

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES, COMMUNITY SAFETY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

2.00pm 13 OCTOBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD, HOVE, BN3 3BQ - HTH/CC

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Winder (Deputy Chair), Goldsmith (Opposition Spokesperson), Alexander, Czolak, Gajjar, McGregor, Mistry, Pickett and Sheard

11 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declaration of Substitutes

Councillor Sheard was present in place of Councillor Pumm.

(b) Declaration of Interests

Councillor Alexander declared that she had an interest in item 21 as she runs Brighton GrubHub on a voluntary basis, and has previously received funding from the community engagement fund, with the likelihood to apply to receive further funding in future.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

It was agreed that the press and public not be excluded.

12 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

13 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair gave the following communications:

I would like to begin by saying what a privilege it is to have a role in this Committee, working alongside all members of our city's diverse communities. Since our Labour administration took over, a lot has happened for equality, diversity, and inclusion in our city. We have built new relationships, committed to reaching out to listen to the needs of all our residents. Nobody should be left behind.

This month is Black History Month, a time dedicated to celebrating Black contributions in our city, country and around the world. It is a time to shine a light on those who have always fought against racism, injustice, and inequality.

Brighton and Hove City Council has launched a number of initiatives to ensure our city becomes a fairer and more inclusive space. The Fair and Inclusive Action Plan is a good example of what will be meaningful action that will remove barriers that still exist and will

empower people with different backgrounds to be the leaders of tomorrow. We all have a duty to deliver progress on equality and fair opportunities both within and outside of our Council roles.

At last week's Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Meeting, Councillors heard the very stark financial position the Council is in this year. There is a forecast overspend of almost £9m on the Council's General Fund revenue budget for 2023/24 and a cumulative budget gap of £73m estimated for the next 4 years. Every service has been asked to review budgets and identify where non-statutory and discretionary spend can be reduced. This will include our grant programmes to the community and voluntary sector.

Unfortunately, this may mean we have to close the Communities Fund early this year and withdraw the final round of funding. As soon as a decision is made, officers will be in contact with the groups that have already applied and let them know the situation. This is likely to be in early November.

14 CALL OVER

The following items were reserved for discussion:

- Item 19** Public Space Protection Orders
- Item 20** Nelson Row Public Space Protection Order
- Item 21** Third Sector Commission 2025-2029
- Item 22** Brighton and Hove Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026

There for the following items were agreed as per the recommendations in the reports:

- Item 18** Refugees, Migrants, and Asylum Seekers Update

15 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

15.1 The Chair invited Naomi Bos to ask her question on page 5 of Addendum 1:

Very pleased to see the draft VAWG strategy is on the agenda. Item 3.1 states the draft strategy has been put together "incorporating the learning from stakeholder consultations as well as the feedback from more recent consultative events". Please can you let me know specifically which stakeholders were consulted, and when and where the consultative events were held?

15.2 The Chair gave the following response:

Thank you for your question. Due to operational demands a written response will be sent to you in due course once a list has been compiled.

15.3 The Chair invited Nicola Benge to ask her question on page 5 of Addendum 1:

Could the committee explain why at a time of increasing issues around Violence Against Women and Girls in Brighton & Hove the city-wide VAWG forum hosted by BHCC hasn't met since April 2023? Despite continual

enquiries, no further VAWG forum meetings have been scheduled. Are there plans to restart this very soon?

15.4 The Chair gave the following response:

The VAWG forum is chaired by a senior CVS representative who is responsible for regulating meetings. Following the meeting in April a complaint was made and council officers have been trying to help the chair resolve this and agree arrangements. It is hoped that the next forum dates can then be agreed. The forum is a safe space for all attendees. Officers are hopeful that this meeting will be resumed shortly.

15.5 The Chair invited Nicola Benghe to ask the following supplementary question:

As violence against women and girls is a stated priority of this administration, bearing in mind that a draft VAWG Strategy is being presented to the Council today, will this Committee commit to ensuring that the violence against women and girls forum sits regularly to ensure the strategies can be delivered, and there is joined up working across all of the different delivery partners?

15.6 The Chair confirmed a written response would be sent to Nicola Benghe after the Committee.

16 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

16.1 The Chair invited Victoria Smith to join the meeting to hear the following response to the deputation presented at the previous Full Council meeting on 20 July 2023:

The consultation was delivered in line with advice and in consultation with Libraries Connected and the DCMS. The Library Service began the consultation as soon as was practical, in response to the decision made by the councillors in February 2023.

Closing libraries is not an easy decision, especially for us as our Administration recognises the importance of library access across the city.

Mile Oak Library was considerably more expensive per visit than any other library, including the other community libraries of similar size. Pre-pandemic the library was already the most expensive in the city to run and, with falling numbers of customers post-pandemic, the cost of the service became prohibitively expensive. Where other libraries have gradually increased their visitor numbers to closer to pre-pandemic levels, Mile Oak did not recover in a comparable way.

The Library Service works with residents across the city and continues to explore ways to promote reading and learning in the area. This included working with local schools to promote the Summer Reading Challenge 2023 with many young people from the area taking part.

Cllr Pumm is working with ward councillors to address the cost of living impact and community spaces available in this part of the city.

17 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

17.1 The Chair invited Councillor Goldsmith to ask her question regarding Transphobia found on page 19 of the Agenda:

In light of Cllr Thomson's tweets – regarded by many in the LGBTIQ+ community as transphobic – what is the administration doing to tackle transphobia within its group, and how will it meaningfully demonstrate to LGBTIQ+ people in this city that it will not hesitate to stand up for them in the face of hate and discrimination?

17.2 The Chair gave the following response:

The Administration's position was very clearly set out in the Leader's statement published in early September.

