

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 13 DECEMBER 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Randall (Chair), Meadows (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Bennett, Bowden, Brown, Buckley, Hawtree, Carden, Cobb, Cox, Davey, Deane, Duncan, Farrow, Fitch, Gilbey, Hamilton, Hyde, Janio, Jarrett, Jones, A Kitcat, J Kitcat, Lepper, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Mears, Mitchell, Morgan, A Norman, K Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pidgeon, Powell, Robins, Rufus, Shanks, Simson, Smith, Summers, Sykes, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wakefield, Wealls, Wells, West and Wilson.

PART ONE

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 51.1 Councillor Simson declared a personal but non pecuniary interest in Item 56(a) a public question concerning the Dene's Youth Project as she was a trustee.
- 51.2 No other declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

52. MINUTES

- 52.1 The minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on the 25th October 2012 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

53. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

- 53.1 The Mayor stated that he was pleased to announce that Robert Robertson, the Mayoral Chauffeur won an award for completing the RAC Future Car Challenge on Saturday 3rd November, managing to get the mayoral car from Brighton to London with just over 30miles of charge left in the battery. He invited Robert to come forward to collect the award.
- 53.2 The Mayor stated that he was pleased to announce Brighton & Hove City Council's Soundscape project had received national recognition at the Noise Abatement Society's annual John Connell Awards. The council had been highlighted for its pioneering approach to considering noise in city planning projects, using sound to tackle antisocial behaviour, and excellent multi-agency working. He then invited Gloria Elliot and Lisa

Lavia from the Noise Abatement Society, and Matthew Eastell, from the Sustainable Communities Team to come forward to collect the award.

- 53.3 The Mayor noted that the Revenues & Benefits team had recently had a review which assessed their commitment to Customer Service and had passed. He then invited Councillor Littman and John Francis to come forward to receive the certificate on behalf of the team.

54. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR (A) THE MAYOR-ELECT AND (B) THE DEPUTY MAYOR-ELECT

- 54.1 The Mayor noted that the next item dealt with the nominations for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor-Elect and called on the Monitoring Officer to outline the process and to seek nominations.
- 54.2 The Monitoring Officer thanked the Mayor and explained the process for the appointment of the Mayor-Elect and then sought nominations to the position.
- 54.3 Councillor G. Theobald nominated Councillor Cobb, and Councillor Peltzer Dunn formally seconded the nomination.
- 54.4 The Monitoring Officer noted that there were no other nominations and therefore Councillor Cobb was the only prospective nominee.
- 54.5 The Mayor declared that Councillor Cobb was duly appointed as Mayor-elect for the City of Brighton & Hove for the municipal year 2013-14.
- 54.6 The Monitoring Officer then noted that nominations were required for the position of Deputy Mayor-Elect and that it was usual practice for the outgoing Mayor to be duly nominated.
- 54.7 Councillor J. Kitcat nominated Councillor Randall and Councillor G. Theobald formally seconded the nomination.
- 54.8 The Monitoring Officer declared that Councillor Randall had been duly appointed as the Deputy Mayor-Elect for the municipal year 2013-14.

55. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS.

- 55.1 The Mayor invited the submission of petitions from councillors and members of the public. He reminded the Council that petitions would be referred to the appropriate decision-making body without debate and the person presenting the petition would be invited to attend the meeting to which the petition was referred.
- 55.2 Mr. Moorhouse presented a petition signed by 661 residents calling on the council to reject the Government's cuts to council tax benefit.

- 55.3 Ms. Clark presented a petition signed by 33 residents, requesting that the parking restrictions in Cromwell Road, Hove be amended and a zebra crossing installed to improve road safety.
- 55.4 Ms. Paynter presented a petition signed by 83 residents concerning the roll-out of side view only pedestrian crossing lights and asking that this be reviewed.
- 55.5 Ms. Lyon presented a petition signed by 694 residents concerning the cessation of pop concerts in Stanmer Park.
- 55.6 Councillor Mears presented a petition signed by 119 residents concerning the provision and accessibility of childcare facilities in Saltdean.

56. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

- 56.1 The Mayor reported that 4 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited Mr. Greenstein to come forward and address the council.
- 56.2 Mr. Greenstein noted that his question had been circulated and asked the following supplementary question; "On 25th October an employment tribunal found that the Office & Finance Manager of Deans Youth Project had been automatically unfairly dismissed for making a protected disclosure by revealing to the Chair of Trustees that another employee had been falsifying invoices.

Instead the claimant was herself dismissed on the grounds of theft and dishonesty. This was reported to the Police who found there was no substance in the allegations.

What steps have been taken by the Council, as a major funder, to ensure that a new management is put in place and that the claimant is reinstated in her post?"

- 56.3 Councillor Shanks replied;
- 56.4 The Mayor thanked Mr. Greenstein for his questions and invited Ms. Paynter to come forward and address the council.
- 56.5 Ms. Paynter thanked the Mayor and asked the following question, "Important decisions are taken by officers under delegated powers which serving Administrations must carry the can for and I am not aware of the current Administration having any wish to take back responsibility for any of them. Indeed I wonder if councillors are sometimes taken unawares when one is implemented that they had no say in.

How many delegated decisions are first notified to or discussed with Councillors?"

- 56.6 Councillor J. Kitcat replied, "I'll provide you a very full response in writing but to cover the overall theme, the way that this Council, as every other Council in England operates, is a division of labour between Members who set the policy and the officer who do the day to day operational running and delivery of the services. The delegated powers and the schedule of delegations we have has actually been relatively the same for quite some time and it's based on a model created by INLOGOV which is an expert body at the University of Birmingham in these matters.

There have been some tweaks but merely to adjust to our changes to the cabinet system and then from the cabinet system but the distribution of powers is unchanged, between officers and Members and the situation is, as you know because you attend our committees, make the Policy decisions and they are enacted under powers by officers. But many times those decisions made at delegated level by officers are done in consultation with members (in audible) and I think it works well.”

56.7 Ms. Paynter asked the following supplementary question “Is it not true that certain decisions like hard copy planning material should be policy and not officer delegation decision?”

56.8 Councillor J. Kitcat replied, “Local Government has to operate on a balance of trust and understanding between Members, officers and the public and the delegations are the legal basis for how that division of labour happens. Now we can have a discussion about whether the policy of paper or digital; at what point that should be a decision by whom and that would be a fair discussion but ultimately it would not be reasonable to expect Councillors to be overseeing and managing every decision that the Council makes.

