

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 17 OCTOBER 2013**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor J Kitcat (Chair) Councillors Littman (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Morgan (Group Spokesperson), Hamilton, Lepper, A Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Randall and West.

**PART ONE**

**50. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**(a) Declarations of Substitutes**

50.1 Councillor West declared that he was attending the meeting as substitute for Councillor Shanks.

**(b) Declarations of Interest**

50.2 Councillor A. Norman declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Item 60 on the agenda, Falmer Released Land & Site Adjacent to Community Stadium as she was a season ticket holder at the Amex Stadium.

50.3 Councillor Warren Morgan declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Items 57 and 60 on the agenda, Financial Inclusion – Debt Recovery Policy and Falmer Released Land & Site Adjacent to Community Stadium, as he was a member of the East Sussex Credit Union and a season ticket holder at the Amex Stadium.

50.4 Councillors Lepper and Randall declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Item 57 on the agenda, Financial Inclusion – Debt Recovery Policy as they were both members of the East Sussex Credit Union.

**(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public**

50.5 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.

50.6 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item contained in part two of the agenda.

**51. MINUTES**

- 51.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of Councillors G. Theobald, A. Norman and K. Norman having requested that their names be recorded as having voted against the resolutions listed at Item 31, Budget Update and Budget Process 2014/15 on pages 14 and 15.
- 51.2 The minutes of the special meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Peltzer Dunn as being listed as present and his name correctly spelt at paragraph 48.14.

**52. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 52.1 The Chair noted that the council had been runners up in the 'City of the Year' category at a recent CIVITIAS event, who commended the council on our 'exceptional achievement in the field of urban transport' and our 'active representation of the CIVITAS Initiative'. The Council was recognised for our 'clear political leadership and continuous consultation with experts and local stakeholders' in respect of transport policy measures and the way 'the city has proved itself to be a paradigm of excellence, inspiring and serving as a model to guide and stimulate the further development of sustainable mobility measures in Europe'. As a runner-up for the CIVITAS award 'category III', the European Commission acknowledges the city as one of Europe's best in making a real difference for the welfare of the European citizen. He also hoped that the council would receive similar acclaim at the National Transport Awards this evening where we have been shortlisted.
- 52.2 The Chair stated that he was pleased to announce that the council would be joining the 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign. A football based initiative combating racism. It's a project that Brighton & Hove Albion already supports and he wished to thank them for offering to act as our co-sponsor.
- 52.3 The Chair stated that as Members may recall, at its July meeting, P&R asked for a report on blacklisting by contractors. He wished to make it absolutely clear that the Council was opposed to the practice of blacklisting and was determined to use all avenues within the law to prevent it happening. However, translating that principle into practical enforcement was fraught with legal difficulties. We also understand that the Parliamentary Committee on Scottish Affairs has been looking at this closely and is expected to report in the coming months. It was therefore felt more appropriate to defer consideration of the report until the committee reports its findings and recommendations so that we can make a decision with the benefit of full information. In the meanwhile, the Council has already amended its pre-qualification questionnaire for contractors. This means contractors wanting to submit a bid would be asked whether they have been involved in any blacklisting. He hoped that that, in itself, would be a deterrent.

52.4 The Chair informed the Committee that the Football Association had decided not to pursue their bid to host games of the under twenties world cup in the UK; therefore, and with regret he had agreed to the report at item 63 being withdrawn from the agenda.

**53. CALL OVER**

53.1 The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

- Item 56 Targeted Budget Management (TBM 5)
- Item 57 Financial Inclusion – Debt Collection and Recovery Policy
- Item 58 Improving the Customer Experience
- Item 59 Greater Brighton City Deal and Economic Board
- Item 60 Falmer Released Land & Site Adjacent to Community Stadium
- Item 61 Rampion Offshore Windfarm

53.2 The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the Items listed above had been reserved for discussion; and that Item 62, FIFA Under 20 Football World Cup 2017 had been withdrawn.

**54. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

54.1 The Chair noted that there were no petitions or depositions from members of the public, and that one public question had been received. He therefore welcomed Ms. Paynter to the meeting and invited her to put her question to the meeting.

Ms. Paynter thanked the Chair and asked the following question, “The Falmer-based bilingual school seeks to expand and build on the Hove Park Depot. The Portslade-based Kings School champs at the bit as it eyes up the King Alfred site for its expansion plans. And one hears of other Free schools wanting land from the council.

Meanwhile, the Council struggles to find land for its own schools; and the question is: how many Free Schools is too many or too big? And where is the cut-off point that removes BHCC obligation to provide land to these minority-interest Free-Schools that you have no authority over but are asked to accommodate?”