Excerpt:

"As your Labour Council, we stand in solidarity with our Trans, Nonbinary and intersex communities and are proud of our commitment for Trans equality and we celebrate our city's diversity.

I want to reassure the Trans community that any expressions of anti-trans sentiment in any form will not be tolerated".

The Lead Member for Equality has been meeting with members of the TNBI community to hear their concerns and priorities and will be working with the community to re-start the Trans subgroup of the city's Equality and Inclusion Partnership to bring public bodies and the community together to work on those priorities.

17.3 The Chair invited Councillor Goldsmith to ask the following supplementary question:

I think its interesting that you state about reinstating the trans/non binary group because there is currently a group on the equit partnership which is a trans subgroup, and I understand that Labour has been asked not to attend that because they don't believe that you are taking this seriously, and in terms of meeting with groups, I've actually been speaking with a few groups myself ands I was really disappointed to find out that a meeting of the voluntary community sector organisations on the 13th September, Councillor Sankey didn't answer various questions from LGBT Groups but promised a written answer by the 29 September. As of this Wednesday (11th) they still hadn't received a response, just an apology with no future commitments. I also heard from the Clare Project that Councillor Pumm had agreed that there would be 2 round table sessions with LGBTQ+ groups this month to discuss a path forward but they have never been given any dates. I am wondering what this means for reaching out and whether or not this administration thinks that's an acceptable way to treat LGBT groups within our city?

17.4 The Chair confirmed that a written response would be provided after the Committee.

17.5 The Chair invited Councillor Pickett to ask the question regarding the Anti Racism Strategy found on page 19 of the Agenda:

The Council's Anti-Racism Strategy was published and approved earlier this year by the previous Green administration, with cross-party support. Given

over half a year has passed since these commitments were made, when can we expect a directorate-wide update on how council is progressing with the Core Priority Actions outlined in the strategy, and to facilitate updates, would the chair consider returning the anti-racist strategy as a standing item on this agenda?

17.6 The Chair gave the following response:

Following on from the Council's pledge in 2020 to work towards being an anti-racist council and a set of initial actions, the development and adoption of the strategy was an important step to moving to making planned, systemic change. The priority actions identified in the strategy are for the five years of the strategy – they're focused on long-term change. Therefore, to make best use of staff, partner and community resources, bearing in mind some of the actions involve several different groups, updates on the strategy will be reported to the committee annually. This allows us to balance the limited resources of the council between action and change, and reporting and scrutiny. We will therefore have an update in March 2024.

18 REFUGEES MIGRANTS & ASYLUM SEEKERS UPDATE

RESOLVED:

That Committee:

1. Noted the council and its partners' work between September 2022 and September 2023 related to refugees and asylum seekers and developments in central government policy and practice over this period.
2. Noted the Homes for Ukraine funding and expenditure to date as detailed in paragraph 3.10.
3. Noted the steps being undertaken to secure City of Sanctuary re-accreditation in 2025 in accordance with the Council Plan.
4. Approved the re-procurement of refugee support services as outlined in section 6 of the report and delegates authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities to take all steps necessary or incidental to undertake this re-procurement and to award the contract.

19 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

19.1 The Chair invited Jo Player to introduce the report starting on page 43 of the Agenda.

19.2 Councillor Goldsmith raised queries about raised police presence disproportionately affecting minoritised groups and equalities impact reports, potentially including people experiencing homelessness.

RESOLVED:

That Committee:

1. Endorsed the continued use of the PSPOs relating to the exiting gating, dog control, and alcohol PSPOs for three years until further review is required in 2026. The orders will be amended to reflect these new dates.

20 NELSON ROW PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

20.1 The Chair invited Jo Player to introduce the report starting on page 73 of the Agenda.

20.2 Councillor Pickett raised queries about reviewing the Public Space Protection Order to check its success rate.

RESOLVED:

That Committee:

1. Approved the draft Nelson Row Public Space Protection Order (See appendix 1)

21 THIRD SECTOR COMMISSION 2025-2029

21.1 The Chair invited Emma McDermott to introduce the report.

21.2 Joanna Martindale and Councillors McGregor, Goldsmith, and Pickett raised queries about access to funding for small community groups and ringfencing funding for small charities.

21.3 Councillor Czolak raised queries about the Black and Racially Minoritised Community Voluntary Sector.

21.4 Councillor Sheard raised queries about the reasons behind the increase in funding for financial advice services.

RESOLVED:

That Committee:

1. Delegated authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities to develop, in consultation with the community & voluntary sector, a Third Sector Commissioning Prospectus for 2025-2029, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of this report.

2. Noted that a report will be brought back to Committee for final approval of the Prospectus, following the conclusion of the consultation.

22 BRIGHTON AND HOVE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY 2023-2026

22.1 The Chair invited Jo Player to introduce the report starting on page 175 of the Agenda.

22.2 Councillor Goldsmith raised queries about commissioning of support services, social value frameworks, local value, the building member working group, and the procurement process.

22.3 Councillor Pickett raised queries about local disability groups, guidance for colleges and secondary schools to combat misogyny, and the White Ribbon UK Accreditation.

22.4 Councillor McGregor raised queries about addressing housing and lighting issues to help resolve some problems with violence.

22.5 Joanna Martindale raised queries about the formation of the strategy and creating action plans.

22.6 Councillor Sheard raised queries about the numbering of priorities in the report, and managing harmful external influences.

RESOLVED:

That Committee:

1. Noted the work undertaken to date and agrees that officers commence a public consultation on the draft Strategy attached as Appendix 1.
2. Noted that the Strategy will be brought back to this Committee for formal approval once it has been finalised with the Community Safety Partnership.

23 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 2:52pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