Councillors are not managers, councillors are there to set the policy of this Council by democratic process and the officers enact that. That’s the basis at which Local and National Government works across much of the world and while there are sometimes imperfections in the balance of those I think overall the system has put us in good stead.”

56.9 The Mayor thanked Ms. Paynter for her questions and invited Mr. Evans to come forward and address the council.

56.10 Mr. Evans thanked the Mayor and asked the following question, “Why are the pelican crossings being downgraded without any specific reference to them on the questionnaire when we have many disabled and vulnerable people that use Seven Dials for their local shops, post office and chemist?”

This question comes from the parents of a wheelchair user who know they are more secure with phased traffic lights on the existing crossing.”

56.11 Councillor Davey replied, “Rather than crossings being downgraded, the whole area is being upgraded for pedestrians. The main reasons for replacing the pelican crossings with zebras is that zebra crossings provide an improvement to the pedestrian experience as the wait time is vastly reduced compared to traffic lights which have a pre-programmed timer installed and generally prioritise vehicle and traffic over pedestrians.

Effectively zebra crossings give priority to pedestrians. There is no evidence to suggest that zebra crossings are more dangerous than pelican crossings. It is considered by officers that the new crossings will provide a more convenient crossing facility for disabled and vulnerable people who will further benefit from the introduction of a raised table around the crossings. The combination of the raised table crossing together with the physical changes to the approaches to the roundabout as well as the roundabout

itself combined with the reduction in speed limits in the area to 20 miles per hour, which the administration is proposing, will combine to make the area safer for everybody however they are travelling.

Crossing surveys at Seven Dials show that many people currently cross on the red man instead of waiting for the green man to appear. This can be dangerous as drivers will not be expecting a pedestrian to cross during the red man phase. Observations also show that the traffic light crossings result in a great deal of additional waiting time for vehicles, creating unnecessary delay and frustration. This occurs because the traffic lights will still change to red even though the pedestrian has already cross the road.

The proposals have been discussed with the representatives from the Federation of Independent Living on two occasions, firstly by myself and then by officers. The Federation agreed on balance they would benefit the mobility impaired. The questionnaire is intended to indicate a broad level of support or opposition to the proposals which were clearly identified in the consultation plans including the zebra crossings. It is not practical to seek to ask questions about each element of a scheme as the questionnaire would become overly lengthy and complicated.

Space is provided for additional comments and all comments made in this way are analysed to identify any particular trends or patterns and will be reported as part of the consultation report. It is worth noting that 49 of those who responded to the consultation indicated that they had a disability and that 59% of those indicated that they are in favour of the proposals.”

- 56.12 Mr. Evans stated that he did not have a supplementary question.
- 56.13 The Mayor thanked Mr. Evans for his question and invited Mr. Jenner to come forward and address the council.
- 56.14 Mr. Jenner asked the following question, “In light of the plethora of consultations being undertaken by the Green Administration, especially in relation to traffic proposals are Transport Consultations carried out in isolation of each individual case?”
- 56.15 Councillor Davey replied, “Engaging with the city is a priority for the Green administration and for the Council in general. Both transport work and the associated consultations are not carried out in isolation of each other, they form part of the forward plan which is outlined as a program of work on a yearly basis in the Annual Local Transport Plan Capital Spend which is agreed following finalisation of the allocation at Budget Council.

Transport project teams work closely together to ensure that all projects and the desired outcomes are co-ordinated and fit in with the aims of the Local Transport Plan that was agreed by all parties at Full Council in May 2011. The current year’s program was agreed in March this year by Cabinet and next years will go before the Policy and Resources Committee after Budget Council.

Consultations on major works are all timetabled in the Engagement Calendar which is overseen by the Community Engagement Partnership which has membership from all three parties.”

- 56.16 Mr. Jenner asked the following supplementary question, “Do you believe that the knock on effect of all the changes can be seen? For instance, with the closure of the Old Shoreham Road whilst the cycle lane was created, Wilbury Avenue and Wilbury Road became a cut through with now potentially an 18 month road closure due to the bridge being damaged caused by heavy traffic and much heavier usage. The lights on The Drive and Cromwell Road has increased the traffic on Fonthill Road, Montefiore Road, Lyndhurst Road and other roads off it. Therefore were these shown in any traffic analysis and have similar analyses been undertaken on a wider number of roads in relation to the Seven Dials proposals?”
- 56.17 Councillor Davey replied, “Yes I’m sure that’s the case, I’m not sure whether your referring to the time when the actual works take place or once the works are implemented but certainly with regards to whilst the works are taking place, a full plan will be developed by the officers responsible for the project and they will liaise with the highways management team to minimise disruption but it’s inevitable that where changes and improvements occur there will be some disruption and I’m sure that the many people who live around and use the new excellent crossing facilities which have been put on the Old Shoreham Road and will be at the junction of The Drive and Cromwell Road, will very much appreciate the new facilities once they are in place.”
- 56.18 The Mayor thanked Mr. Jenner for his questions and noted that this concluded the item.

57. DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

- 57.1 The Mayor reported that no deputations had been received from members of the public for the meeting.

58. PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE

- 58.1 The Mayor stated that the council’s petition scheme provided that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at a Council meeting. He had been notified of one such petition which had sufficient signatures to warrant a debate and therefore would call the lead petitioner to present their petition before opening the matter up for debate.

(a) Seven Dials Improvement Scheme

- 58.2 The Mayor then called on Mr. Evans to present the petition concerning the Seven Dials Improvement Scheme.
- 58.3 Mr. Evans thanked the Mayor and stated that a total of 1,385 people had signed the paper petition which read as follows:

“We the undersigned petition the council to reject the proposals as they stand. We oppose any scheme at the Dials which may lead to traffic being diverted onto residential streets

We are in favour of changes to our local area which improves the environment for all users.”