54.2 The Chair thanked Ms. Paynter for her question and replied, “The Department for Education through its funding division the Education Funding Agency (EFA) is responsible for securing sites for new Academies and Free Schools. Where a site has previously been used for education purposes in the previous eight years but is no longer so used, the EFA may require a local authority to give up the site for an approved Academy or Free School. The EFA would have to pay the market rate for other sites which have not been used for education purposes, including for example the Hove Park Depot and King Alfred sites.

Academies and Free Schools are state maintained schools independent of the local authority, and as such they count towards the local authority’s duty to secure sufficient school places for their area. The current government’s policy is that any requirement for a new school must be advertised to potential academy or free school sponsors before there is any possibility for the authority to develop its own school. In this context, the Council is obliged to include academy and free school options within its school places

planning and it is not a question of either an academy/free school or a local authority school.”

54.3 Ms. Paynter asked a supplementary question, “How many is too many, there could be anything between 6 and 10 free schools in Hove with no upper limit on the numbers of pupils that had to be accommodated?”

54.4 The Chair stated that it was not a question that he or the council could answer as it was for the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to determine what level of support would be given to applications for Free Schools and to assist in finding suitable locations for them. He thanked Ms. Paynter for her questions and noted that there were no other questions that had been submitted.

## **55. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

55.1 The Chair noted that there were no petitions, questions or letters from Members had been submitted for consideration at the current meeting.

## **56. TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM 5)**

56.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report and noted that the report provided an update on the position previously reported to the Committee in June. There was a current projected overspend on the General Fund of £2.4m which had come down from £3.3m and officers were continuing to take action to reduce the deficit. She was pleased to report that there was a projected surplus for the Collection Fund but noted that it remained closely monitored by officers.

56.2 Councillor Littman welcomed the report and the direction of travel in regard to the overall reduction in the projected deficit at this point and wished to thank officers for their work across the various budget areas.

56.3 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and queried what the variance of £28k was listed on page 39 for Children’s Services and whether the vacant post referred to on page 40 was likely to be filled in the near future. She also queried whether the ICT overspend on age 57 could be managed and how the £1m risk associated with prescription costs had arisen.

56.4 The Assistant Director of Children’s Services stated that it was hoped to address the variance of £28k which had resulted from difficulties in appointing social workers. However, twelve newly qualified social workers had been appointed from the 1<sup>st</sup> September and others were being short-listed with a view to appointments being made in the near future.

56.5 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that the £1m risk identified in relation to Public Health was a result of contractual arrangements with GPs following the transfer of the public health budgets to the local authority. This was a situation that affected other local authorities and was due to be raised with Public Health England; however it was felt prudent to identify the risk at this stage. In regard to the ICT budget, she noted that it was hoped to achieve greater efficiencies as part of the value for money programme. However there were issues relating to security of applications etc

and the implementation of the Workstyles programme which meant that the savings target may not be achieved in the current financial year.

- 56.6 Councillor Hamilton noted the report and welcomed the reduction on the projected overspend. He was concerned about the Public Health risk and the likelihood that the adult care budget was likely to remain overspent with more older people requiring care. In regard to the short-break provision for disabled children on page 69 he queried whether consideration had been given to using the facility at Hurstpierpoint.
- 56.7 The Assistant Director of Children's Services stated that he would look into the provision available at Hurstpierpoint and provide members of the committee with a briefing note on the situation and feasibility of using the facility.
- 56.8 Councillor G. Theobald asked for an update on where the funding achieved from the sale of the mayoral car's number plates was going and noted that income from off-street parking was under-achieving. He also queried whether the proposed temporary office at Horsdean Traveller site required planning permission and expressed his concern in relation to the future of the Volks Railway if a solution could not be found for the sheds.
- 56.9 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing stated that off-street parking was being monitored and he was happy to meet with Councillor Theobald to discuss matters. In relation to the proposed temporary building at Horsdean, he would ensure that further information on the proposals was provided to Members as the situation was likely to change.
- 56.10 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that officers were looking at funding options for the Volks Railway sheds and a Heritage Lottery Fund application had been submitted. Should the application fail there would then be a need to review the situation.
- 56.11 Councillor Morgan suggested that the shortfall in income targets for off-street parking could be partly down to the cost of parking. He noted that Regency Square car park was half empty during the day and that machines in Trafalgar Street had not been working for sometime, enabling people to park for free. He also noted the underspend of £0.668m for Discretionary Social Fund and asked if the take up from this could be promoted.
- 56.12 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that take up from the various social funds was being tracked and there was a good profile of spend to date. However, officers were looking at how this could be promoted and a more pro-active approach taken. She also noted that additional funds had been put into the budget area because of the uncertainty around take up and therefore an underspend was anticipated, especially as people should be accessing funding through the DWP.
- 56.13 The Chair noted the comments and put the recommendations to the vote.
- 56.14 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the forecast outturn position for the General Fund, which is an overspend of £2.413m be noted;

