisation, in its internal media.
- 77.5 Following a request from Councillor Simpson to comment on the council's whistleblowing policy, Ms Routray explained that she found it to be slightly over-legalistic in its language. She advised that it would be helpful to emphasise confidentiality and job security at the beginning of the policy and ensure that the contacts listed were well trained. She added that it was good to see the benefits of the policy listed.
- 77.6 The Chairman agreed that it was important for the policy to use accessible language and provide clear assurance about job security.
- 77.7 The Chairman advised that the Committee move on to discuss the next item as it was linked to the presentation and Ms Routray may wish to provide comment further during its consideration.
- 77.8 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

78. INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING ARRANGEMENTS

- 78.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources concerning an internal audit review of the council's whistleblowing arrangements.
- 78.2 Councillor Randall advocated the retention of the term 'whistleblowing' as it was a well-recognised term that staff understood, and should therefore not be changed. He queried whether it would be better to reduce the number of contact officer listed in the policy so that fewer people were involved.
- 78.3 The Chairman stated that the policy needed to be clear and also advise that staff could contact the District Auditor to raise concerns. He added that PCaW could provide staff with advice that they may feel they could not obtain internally.
- 78.4 Ms Routray stated that while 'whistleblowing' was a recognised term, the council could consider other positive titles, such as 'Speaking Up'. She advised that it was better for staff to have a longer list of contacts and that they should be reminded that they could raise concerns with councillors. She added that staff should be made aware that the District Auditor would be obliged to investigate any concerns raised with them.
- 78.5 Councillor Mitchell requested that it be made clear in the policy that the outcome of whistleblowing investigations would be reported in writing to the respondent and all those involved in the matter.

- 78.6 The Head of Internal Audit and Business Risk reported that comparisons had been made with a number of councils and Brighton & Hove had been asked by other local authorities to advise of what recommendations the council was making. He added that officers would work on improving the language used within the policy.
- 78.7 Councillor Elgood stated that he was pleased that line managers would be trained to deal effectively with whistleblowing. He explained that it was important for Members to be involved in monitoring progress and suggested that the policy be referred to scrutiny or a cross-party working group be established.
- 78.8 The Chairman advised that he was confident that all Members were signed up to the policy; it was, however, clear that it needed to be promoted more actively within the organisation.
- 78.9 Councillor Mears echoed support for retaining the term 'whistleblowing'. In response to the request for a cross-party working group she agreed that all Members were already signed up to the policy, but suggested that each Group received a presentation on the issues discussed and that a progress report be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.
- 78.10 The Director of Strategy & Governance explained that, while it was difficult to directly amend audit recommendations, officers would ensure that arrangements would be amended to incorporate Members comments in relation to the name of the policy, promoting it, the language used, the method of reporting and reviewing the number of contacts listed. He added that all officers and Members had responsibilities in relation to the policy.
- 78.11 The Chairman stated that the Committee had now considered the issue of whistleblowing on a number of occasions and officers had done significant work around it. He asked Councillor Elgood, who had taken a special interest in the issue, whether he was satisfied with the progress made.
- 78.12 Councillor Elgood advised that he was happy to move forward with the agreed timetable.
- 78.13 **RESOLVED** - That the findings, key issues and agreed actions arising from the internal audit report at Appendix 1 be noted and in particular the audit opinion that gives reasonable assurance and concludes there are no significant weaknesses, whistleblowing arrangements compare well with other local authorities examined.

79. DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORK POLICY - PROGRESS UPDATE

- 79.1 The Committee received an update on progress towards the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy from the Assistant Director for Human Resources.
- 79.2 The Assistant Director for Human Resources reported that a new draft of the policy and procedure had been completed and consultation had taken place with the relevant internal groups. She explained that the policy had been discussed Overview & Scrutiny Commission Members, who had requested to hear directly from trade unions the council's internal staff forums. She advised that any comments made during this process would be incorporated in the policy prior to consideration by the Committee.

79.3 Councillor Elgood reported that the process was progressing well.

79.4 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

80. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

80.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) annual report on Members' Allowances.