- 58.4 Mr. Evans stated that local residents and traders were in favour of improvements to the Seven Dials area, but were concerned over the consultation process and the impact of parking in surrounding areas should the current proposals be approved at the Transport Committee in January. He stated that the consultation process needed to be extended and the proposals reviewed in light of the concerns that were being raised and asked that consideration be given to delaying the implementation of the scheme.
- 58.5 Councillor Davey thanked Mr. Evans for attending the meeting and stated that a lot of work had been undertaken, including traffic modelling and monitoring of surrounding streets and this would be repeated if necessary. He also noted that there was an amendment from the Labour & Co-operative Group and stated that he was happy to accept it.
- 58.6 Councillor Robins thanked Councillor Davey for accepting the amendment and formally moved it on behalf of the Labour & Co-operative Group.
- 58.7 Councillor Mitchell formally seconded the amendment.
- 58.8 Councillor Cox stated that he had been in discussions with various people and local traders during the last two weeks and all had acknowledged the need to improve the Seven Dials area. Over the years there had been a number of accidents and concern remained that a cyclist would be killed if the junction was not improved. He queried whether the meeting that was now scheduled for next Monday would be considered as further consultation, bearing in mind that it was intended to receive a report to the January Committee meeting.
- 58.9 Councillor G. Theobald welcomed the petition and the amendment and stated that it was the third most dangerous junction in the city and something needed to be done to address this.
- 58.10 Councillor Buckley stated that she supported the proposals for improvement but felt that further consultation was required and that it needed to include interest groups such as the visually impaired and disability groups, so that their views could be taken into account.
- 58.11 Councillor Mitchell welcomed Councillor Davey's comments but expressed concern over the fact that the decision to take the improvement programme forward and undertake a consultation process had not been reported to the Transport Committee in the first instance. She hoped that the concerns raised by the petition and local residents would be taken into account in the report to the committee in January.
- 58.12 Councillor Davey noted the comments and stated that everyone agreed there was a need to take action and improve the Seven Dials area. The difficulty was in finding a solution that could meet the majority of aspirations. He also acknowledged that briefings should have been offered to councillors in regard to the scheme being taken forward and noted that these had now taken place and that further briefings would be made available on request. He was also willing to meet with residents and discuss matters so that concerns could be taken into account and hopefully a solution found to improve the vitality of the area.

58.13 The Mayor noted the comments and thanked Mr. Evans for attending the meeting and presenting the petition. He then put the recommendations to refer the petition to the Transport Committee as amended for consideration to the vote which was carried.

58.14 **RESOLVED:** That the petition be referred to the Transport Committee for consideration and the committee be requested to ensure that the following measures have taken place:

- (i) That in view of the large amount of concern expressed by residents living in the 7 Dials area as evidenced by this petition, the current proposals for the traffic and highway changes in their current form are reviewed;
- (ii) That adequate traffic modelling is undertaken before any further proposals are brought forward in order to fully understand the potential for any increase in 'rat-running' traffic through side roads; and
- (iii) That this work is followed by further public consultation on the detail of the scheme as it is proposed to affect pedestrians and any other changes in the plans to hopefully ensure good traffic flow.

59. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS.

59.1 The Mayor reminded the Council that written questions from Members and the replies from the appropriate councillor were now taken as read by reference to the list included in the addendum, which had been circulated as detailed below:

(a) Councillor G. Theobald

59.2 "In view of the welcome changes to local government finance which mean that councils such as Brighton & Hove will retain half of any increase in business rate income from 1st April 2013, does the Leader of the Council agree with me that it is vitally important for council tax payers that the Council does all it can to ensure that all businesses in the city are paying their full business rates as assessed by the Valuation Office?

Would the Leader of the Council also please advise me what was the rateable value, and consequently business rate paid by the Co-op on their London Road store (a) for the last full financial year of operation prior to closure in 2007; and (b) during each of the financial years since 2007 that the property has been left vacant."

Reply from Councillor J. Kitcat, Leader of the Council.

59.3 "We have an excellent foundation for Business Rates collection. Last year the collection rate was 98.56% and we are on target to increase collection further this year. Also, the Business Rates team is conducting a full review of processes, which will bring improvements both in customer service and collection.

Profiling the Business Rates taxbase itself is a core piece of work and is proving to be very complex. We do have concerns about the impact of ongoing appeals against Rateable Values. The government's Valuation Office Agency deals with these directly,

but they do not provide us with full information. We therefore have limited knowledge of the quantity and identity of appellants, when they will be answered, or whether individual cases are likely to go up or down. I hope Cllr Theobald will join me in lobbying government to demand improvements in the performance and openness of the Valuation Office Agency in these regards.

Meanwhile, we have engaged the consultants Wilks Head and Eve to help us with our profiling in this area. They will also be advising us more generally about accurately maximising the properties that are listed for Business Rates.

Regarding the Co-Op, payment was made in full while the property was occupied. The Rateable Value was £220,000, translating to a £100,398.76 charge in 2005/6 and £85,081.53 for a partial 2006/7 year. After that, changes were made to the Rateable Value due to splitting of the property, and there is currently a legally prescribed exemption in place due to Health and Safety issues. Our Revenues team continues to monitor the situation. More generally, we are looking at ways of encouraging empty properties back into use and have provisionally set funding aside in the budget for Business Rate incentives in this area.”

60. ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 60.1 The Mayor noted that notification of 7 oral questions had been received and invited Councillor Geoffrey Theobald to put his question to Councillor J. Kitcat.

King Alfred

- 60.2 Councillor G. Theobald asked, “I think we can all agree that something needs to be done with the King Alfred. As I’m sure Councillor Bowden is aware, there are now at least 5 developers in the City and beyond who have expressed an interest in providing new sporting and other leisure facilities on the King Alfred site. I’ve now met most of these people as I’m sure that you have too, Councillor Bowden and the on thing that they have all said to me is that they would like the Council to set out a timetable as soon as possible for when a preferred business plan will be chosen in order to give them the level of service they require to plan properly for their bid.

Indeed they have gone further and said that if the Council doesn’t give them that timetable then they may well walk away. Given at long last the cross party working group, on the King Alfred, has already had it’s first meeting without a timetable being set, will Councillor please give me, and more importantly those developers, a pledge to set that timetable at the next meeting of the Working Group in January?”

- 60.3 Councillor Bowden replied, “As you rightly said the cross party working group met on the 27th November for the first time, it’s not any cross party, we also have an external person in the guise of Tony Mernagh so we’ll have some very commercial sense brought to bear on our deliberations. The first meeting was to set up parameters, I’m very pleased that Councillor Wealls was part of that deliberation and we’re looking at a very long list of ideas that we would like to see come to the next committee where I do hope, indeed, that we will start setting out a timetable for our deliberations to be concluded and to go out to the market to tell them what we are hoping to see in this site which has to comply and conform with what we are hoping will be accepted within the City Plan.