- (2) That the forecast outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is an underspend of £0.150m be noted;
- (3) That the forecast outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant which is an underspend of £0.309m be noted;
- (4) That the forecast outturn position on the capital programme be noted; and
- (5) That the following changes to the capital programme be approved:
  - The variations and reprofiles in Appendix 3 and the new schemes as set out in Appendix 4.

## **57. FINANCIAL INCLUSION - DEBT COLLECTION AND RECOVERY POLICY**

- 57.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report and stated that there had been significant changes to Welfare Reform which had led to a review of the Debt Collection and Recovery Policy. She stated that where individuals notified the council that they were in difficulties, the council would look to support them, however if they chose not to engage with the council then officers would seek to recover the debt.
- 57.2 Councillor Littman welcomed the report and stated that it was a good example of joint working with other agencies and hoped that more councillors and officers would join the credit union. He had also attended a conference recently concerning the financial exclusion in the private sector and this was something that needed to be looked at bearing in mind the number of private rented dwellings in the city.
- 57.3 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and the approach to actively help those in financial difficulties and she fully supported the recommendations.
- 57.4 Councillor Lepper also welcomed the report and noted that there were a number of residents who were being driven to using pay day lenders and queried how the information that the council was offering support was being publicised. She felt that the council's web site was difficult to navigate and whilst the report's appendix listing other organisations that can help was excellent, it needed to be made available to those who were in need.
- 57.5 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources stated that officers were actively reviewing the communication process and working with the Money Advice Service to ensure as much information as possible was made available in regard to the support available and who could be contacted for help.
- 57.6 The Chair noted that officers were also talking to the local banks as part of the financial inclusion process and hoped that this would result in further assistance being made available. He then put the recommendations to the vote.

**57.7 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Corporate Debt Collection & Recovery Policy at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (2) That the proposed Action Plan at Appendix 2 to the report be approved; and
- (3) That it be noted that the policy and its effectiveness would be the subject of ongoing review and any necessary amendments reported back to the committee for consideration.

**58. IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

58.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report which detailed the intention to improve customers experience when interacting with the council. It was a key action to support the modernisation of the council and would see investment in the council's ICT strategy so that the best use of technology could be used to improve access to services.

58.2 Councillor Littman welcomed the report and noted that customer satisfaction levels were improving and that it was part of the council's digital inclusion approach which he hoped would lead to improved access across the council's services.

58.3 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and stated that the investment was much needed and she hoped it would result in improved access.

58.4 Councillor West noted that the contact centres had been working well and had shown an improved service which had reduced costs and meant that the council had been able to respond to residents in a better way. He hoped that the proposed investment would see similar improvements to customer experience across the council.

58.5 Councillor Morgan noted the report and that there were still a number of people who were not on-line but had smart phones. He hoped that consideration would be given to enabling those people to access service through Apps and to improving the Wi-Fi connectivity across the city.

58.6 The Chair noted the comments and stated that work was ongoing in regard to improving Wi-Fi connectivity and the use of Apps. He also noted that around two-thirds of people were able to self-service via on-line connections. He then put the recommendations to the vote.

**58.7 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a £273,000 "invest to save" customer access project to make it easier to access parking services online and through smart phones be approved; and
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director Finance & Resources to authorise further customer access invest to save projects within the parameters set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