80.2 The Chairman welcomed Simon Keane, Chair of the IRP, to the meeting.

80.3 Mr Keane thanked the Members who had met with the panel and the officers involved in the review process. He explained that due to the significant changes to the council's working practices the panel decided to conduct a thorough review of Members' allowances. He highlighted the main proposals in the report and explained that the panel had been mindful of the pressure on the council's finances in making their recommendations; some councillors would receive a reduced allowance, but this had been kept to a minimum.

80.4 The Chairman thanked the IRP for the time they had given to the review process and their commitment to finding out about all aspects of Members' work. He advised that the Committee's role was to note the report and refer it to the Full Council for a decision.

80.5 Councillor Taylor praised the work of the panel and reported that the Green Group supported the new formula proposed for calculating Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Group Leaders/ Convenors and the withdrawal of SRAs for members of the Arts Commission and the deputy chairmen of Overview & Scrutiny committees, as well as the introduction of ad hoc payments for chairmen of scrutiny panels. He advised that the Group was unsure whether they were in support of withdrawing SRAs for the deputy chairmen of regulatory committees; potentially the chairmen could require support with the large volume of work.

He highlighted his Group's concern over the SRA awarded to the Leader of the Opposition. He queried the logic behind awarding a higher allowance to the Leader of one of the opposition Groups when there were two Groups with the same number of councillors; by designating an 'official' opposition one Group gained an advantage by receiving a higher SRA for its Leader and a Deputy Leader SRA.

80.6 Councillor Fallon-Khan suggested that in future reviews the panel ask Cabinet Members about their caring responsibilities and consider whether this could be a barrier to people considering becoming a councillor.

80.7 Councillor Mitchell reported that the Labour Group did not support the withdrawal of SRAs for deputy chairman of any committees; it was necessary for Group Leaders to have a recognised way of allowing councillors to gain experience in more senior positions. She was unable to support ad hoc payments for chairmen of scrutiny panels; she felt that this was reminiscent of attendance allowances, which had been abolished some time ago.

80.8 Councillor Mears echoed Councillor Mitchell's comments in relation to the ad hoc payments for chairmen of scrutiny panels; she was concerned that it could create a feeling of competition between Members. She added that she did not agree with withdrawing the SRAs for deputy chairman of committees, as it was vital that there were enough positions available to allow Members to gain experience.

80.9 In response to the comments made Mr Keane made the following remarks:

- The view of the IRP was that it was for the council to decide which Group was the official opposition.
- The IRP would continue to meet and Members were welcome to make representations at any time; the panel did not want there to be any barriers for those wishing to become councillors.
- The decision to withdraw SRAs from the deputy chairmen of committees was not taken lightly; if the council decided to retain the SRAs it was important to be mindful of the government guidance, which stated that the number of SRAs should be equal to 50% of the total number of elected Members.
- The IRP viewed the ad hoc payments for chairmen of scrutiny panels as recognition for the additional work required, rather than as an attendance allowance.
- The IRP understood that the council was ultimately free to reject any of its recommendations.

80.10 Councillor Elgood echoed the concerns raised in relation to the SRAs for deputy chairmen of committees and the ad hoc payments to scrutiny panel chairman, but added that as the council has an independently established panel, Members should adopt its recommendations; the requirement of independence would be negated if Members routinely ignored IRP proposals.

80.11 In response to questions from Councillor Taylor, the Chairman confirmed that the report would be considered at Full Council on 18 March and that the council had previously exceeded the 50% of all councillors guideline when it was felt to be justified. He added that any amendments would have to be considered in light of the budget.

80.12 Councillor Mitchell stated that Members should also be mindful of the number of SRAs not taken up as a result of a Member holding two or more positions.

80.13 **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be recommended to Council for approval.
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to amend the Brighton & Hove Members' Allowances Scheme to reflect the foregoing, to submit to Council for adoption, and to issue the revised scheme following council approval.
- (3) That the allowance payable to each of the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be increased by the council's salary inflation of 1% for 2009 with effect from 14 May 2010, (i.e. the day after the Annual Council meeting and in

line with the effective date recommended by the Panel for increases in Members' Allowances), in recognition of their time commitment and their important role.