There is a long wish list; what we can actually deliver, as you say there are a lot of people lining up some more interesting than others, I'm not going to see all those people yet because I don't want to start entering detailed conversations although I know that officers are having some of those conversations and they are shaping some of the thinking so the next meeting that we have, I think, I look to Councillor Wealls as I think it's in January, we will have a progress report, no one will be kept waiting around. We will not have a repeat of the Black Rock debacle where we had ten disappointing wasted years so we will move as quickly as possible to a situation where we hope we will have a preferred partner to work with."

60.4 Councillor G. Theobald asked the following supplementary question, "I do appreciate a response where the Chair refers to lots of ideas and wish lists and such like but what I'm really after is a timetable because these developers and others are going to get fed up and going to go away and the local MP, Mike Weatherly, has been making exactly the same point. I really think, for instance, September/October 2013 ought to be the Policy and Resources Committee that we aim at where we actually select the final bidder. That's my challenge to you and your administration. September or October 2013 Policy and Resources Committee; actually seeing the schemes and approving one of the developers so that we can then move on."

60.5 Councillor Bowden replied, "Well we all remember what happened with Black Rock before and we're not going to have the same issue happening in King Alfred this time. If we can move faster than September I guarantee we will, so we're not going to muck about, we all want to see cranes going up and action because we cannot put it off any longer. We are going to have discussions with Sport England and there may be more money from their Iconic Fund and I've got a scheduled meeting with them coming up possibly before Christmas."

At the first meeting of the working group; the members present, all expressed views of what they would like to see in the new site. Officers are going away to see how feasible some of those are, we'll come back, assess that and from the next meeting I hope we will be much clearer on the parameters of what we will be asking of developers. All the other schemes that have come forward at the moment are promising all sorts of ideas; multiplex cinemas, art centres and more. Once we have in our minds exactly what we want on a cross-party basis then we will invite serious discussions but if we can move faster then we certainly will."

Funding for Policing and Community Safety

60.6 Councillor Mitchell asked, "The newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex has recently announced that the overall policing budget for the county will stay the same for the forthcoming year but cuts to this budget are expected the year after. Could Councillor Kitcat please outline what discussions he has had with the Commissioner in relation to the future funding of the policing and community safety needs of the city and how he will ensure that the Commissioner particularly gains an appreciation of the preventative and support work currently being undertaken here and the importance of that work being continued in the face of further cut backs?"

60.7 Councillor J. Kitcat replied, "I have had a number of informal conversations with the Police Commissioner already since her election and I have a more formal meeting with

her on Tuesday but before the election itself even took place I worked with officers and colleagues to prepare a very extensive briefing pack for the candidates and whoever the successful candidate would be to make them as aware as possible to the unique and important work that our partnership on community safety, drugs prevention and so on, does in this city and the importance of protecting that and the informal insurances we've had so far are that the budget from the PCC will be protected until the 2013/14 financial year and that carry-overs that we have negotiated will be protected as well. Obviously like Council space, there is a level of uncertainty about what their future budget positions are but I'm committed to fighting for this City and getting as much budget as possible to provide those essential services to our communities."

- 60.8 Councillor Mitchell noted the response and stated, "I'm sure our 2 members from this authority on the Police and Crime panel will do all they can to put forward and make the case for the policing and community needs of this city to be adequately funded. I would actually hope that there is a way that this Council can also place some part in holding Commissioner to account and therefore I look forward to seeing how this role will be developed and how the wishes of this Council can be adequately represented as part of that process."

Coach Parking

- 60.9 Councillor Cox asked, "What are the Administration's plans for improving coach parking in Brighton and Hove?"
- 60.10 Councillor Davey replied, "As I'm sure you're aware, this is not an easy problem to solve otherwise I'm sure it would have been solved by the previous Conservative Administration or by the Labour Administration that preceded it. The main problem is the lack of availability of a suitable location for a coach park here. Space in the City is of a premium. I suggested at the last Transport Committee Meeting that we identify funding for a proper study to be commissioned that will look at the current situation, seeing what can be learned from elsewhere and be tasked with identifying possible solutions. So if we get capital funding to be agreed at Full Council and the subsequent agreement by Policy & Resources, that study could start in the next financial year. I would propose that all parties will have input into the brief for that study and will be given the opportunity to input into it."
- 60.11 Councillor Cox asked the following supplementary question, "Could Councillor Davey clarify what's happened to the £100,000 that was set aside for a temporary coach park and whether a full equality impact assessment was done on the decision to not have a temporary coach park; the impact, in particular, on the disabled, the young and the elderly who are predominantly coach users?"
- 60.12 Councillor Davey replied, "There was no concrete decision, or certainly business case to build a coach park and as I know you're only to aware the £100,000 was used by your party to part fund the freeze in Council tax at Budget Council in February this year so basically the answer to the question of what happened to the £100,000 is that you spent it."

Free Parking for the Christmas Period

60.13 Councillor Robins asked, "Will Councillor Davey reconsider his opposition to allow free parking in Brighton and Hove in the run up to Christmas and give a boost to the local traders in the same way that other Sussex towns are doing?"

60.14 Councillor Davey replied, "Parking charges encourage a high turnover of vehicles in our car parks on street. This in turn reduces queues to enter our car parks and helps reduce congestion which is good for shops and good for business. At the same time the Council has invested £4m in our car parks dramatically improving the parking experience for the city's drivers. Far from supporting local traders, offering free parking would mean that less parking was available for those wishing to use local shops. As parking spaces would be taken up by long term parkers, the end result would be that there would be fewer spaces available for shoppers and more drivers trying to use them. In an excellent report which I could commend to Councillor Robins from the RAC it said that, "there is evidence that such free parking does not provide additional parking resources for shoppers." Should you wish to check it; out it is called 'Space and Perspectives on Parking Policy' and it came out in July this year.

Another recent report carried out for London boroughs in October this year concluded that there is no such thing as free parking. I quote, "all of the research reviewed including that sponsored by the Industry Association such as the British Parking Association highlights that somebody has to pay for development and maintenance for parking spaces as well as the management of any enforcement regime to ensure that efficient use, where parking is the responsibility of Local Authorities, it is the local tax payers who pick up the cost of provision if revenue is not sufficient to cover costs." If we were to offer free parking in the run up to Christmas that would cause a significant budget pressure and that would be in the region of £30-40,000 a day should you wish to extend that for a week, it would not be probably over £100,000 there and should you wish to extend that for a month you'd be looking at £500,000.