**59. GREATER BRIGHTON CITY DEAL AND ECONOMIC BOARD**

- 59.1 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing introduced the report which provided an update on the Greater Brighton City Deal bid to Government and details regarding the proposed Growth Hubs at Preston Barracks and New England House. He stated that good progress had been made and that officers were due to meet with government representatives on the 5<sup>th</sup> November. He also noted that the report outlined the establishment of a Greater Brighton Economic Board and that full proposals would be submitted to the January Council meeting following further negotiations with the prospective partner organisations that would form the Board.
- 59.2 The Head of Law noted that there were likely to be a number of amendments to the terms of reference for the proposed Board, which was why it was recommended that a further report be taken to the Council meeting in January.
- 59.3 Councillor G. Theobald welcomed the report and stated that the Conservative Group fully supported the proposals for the Greater Brighton City Deal and the establishment of the Board and noted that Sussex and Surrey equated to the fifth largest economy in the whole of the European Union.
- 59.4 Councillor Morgan stated that it was a significant development which had complex relationships across the council and with other organisations. He noted that the council's representation for the Board only held two places for the city council and sought assurance that all parties would be included and engaged in some way.
- 59.5 The Chair noted the comments and that all other organisation only had one representative on the Board. However, he accepted that consideration needed to be given as to how all parties were included and noted that observer status was one option that was being looked at. It was going to be a new way of working and one that could result in many benefits to the city and it was therefore important that it was taken forward. He then put the recommendations to the vote.
- 59.6 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:**
- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and the work of the City Deal Project Boards, to secure a City Deal agreement for the Greater Brighton City Region be endorsed;
  - (2) That it be agreed that through the City Deal negotiation process, the Executive Director Environment Development & Housing in conjunction with the Director of Finance & Resources should enter into detailed negotiations with Government in relation to the New England House and Preston Barracks sites, in order to facilitate their development as Growth Hubs and to report back to Policy & Resources Committee on the implications and any necessary asset management and investment decisions; and
  - (3) That it be recommended to Full Council on 30 January 2014 the establishment of the Greater Brighton Economic Board, details of which are set out in Appendix 2 of the report, to 'go live' in April 2014.



**60. FALMER RELEASED LAND & SITE ADJACENT TO COMMUNITY STADIUM**

- 60.1 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing introduced the report, which detailed proposals submitted by The Community Stadium Ltd, in relation to the redevelopment of the Falmer Released Land site and the construction of a new hotel on a site adjacent to the Stadium.
- 60.2 The Chair noted the information and asked whether a further report would be brought to the committee if progress on the proposals was made.
- 60.3 Councillor Morgan welcomed the report and stated that he believed the proposals would benefit the city and therefore hoped that progress would be made a further report brought to committee. He also asked that ward councillors be included in any consultation and kept updated on discussions as they progressed.
- 60.4 Councillor G. Theobald stated that the proposals made good sense and were in the best interests of the city and the club. He hoped that an agreement could be reached and the proposals taken forward.
- 60.5 The Chair then put the recommendations to the vote.

**60.6 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Executive Director Environment Development & Housing, Executive Director Finance & Resources and Head of Law be authorised to enter into negotiations with The Community Stadium Limited ("TCSL") regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Falmer Released Land, as shown on the annexed plan, with TCSL and to agree that proposed Heads of Terms are brought back to the Committee for final approval; and
- (2) That the Executive Director Environment Development & Housing, Executive Director Finance & Resources and Head of Law be authorised to enter into negotiations with TCSL regarding the proposed construction of a hotel on the land adjacent to the Community Stadium shown on the annexed plan and to agree that proposed Heads of Terms are brought back to the Committee for final approval.

**61. RAMPION OFFSHORE WINDFARM**

- 61.1 The Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing introduced the report and stated that an endorsement of the submission made to the Planning Inspector in regard to EON's application for development consent to the Rampion Offshore Windfarm was sought as being the corporate view of Brighton & Hove City Council.
- 61.2 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that he supported the report and felt that it was an opportunity which should be pursued as it was similar to the project along the East Coast of Norfolk, and could provide greater benefits to the city.

- 61.3 Councillor Randall noted that the number of turbines had been reduced as technology had developed and suggested that each one could be linked to a school in Sussex, and thereby act as a vehicle for educational development and provide a community link.
- 61.4 Councillor West stated that he was happy to explore the idea of linking schools with the development which would have a significant impact for the city and the use of energy.
- 61.5 Councillor G. Theobald welcomed the report and stated that it was an important factor that could support the City Deal bid and enable partner authorities and the local ports to benefit from the development. He therefore hoped that matters would progress.
- 61.6 Councillor Morgan stated that the Labour & Co-operative Group fully supported the recommendations and that there was a need to think about energy resilience and future security for residents in terms of energy costs and supply.
- 61.7 The Chair noted the comments and put the recommendation to the vote.
- 61.8 **RESOLVED:** That the committee notes the council's representations (appendices 1 and 2 of this report) to the Planning Inspectorate on the Rampion Offshore Windfarm and endorses these as representing the council's formal response to the Planning Inspectorate.

**62. FIFA UNDER 20 FOOTBALL WORLD CUP 2017**

- 62.1 The item was withdrawn.

**63. ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL**

- 63.1 No items were referred to the Council meeting.

**PART TWO SUMMARY**

**64. PART TWO MINUTES**

- 64.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> July were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**65. PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**

- 65.1 **RESOLVED:** That item 64 contained in Part Two of the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 5.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2013