81. E-PETITIONS

- 81.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the outcome of the Council's pilot e-petitions facility and outlining the anticipated changes required by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction (LDEDC) Act 2009.
- 81.2 The Managing Principal Solicitor with responsibility for the pilot highlighted the main changes proposed to the guidance and advised that a further report would be considered by the Committee when the legislation came into force.
- 81.3 Councillor Oxley added that the changes would allow the council to see whether signatories lived within Brighton & Hove or outside the city.
- 81.4 Councillor Taylor supported the continuing operation of the e-petitions facility and reported that he had received good feedback about it. He queried what would be done with the personal information of those who signed an e-petition.
- 81.5 The Managing Principal Solicitor advised that only names of signatories would be made public and sent to the petition originator; all other personal information would be kept by the council.
- 81.6 Councillor Mitchell asked that Members be advised of the outcomes in relation to two e-petitions relating to health functions that were not in the remit of the council.
- 81.7 The Chairman confirmed that the e-petitions had been referred to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and instructed officers to circulate details of the outcomes.
- 81.8 In response to comments made by Councillors Mitchell and Simpson in relation to the threshold for triggering debate of a petition by the Full Council, the Managing Principal Solicitor explained that the threshold had to be achievable and the council would have a duty to review it after a period of time if it had not been met. She added that the council would need to be mindful that certain local issues would not be capable of reaching the threshold and consider how to deal with these issues.
- 81.9 The Chairman thanked the Democratic Services team for running the e-petitions facility and Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council, added her thanks.

81.10 RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Committee agrees and recommends to Council the following:
- (a) That the current e-petitions facility be retained.
 - (b) That the changes to the E-Petitions Guidance be approved.

- (2) That the likely changes that will be required to the Council's petition arrangements when the relevant provisions of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (LDEDC) come into force be noted.
- (3) That, given the delay in bringing into force national legislative changes and associated Statutory Guidance, officers bring a further report to the Governance Committee with a draft amended petitions scheme when the LDEDC Act provisions are in force.

82. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION ACT 2009

- 82.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance updating Member on the implementation of those parts of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 of most relevance to the council.
- 82.2 Councillor Elgood suggested that it could be beneficial to establish a cross-party working group of Members to consider the implications of the Act.
- 82.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

83. COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT

- 83.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning community and neighbourhood engagement in the city and the focus of the formal review of Strengthening Communities activity.
- 83.2 Councillor Mitchell queried how the issues in the report related to the Community Engagement Framework, which had been through the scrutiny process. She was concerned that the intention was to centralise engagement activity and restrict grass roots involvement; she was particularly worried about the future of Local Action Teams (LATs) and the fact that the report did not mention any consultation with community groups. She added that commissioning work appeared to have ceased.
- 83.3 Councillor Simson gave assurances that there was no intention to undermine the grass roots organisations. The aim was to review how they could be better supported by the council and how they would be funded in the future; there was no desire to change the bottom-up approach that existed in the city.
- 83.4 Councillor Randall stated that he perceived the aims of the report as an attempt to tidy up the approach to engagement and ensure better use of the funding available. He advised that while there was an overlap between some groups, it would be difficult to interfere with the LATs in any way; they were very well-attended and the council's partner organisations were supportive of current structures. He added that information sharing between groups could be improved.
- 83.5 Councillor Elgood praised the network of community groups and the support provided by the council. He hoped that the council would add value to ongoing engagement activity and advised that more needed to be done to promote LATs through the council.

- 83.6 Councillor Simpson explained that she was concerned there would be a move towards a uniform approach to engagement across the city. She reported that the uniform nature of LATs and Schools Cluster groups had contributed to the disbanding of the Hollingdean Partnership, which had been very valuable for local people in her ward. The support available for the partnership had been diluted by the move towards more formal groups which focussed on specific issues rather than the whole community.
- 83.7 In response to a query from Councillor Taylor regarding Member involvement in the review of Strengthening Communities activity, the People and Place Co-ordinator explained that the intention was to involve the Members' Advisory Group (MAG), which had responsibility for allocating grant funding to community groups. She added that ward councillors would be indirectly engaged via their involvement with community groups, who would be consulted during the review.
- 83.8 Councillor Taylor expressed concern that the MAG would be involved and advised that a separate cross-party working group should be established.
- 83.9 Councillor Simson explained that the intention was to involve Members through the MAG because it was an established cross-party group with relevant expertise, however, a new working group could be set up if Members felt it appropriate.
- 83.10 Councillor Oxley moved an amendment to recommendation 2.1 proposing that the Committee agree to establishing a cross-party working group.
- 83.11 Councillor Mears formally seconded the amendment and opposition Members confirmed their support for the amendment (see 83.14 (1)).
- 83.12 In response to the comments made by Members the People and Place Co-ordinator made the following remarks:
- The main function of the Communities Team within the council was to support community groups and work towards strengthening existing engagement arrangements.
 - The Community Engagement Framework was a policy document that had been consulted upon extensively. It set out the principles of community engagement and was designed to enhance understanding.
 - The Strengthening Communities review would consider whether existing arrangements were working and how engagement activity would be funded in the future.
 - There was no intention to impose a uniform approach and the council supported the organic approach that existed in the city, recognising that choice was important.
 - The future of LATs would not be reviewed, however the police planned to review how LATs fed into their Joint Action Groups (JAGs).
 - Extensive consultation would take place as part of the review.
- 83.13 Councillor Mears advised that the cross-party working group should be set up along similar lines to the MAG.