As most of the street parking is shared with residents it would make it much more difficult for residents for residents to find spaces near their homes particularly in the City Centre and it would of course also add to both congestion and air pollution. You must remember that money will have to be found from somewhere and particularly as the income is used to pay the loans, agreed by all parties in this chamber, to refurbish the Council Car Parks."

60.15 Councillor Robins noted the response and stated "I'll take that as a no then shall I?"

Intelligent Commissioning

60.16 Councillor Janio asked, "Would the Leader of the Council please confirm that with over 500 Council employees holding the title of Manager, that the new Chief Executive's terms of reference include reducing the management overheads that currently devour a disproportionate amount of the Council Budget and thus enable essential front line service, not just to be maintained, but in increased during the current budget discussions?"

60.17 Councillor J. Kitcat replied, "I always find it a bit difficult to take these kinds of questions from a Conservative Councillor when it's their Government imposing utterly

disproportionate cuts on the Council Budget. It's a bit rich Councillor Janio when Mr Pickles and his fellow Ministers match the level of cuts that they're imposing on Local Government, perhaps we can have another conversation, but when your own Conservative Chairman of the LGA points out that it's 28% reduction for Local Government that have been delivered so far and much more to come sadly and only 8% for Whitehall. There's a bit of a disconnect there and that's not right.

In terms of your question Councillor, what I'd say to you is first of all I reject this whole simplistic notion of front line versus back office. You can't have a front line without the back office; the two go together so let's have a sensible mature discussion about services. How they're funded and how they work because all levels of officers are key to delivering but of course we need to be efficient which is why since we took control of this Council we've delivered ever greater under spends earlier and the VFM has been exceeding targets so we have been finding savings, we have had to reduce the head count, unfortunately, but there have been no compulsory redundancies so I think, given the appalling circumstances of Government, we're doing incredibly well and I'm delighted that our new Chief Exec is on board and is going to take us further on that."

60.18 Councillor Janio asked the following supplementary question, "Would he like me to sit one afternoon with him and explain the bureaucracy of this Council?"

60.19 Councillor J. Kitcat replied, "I noted that Councillor Cox appreciated my answer earlier on about the division between Councillors and Officers and it's sad that Councillor Janio didn't quite get that which is the point that we set the goals and the Policies of this Council and we don't meddle in the management grades. That is an officer matter and I'm not going to discuss it further."

Paring on Grass Verges and Pavements in North Portslade

60.20 Councillor Gilbey asked the following question, "Since the construction of PACA's new Sixth Form Site began on Chalkey Road on the sports centre car park site, despite an alternative car park being made nearby on the PACA site, vehicles belonging to sports centre users are currently parking on the wide grass verges on Chalkey Road; not only damaging the verges but causing a danger to the pedestrians with vehicles skidding out of control. I am pleased that this area is to be looked at as a pilot but what interim measures are to be taken and when?"

60.21 Councillor Davey replied, "I'm pleased you and your Ward have agreed for this to be a pilot for the testing out of new powers to restrict parking on grass verges. I know that you've met with officers already and I think that enforcement action is taken by Council parking attendants where waiting restrictions apply and officers are investigating other options to protect the foot way such as improved signing, subject to identifying resources. So I think it's actually something that you've been involved in a lot more than I have and you've been meeting with officers about this. I think there's probably very little that can be done and it's probably going on for some time and these new powers can be agreed at Transport Committee in January and subject to that, we'll try to get those in as soon as possible."

60.22 Councillor Gilbey asked the following supplementary question, "I understand that if the pilot is approved the scheme wouldn't be implemented until next summer. The building is actually going on until September 2013 so would you consider taking funding for

these pilots from the well funded Local Transport Plan Budget so that they can be implemented more quickly?”

60.23 Councillor Davey replied, “We’ll do everything possible, subject to the agreement at Transport Committee and hopefully maybe discuss it at Transport Committee to bring these through as quickly as possible.”

Allocation Policy for New Build

60.24 Councillor Mears asked the following question, “Housing Committee has overall responsibility for the Council’s housing functions which includes allocations to new build and refurbish properties. Following on from the Housing Committee Meeting where confirmation was given that the Council now has only one Housing Allocation Policy that started under our administration, can the Lead Member of Housing confirm when the review of the Allocation Policy will take place?”

60.25 Councillor Wakefield replied, “All Council Housing properties, whether new build or otherwise are allocated as Councillor Mears has said, per the Allocation Policy which, as Councillor Mears has said, is the same Allocation Policy at present that the Conservative Administration put into place. The Allocations Policy will be looked at, I don’t have a firm date as to when at the moment.”

60.26 Councillor Mears asked the following supplementary question, “As we’ve already received consultation papers from Central Government around the Allocation Policy, these papers came out in June, I think it’s about time that we actually had a date set for Housing Committee to discuss this Allocation Policy, bearing in mind it is the Housing Committee that has the housing function under the Housing Act to ensure that all properties are appropriately allocated and to ensure that if they are disabled units; they are actually allocated to the required standards of the people that most need them. I would like reassurance from the Member of Housing that she will bring this paper to the Housing Committee with a firm date so the Housing Committee can actually discuss it in detail.”

60.27 Councillor Wakefield replied, “Certainly it will come to Housing Committee that is the correct place for it to come. I don’t have a date at the moment, I will re-iterate that, but it will be coming. Just to reassure everybody that units that are adapted for people with needs are given to people with needs and we will be continuing a fair and open Allocations Policy as per the one your Administration had put in place. There will be at some point, it isn’t timetabled yet, a need to review the policy and obviously the right place for that to be discussed will be at Housing Committee.”

60.28 The Mayor noted that this concluded the questions from Members.

61. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

(a) Callover

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

- Item 62 - Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions Reform
- Item 63 - Council Tax Support System – Final Scheme

Item 66 - Two-Year-Old Free Early Learning Entitlement

(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports

61.2 The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the following reports on the agenda with the recommendations therein had been approved and adopted:

Item 64 - Statement of Gambling Pursuant to the Gambling Act 2005

Item 67 - Part Two Minutes – Exempt Category 3

Item 68 - Part Two Proceedings

(c) Oral Questions from Members

61.3 The Mayor noted that there were no oral questions in relation to those items that had not been reserved for discussion.

62. COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS REFORM

62.1 Councillor Littman introduced the report stated that he wished to place his thanks to the officers involved in producing the report on record. He believed that the proposals were excellent and that the changes would encourage a greater turnover of empty properties.

62.2 Councillor A. Norman welcomed the report and the flexibility that the proposed changes provided in terms of council tax and hoped that it would encourage the release of long-term empty properties. She also thanked the officers involved in producing the report and sought clarification in regard to paragraph 3.1.3 and the ability to extend the 6-month period in exceptional circumstances.

62.3 Councillor Hamilton welcomed the report and stated that he believed in provided the potential to raise extra income and hoped that the turnover of empty properties would be speeded up.

62.4 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that he supported the proposals and hoped that genuine home-owners who had to leave their property would not be penalised if they failed to sell their homes within the 6-month period. He noted that the Leader of the Council had stated that cases would be treated on their individual merits at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting.

62.5 Councillor J. Kitcat welcomed the support for the report and its proposals and noted that there were approximately 15,000 people on the housing waiting list. He hoped that the changes would encourage landlords to release properties and a behavioural change that would see long-term empty property numbers reducing. He also confirmed that the scheme's flexibility meant that cases could be treated on their merits and extensions granted in exceptional circumstances.

62.6 Councillor Wealls queried the value of the consultation process which had not been obligatory and had not resulted in any real benefit and therefore suggested that there was a need to give consideration to the cost of such consultation exercises in the current economic climate.

62.7 Councillor Littman noted the comments and thanked the cross-party scrutiny panel for their recommendations and stated that where appropriate exceptional cases would be treated on their merits. He believed the consultation process had been worthwhile and noted that it was expected that 70% of improvements would be undertaken within the 6-week period.

62.8 The Mayor noted that the recommendations had been moved and put them to the vote.

62.9 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Council abolishes the 10% Second Home Discount, meaning that those liable for Second Homes will pay full Council Tax from 1 April 2013;
- (2) That the Council retains the current arrangement for empty dwellings undergoing repair or structural work, namely that liable parties will receive a 100% discount for up to 12 months, or for 6 months after work is complete, whichever is sooner. This provision is currently known as a "Class A Exemption";
- (3) That the Council introduces a period of up to six weeks 100% discount for dwellings that are empty and unfurnished, to replace the current six month exemption known as Class C;
- (4) That officers will have discretion, (a) to give an additional period of up to six weeks 100% discount after a change of liable party and (b) in exceptional circumstances, to extend the six week 100% discount to an absolute maximum of three months;
- (5) That the Council introduces an Empty Home Premium at the maximum 50%, meaning that those liable for empty dwellings will have to pay 150% Council Tax after two years of the dwelling remaining empty;
- (6) Accordingly that the Council makes the formal determinations and decisions for the financial year commencing on 1 April 2013 and subsequent financial years as set out in Appendix 4;
- (7) That the Director of Finance and other relevant officers identified in the Council's Scheme of Delegations to Officers as responsible for local taxation services and revenues and benefits, be authorised to take all appropriate steps to implement and administer the recommendations, including publishing in accordance with statutory requirements; and
- (8) That the Head of Law be authorised to amend the Council's constitution by the addition in Part 3.1 (Council Functions) of a new paragraph in section 3.01 after the paragraph relating to Policy and Budget: "Council Tax: Exercising any function which, under section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, may only be discharged by the authority.

Note:

62.10 The Mayor then adjourned the meeting for a refreshment break 6.15pm.

62.11 The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 7.00pm.

63. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SYSTEM - FINAL SCHEME

- 63.1 Councillor Littman introduced the report and stated that having had to take on the responsibility for administering and producing a council tax support system he believed that officers had produced an exceptional scheme. He noted that the council would be putting in £1m towards the scheme, in order to ensure that the vast majority of people would pay less than £2 a week in council tax. He therefore recommended the scheme to the council.
- 63.2 Councillor A. Norman stated that it was an excellent report and wished to place on record her thanks to the officers concerned. She referred to paragraph 3.16 and stated that she hoped appropriate measures would be set in place to keep the potential for fraud to a minimum.
- 63.3 Councillor Hamilton noted that the Government's decision to give local authorities responsibility for their own council tax support scheme had come with a cut in level of funding available to support such a scheme. He was concerned that the changes would result in a reduction in the collection rate and add pressure for those agencies that offered support and advice for debt management.
- 63.4 Councillor G. Theobald stated that the Administration had the choice to fully fund the scheme and it was for the council to decide on how resources were distributed. He noted that the Government had sought to enable local authorities to have greater control over their own schemes as part of its management of deficit that had been inherited.
- 63.5 Councillor J. Kitcat stated that he believed the Government had not given the process sufficient consideration and had issued regulations at the last minute which had not helped in enabling officers to develop the scheme. He believed that the scheme before the council was likely to be one of the best in the country and noted that the council was further ahead than many other authorities because of the work undertaken by the officers.
- 63.6 Councillor Phillips stated that she had chaired the scrutiny review panel which had been established following the Leader's request for a review of the changes that were being recommended by the Government. She wished to thank her fellow panel members and the representative from the East Sussex Credit Union and noted that the majority of recommendations had been taken on board. However, she was concerned that for many households the additional council tax payment was going to prove to a real hardship.
- 63.7 Councillor Janio suggested that the heart of the problem was as a result of the previous Government's failure to control borrowing and it was now left to the current Government to tackle the issues. He suggested that the Administration should do the same and find the resources to fully fund the scheme should they wish to do so.
- 63.8 Councillor Jarrett stated that the Government had given the responsibility to local authorities but at the same time reduced the level of funding available. It was for each

local authority to determine how they managed the situation and he believed the officers had done a tremendous job in bringing forward a scheme that could be funded and that could support many of the households affected.