83.14 **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the public engagement work underway, the Framework and plethora of models developed according to community needs and priorities be noted, **and a cross-party working group be established.**
- (2) That the formal review of Strengthening Communities Commissioning activity be noted and agree that the Review should provide a way forward in providing recommendations for public engagement in the future. This will test the existing models and examine the need for further community decision making opportunities, (e.g., looking at LATs and how they feed into the Community Safety Forum etc).
- (3) That the outcomes of the review should include
 - A mapping and overview of the different forms and structures for public engagement that exist in the city, such as neighbourhood groups (e.g. LATS), and citywide representative activity, (such as that developed by the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum).
 - An analysis of the costs and benefits of community and neighbourhood engagement, including a breakdown of the costs and value of different models.
 - An analysis of the links between the Council's democratic and constitutional opportunities for engagement and those at grass roots level.
 - A quantitative and qualitative analysis and mapping of the various targeted neighbourhood initiatives in the city such as Family Pathfinder, Adult Advancement Centres and Turning the Tide, evaluating what works and determining any fundamental principles for future neighbourhood activity. Where possible, the review would include partner involvement in this and include Neighbourhood Policing and the PCT's work on health inequality.
 - An analysis of the value of the Council's current Discretionary Grants Programme in helping to support public and neighbourhood engagement.
 - To develop new policy and approach in line with the Council's organisational change processes and the move towards stronger commissioning, creating public value and desire to support local communities and economies and enable co-production of solutions at the local level.
- (4) That the review be completed by September 2010, (in time for the Council's budget setting processes), and submitted to Governance Committee and Cabinet, (as required by the constitution), for consideration and incorporating into budget approaches for 2011/12.
- (5) That written updates be provided to the Committee at every meeting between now and September 2010 and, where appropriate, Governance Committee attendance and involvement be requested in key aspects of the Review process.

84. PROPOSALS FOR TRANSFORMING MEETINGS OF FULL COUNCIL

- 84.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the current operation of the Council procedure rules and proposing amendments to improve the way Council meetings operate.

- 84.2 Councillor Randall reported that the Green Group were opposed to many of the proposals and were concerned that they would serve to stifle democracy. He explained that his Group would like to see an additional Full Council meeting added to the timetable. While he welcomed the proposals in relation to oral Member questions, he could not support the limit of Notices of Motion (NoMs), reduced speaking times and the closure motion.
- 84.3 Councillor Elgood advised that the Liberal Democrat Group was also opposed to many of the proposals; he felt that Members and officers should continue to look for a consensus.
- 84.4 Councillor Mitchell stated that the Labour Group supported the recommendations and in particular that the limit on NoMs seemed adequate. She was interested to see how the changes to oral questions the operation of the closure motion would work in practice.
- 84.5 Councillor Mears explained that she had initially been concerned about the closure motion, but was happy to see how it worked. She added that it would be interesting to find out how all the proposals worked and what impact they would have.
- 84.6 The Chairman stated that it would be for the Full Council to vote on whether the meeting would be closed. He added that monitoring of any agreed changes would be key.
- 84.7 In response to concerns from Councillor Taylor concerning the decision to take the report to Full Council earlier than previously stated, the Chairman explained that the report had been considered by the Leaders Group and been consulted upon for three months; there was no reason to hold the report back when two others from the meeting would go to the March Full Council meeting.
- 84.8 The Head of Law advised that the limit on NoMs and changes to oral questions and speaking times should serve to make meetings shorter and more efficient, and therefore potentially negate the need to operate the closure motion.

84.9 **RESOLVED –**

(1) That the Committee:

- (i) Supports the proposed amendments to Council Procedure Rules as set out in paragraphs 4.3 (closure motion moved by Mayor), 5.4 (Members' Questions) 6.2 (Notices of Motion) and 8.2 (speaking times) and recommends to Council that they be approved.
- (ii) Agrees that, subject to Council approval, the changes come into force immediately after the Annual Council meeting in May 2010.

85. **PROTOCOL FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS DURING FUTURE WARD NAME CHANGE CONSULTATION EXERCISES**

- 85.1 The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the proposals for a process for triggering the consideration of a possible ward name change.

85.2 The Chairman thanked officers for the clear report. He added that the 5% threshold trigger was appropriate and that it was important to keep ward councillors informed from the beginning of the process.

85.3 The Head of Law advised that the threshold with those suggested in other statutory guidance for local government. He also reminded Members that any decision on whether to proceed with a consultation would continue to be made by the Committee.

85.4 **RESOLVED –**

(1) That consideration of a proposal to change a ward name be triggered by submission to the Council of a petition signed by 5% of residents, or 500 people, whichever is greater, who are on the Electoral Register, and who provide a permanent address that can be verified as being within the ward in question.

(2) That, further to recommendation (1), the relevant ward councillors be consulted and their views taken into account before a report is put to the Governance Committee to consider authorising a formal consultation on the proposal.

86. DESIGNATED POLLING STATIONS FOR 2010 GENERAL ELECTION

86.1 The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning designated polling stations for the 2010 General Election.

86.2 **RESOLVED –**

(1) That the Returning Officer's designation of the Children's Centre, West Hove Infant School, as the polling station for the designated area SY, within Wish Ward be noted. (SY is an internal ward area reference used by the Electoral Services Team.)

(2) That the reversion to Craven Vale Resource Centre as a polling place for designated areas DY, part of East Brighton ward, and ES, part of Queens Park ward be noted. (DY and ES are internal ward area references used by the Electoral Services Team.)

87. CHILDREN'S SERVICES SECTION 75 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

87.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director Children's Services concerning proposed changes to the Council's existing partnership arrangements with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and South Downs Health NHS Trust (SDH) in relation to Children's Services and addressing new draft Statutory Guidance in relation to Children's Trusts Boards.

87.2 In response to a question from Councillor Taylor regarding councillor membership of the new Children's Trust Board, Councillor Brown confirmed that there were no plans to change the cross-party make-up of the existing Board.

87.3 The Assistant Director for Strategic Commissioning & Governance for the Children & Young People's Trust explained that the proposals represented the creation of separate

agreements between the council and the PCT, and the council and SDH in respect of commissioning and provision. Two newly created Joint Management Groups of officers would meet regularly to monitor performance in relation to the agreements and the role of the Children's Trust Board would change to fulfil new statutory requirements. He added that the PCT had requested for issues escalated from their Joint Management Group to first go to their Strategic Commissioning Board before being taken further.

87.4 Councillor Oxley assured Councillor Taylor that the proposed new arrangements would in no way prevent scrutiny of the work carried out by all three organisations; monthly meetings of the officer groups would ensure that performance would be monitored more closely than had previously been possible.

87.5 **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the proposed principles of the S75 agreements and the proposed governance arrangements be noted and any comments from the Committee be made known to Cabinet in time for its meeting on 11 March 2010.
- (2) That the proposed new duties in relation to establishing a Children's Trust Board be noted and that it be noted that the proposals would be taken forward by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

PART TWO SUMMARY

88. PART TWO MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

88.1 **RESOLVED** - That the Part Two minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 be approved as a correct record.

89. EQUAL PAY UPDATE

89.1 The Committee considered a verbal update from the Assistant Director for Human Resources updating them on the latest position with regard to equal pay negotiations.

89.2 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

90. PART TWO ITEMS

89.1 The Committee considered whether or not any of the above items should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

89.2 **RESOLVED** – That items 88 onwards, contained in Part Two of the agenda, remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 6.31pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