- 63.9 Councillor Powell stated that in her role as a career adviser she had seen more long-term unemployed people in the last 6 months than ever before and suggested that the changes were the start of an attack on the Welfare State. She believed officers had done an excellent job in developing a scheme for the city and suggested that the Government should look at ways of helping local authorities to administer their schemes.
- 63.10 Councillor Jones stated that whilst he believed it was the best scheme possible for the city, he remained unconvinced that it would protect the most vulnerable in the city. He was concerned that the council was being placed in such a position and unsure as to whether he could support the recommendations before the council meeting today.
- 63.11 Councillor Mears stated that she was disappointed by the various comments attributing the blame on the Government and pointed out that it was for the Administration to look after the interests of the residents of the city. As such, they could decide to identify the necessary funding for the scheme so that there was no impact of those in receipt of council tax benefit and to set a budget that was appropriate for all.
- 63.12 Councillor Littman noted the comments and stated that he believed it was a fair scheme for the city and that without it there was a likelihood of a more costly one being imposed. He therefore recommended that it be approved and noted that it would need to be reviewed, in order for a permanent scheme to be established for 2014.
- 63.13 The Mayor noted that the recommendations contained in the report had been moved and put them to the vote.
- 63.14 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny report at appendix 1, its recommendations and the Policy & Resources Committee's responses at appendix 2 to the report be noted;
 - (2) That the information about the Government's October announcement of transition grant at appendix 3; be noted;
 - (3) That the feedback from consultation and the responses at appendix 5 and section 4 of the report be noted;
 - (4) That the Equality Impact Assessment at appendix 6 to the report be noted;
 - (5) That it be agreed that the proposals in the draft scheme published in July be adopted with the amendments necessary to satisfy the criteria for transition grant set out in the October announcement;
 - (6) That the full text of the final scheme as detailed in appendix 4 and in the list of amendments as detailed in the addendum papers be agreed;

- (7) That accordingly to make the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Pensioners) (Brighton & Hove City Council) 2013 and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Persons who are not Pensioners) (Brighton & Hove City Council) 2013 (which together make up the main scheme) as set out in Part 1 of appendix 4 and the Discretionary Council Tax Scheme (Brighton & Hove City (Council) 2013 (the discretionary scheme) as set out in Part 2 of appendix 4;
- (8) That the Director of Finance be authorised to take all appropriate steps to implement and administer the main scheme and the discretionary scheme, including (1) publishing the main scheme in accordance with statutory requirements, (2) applying for any funding for which the Council may be eligible, and (3) responding to any other government initiatives or consultation exercises; and
- (9) That the Head of Law be authorised to make suitable amendments to the Council's constitution to reflect the council's new functions in relation to council tax reduction schemes, in particular (1) to indicate in Part 3 (Council Functions) that only the Full Council can make, revise or replace its main scheme and (2) to replace in the Schemes of Delegation to Committees and Sub-committees and to officers any references to council tax benefit with references to council tax reduction schemes.

64. STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY PURSUANT TO THE GAMBLING ACT 2005

- 64.1 **RESOLVED:** That the final version of the Statement of Gambling Policy (included with the report) be adopted.

65. NOTICES OF MOTION.

(a) Impact of Parking Charges on the Local Economy

- 65.1 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Cox on behalf of the Conservative Group and seconded by Councillor G. Theobald.
- 65.2 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

"This Council notes with grave concern that visitor numbers in Brighton & Hove fell by 10.8% year on year in the first seven months of 2012 and agrees with the many local traders on the seafront and in the main shopping areas of the city who say that one of the predominant reasons for this drop in numbers was the largest increase in parking charges ever implemented. This is borne out by:

- a) figures from other seaside resorts such as Eastbourne, where visitor numbers dropped by only 3%, and Bournemouth, where numbers actually increased by over 13% during the same period.
- b) The fact that visitor numbers to Brighton & Hove decreased significantly more (over 14%) after the new parking charges were introduced in April.
- c) Targeted Budget Management figures that project a large shortfall on the extra £1.3 million income that the Administration sought from parking charge increases

Furthermore, this Council regrets that the remit of the ongoing citywide parking review does not include issues of charging and notes the concerns of local traders and businesses who feel that they have not been properly consulted as part of the review.

This Council recognises the significant environmental benefits of encouraging the use of trains, buses, bicycles and walking but also agrees that using high parking charges as a tool to force people out of their cars damages the local economy and gives the dangerous impression that Brighton & Hove is a 'rip off' city that takes both visitors and residents for granted.

Therefore, this Council resolves to call on the Transport Committee to ensure:

- a) As part of the ongoing citywide parking review, to undertake detailed financial modelling to determine the impact on the local economy of different parking charge levels both on-street and off-street (including the decision to delete certain tariffs, thus forcing residents and visitors to pay for parking for longer than they need);
- b) As part of this work, to present options to deliver a real terms decrease in parking charges particularly in the areas of the city where local businesses are suffering the most from the impact of high charges. These decreases should bring charges back in line with the level they were at in 2011/12;
- c) To carry out a specific targeted consultation with local traders and their representative organisations about the impact of the Administration's parking charge increases together with the substantial increases in Trader and Business Permits and to act on the findings of that consultation;
- d) To examine ways of making better use of the city's under-occupied car parks such as Norton Road for the benefit of both local businesses and residents;
- e) That a report covering the whole parking situation comes back to the Transport Committee meeting on 15th January to enable the findings to be fed into the Council's 2013/14 Budget."

65.3 The motion was carried.

(b) Rugby World Cup Bid

65.4 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor G. Theobald on behalf of the Conservative and Labour & Co-operative Groups. Councillor Theobald also moved a joint amendment to the notice of motion on behalf of the Conservative, Labour & Co-operative and Green Groups, which was seconded by Councillors Mitchell and Bowden.

65.5 The Mayor then put the following motion as amended to the vote:

"This Council warmly welcomes the long listing of the AMEX Community Stadium to host matches in the 2015 Rugby World Cup. It notes that should the bid, submitted with

cross party support by Brighton & Hove Albion FC, be successful it will help increase tourism, inspire young people to take up the sport and significantly boost the economy of our City. The bid has the full backing from all elected members of Brighton & Hove City Council who undertake to provide their continued support throughout the selection process, and beyond, if successful.”

65.6 **The motion was carried.**

(c) Support Properly Funded Early Years Education and Childcare
(e) Free Childcare for Disadvantaged Two-Year-Olds

65.7 The Mayor noted that the notice of motions listed as 58(c) and 58(e) on the agenda related to the same issue and therefore stated that he proposed to take both motions under one debate but to hold separate votes on each motion.

65.8 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Mitchell on behalf of the Labour & Co-operative Group and seconded by Councillor Gilbey.

65.9 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Shanks on behalf of the Green and Conservative Groups and seconded by Councillor Wealls.

65.10 The Mayor then put the following motions to the vote:

(c) “This council believes that all families in Brighton and Hove should have access to good quality, affordable early years education and childcare. It praises the work of the city’s early years providers and pledges to continue to support their valuable work. It recognises that access to childcare and early education is a vital part of maintaining a strong local economy that enables parents who wish to work to do so and where children can be helped to get off to a good start in life.

Furthermore, the council believes that properly funded family support projects and early intervention schemes such as Surestart are essential to help support struggling families and, by intervening early, to reduce future costs. It supports the free early learning places for 2 year olds being further extended to those on low incomes.

However, the council deplores the actions of the Government to effectively scrap the Early Intervention Fund in order to fund the free early learning places for 2 year olds, as confirmed by DCLG, and to also pass £300m from this fund to the Treasury for purposes that remain unclear. It notes that as a result of these actions this council will lose approximately £3m in 2013/14 from its own Early Intervention Grant funding.

This council also raises the concern that whilst there will be a statutory duty placed upon it to provide the 600 early years places needed for 2 year olds living in areas of disadvantage from September 2013, with at least 1,300 similar places needing to be provided the following year, the Government is failing to give assurances that the necessary capital funding will be made available to create the places in the areas that need them most.

This council therefore;

- Expresses its strong concern that cuts to the Early Intervention Grant will impede the council's ability to properly support vulnerable families and children in Brighton & Hove and calls on the government to fund the early years places for 2 year olds with new money;
 - Supports the actions of the Conservative Leader of the LGA who has written to Ministers asking that the Government returns to councils the £300m cut from the EIG budget that represents a 1m cut per council and;
 - Calls on the Chief Executive to write to relevant Ministers requesting that they provide adequate capital funding for the provision of the additional early years places for 2 year olds so that the Council can properly fulfil the statutory duty placed upon it."
- (e) "This council welcomes the government initiative to extend the current entitlement of 15 hours a week free childcare for three and four olds to disadvantaged 2 year olds.

The proposal to extend to the most disadvantaged two year olds from September next year and then to the most disadvantaged 40% from September 2014 should make a real difference to these children's lives. It will also enable parents to re engage with education and/or employment (paid or voluntary).

The importance of the first few years of a child's life cannot be overstated. Children who have the right support in the foundation years enjoy better health, wellbeing, and achievement in school and later life. [1]

However, while we welcome this extension we ask the government to give us clarity on funding to support this, particularly for future years. We are concerned that the shortfall could mean in adequate provision of high quality free early education, particularly in the disadvantaged areas of our city."

[1] *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years: Proposed Changes to the Entitlement to Free Early Education and Childcare Sufficiency*, Department for Education.

65.11 The motions were carried.

(d) Council Tax Benefit Support

65.12 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Phillips on behalf of the Green Group and seconded by Councillor Duncan.

65.13 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

"This Council believes that the Government's devolution of responsibility for Council Tax Benefit support to local councils in the name of 'localism' is a cynical attempt to make councils take the blame for centrally-driven Benefit cuts. By arbitrarily reducing the amount of money transferred to councils to administer the scheme by ten per cent, it ensured that some of the most vulnerable and impoverished people in local

communities up and down the country would suffer. The Government further legislated that the new "local" schemes that councils devised had to ensure that pensioners were not adversely affected by the changes, leaving councils no choice but to pass on even bigger cuts in benefits to non-pensioners. This is neither fair nor localist, and taken with the other proposed Government changes to the Benefits System, represents a vicious attack on the less well off in our community. At the same time, Government cuts to local government funding of 25% over 4 years leave this council facing other tough choices on priorities. This council is disappointed that the localised scheme's first year of government funding assumes declining numbers of benefit claims, when all indicators suggest that numbers will be increasing. There will be no additional funding in future years for council tax support, which means that councils will be alone in bearing the costs of more benefits claims as a direct result of the government's economic mismanagement and welfare cuts. This council also deplores the government's reduced support for the administration costs councils bear when delivering the council tax support, further adding to the financial pressures facing local government.

The Council notes that unlike many councils across the country, we have agreed to reduce the cuts to benefits by transferring £1m of general funds and the establishment of a hardship fund.

In its 2013/14 budget provisions, through this and other schemes, the Council will ensure that targeted financial support is available to those households most badly affected by the Government's council tax benefit cuts.

The Council calls on the Government to restore the 10% cut made to council tax benefit and appeals to all elected representatives (councillors and MPs) in Brighton & Hove to lobby the Government to restore the full amount of council tax funding."

65.14 **The motion was carried.**

(f) Support Extra Funding for the Local Discretionary Social Fund

65.15 The Notice of Motion as detailed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Fitch on behalf of the Labour & Co-operative Group and seconded by Councillor Farrow.

65.16 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

"This Council notes that the government, as part of its welfare reform programme, will abolish the Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants scheme from April 2013, thereafter delegating responsibility and implementation to Local Authorities of a new scheme, the Local Discretionary Social Fund.

This Council also notes that the government is to dramatically reduce the amount of money available to local authorities for this new scheme with funding based on 2005/2006 levels of demand for the current Crisis Loan programme. As household budgets are squeezed across the city and the government's welfare reforms become a reality, the fear is that more and more people will turn to legal and illegal loan sharks in order to make up the shortfall in the help available.

This Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Minister for the Department of Work and Pensions to ask that more money is available for the new scheme, based on current demand and the anticipated increase as a result of the government's welfare reforms."

65.17 The motion was carried.

66. TWO YEAR OLD FREE EARLY LEARNING ENTITLEMENT

66.1 Councillor Shanks introduced the report and noted that it had been fully supported at the Children & Young People Committee and that the question of funding to support free early learning was to be debated later under the notices of motions.

66.2 Councillor Mitchell stated that the Labour & Co-operative Group had requested that the report be submitted for information as it provided background to the notice of motions on that were on the agenda.

66.3 The Mayor noted that the report had been referred for information and moved that it be noted.

66.4 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

67. MINUTES - EXEMPT CATEGORY 3

67.1 The part two minutes of the last meeting held on the 25th October 2012 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

68. PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

68.1 **RESOLVED:** That item 67 contained in part two of meeting remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

69. CLOSE OF MEETING

69.1 The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and wished them all a Happy Christmas and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of