

Brighton & Hove City Council

Policy & Resources Committee

4.00pm 12 May 2022

Hove Town Hall - Council Chamber

Minutes

Present: Councillor Mac Cafferty (Chair) Druitt (Joint Deputy Chair), Gibson (Joint Deputy Chair), Appich (Joint Opposition Spokesperson), Bell (Group Spokesperson), Clare, Evans, McNair, Yates and Moonan

Other Members present: Dr Sasidharan

Part One

128 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

128.1 Councillor Moonan was present in substitution for Councillor Allcock.

(b) Declarations of Interest

128.2 Councillor Clare referred to Item 140 Changes to Coroners Service, She declared that she worked for Martlets Hospice, but was not in a position of management control.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

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

128.4 **RESOLVED:** That there were no Part Two Items on the agenda and so the press and public would not be excluded from the meeting.

129 MINUTES

129.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

130 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

130.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Last week the Bank of England reported that inflation is at a 30-year high and could hit 10% by Christmas. For Brighton & Hove residents that means the cost-of-living crisis will

continue to rip through our poorest households. This was on top of the bank's warning that we could plunge into recession before the end of the year, with all of the associated devastating effects on businesses, livelihoods and local communities.

The government had the opportunity twice in the last month, during the Spring Statement and in this week's Queens Speech. But they missed an open goal they are a government out of ideas, there were no measures aimed at tackling rising costs, no windfall tax on the big energy companies. No end to the cuts to public services and no plan to rebuild social security in this country following the abysmal £20 cut to universal credit.

I am angry that it's got to the point where in one of the wealthiest countries in the world people are routinely struggling with the rising cost of food, essential goods and fuel bills. With frightening economic storms surrounding our city, I asked for an action plan on the cost-of-living crisis to be produced, and this is the first item on the agenda today. Clear information will be provided on the money section of the Council's website and will build on the leaflet which was circulated to every household earlier in the year, outlining what support was available. We are identifying those at risk of fuel poverty and working with the community and voluntary sector organisations to reach people who may not be coming to the Council but may still need our support. The Community Hub is still open and residents can access help on 01273 293117.

We are rolling out a huge programme to improve the energy efficiency of both council homes and those in the private sector. This is because through practical things like insulation, there will be warmer, healthier homes for residents, reduced bills and reduce our impact on the environment.

We've also increased the council's enforcement team, to send a clear message that action will be taken on landlords renting out cold leaky homes that fail to meet energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector.

While we are reallocating funds for Free School Meals for both Spring and Summer half terms and given that 1 in 5 of the 6,000 people in Brighton & Hove needing emergency food are children, this will provide a lifeline for families across the city.

The council is one of the city's biggest employers with many staff living here and we're committed to help. We have already abolished the lowest pay scales and this week we wrote to the staff unions with a pay offer recognising the impact of the crisis on our poorest paid. Work is ongoing to seek to ensure staff are supported as far as possible. 3,150 staff would see their pay improve, so it's a significant improvement for a lot of staff at a time when it's desperately needed.

Four new electric refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) will be added to the council's fleet, part of plans to end the use of all petrol and diesel vehicles across the council by 2030. This is an important step to replace our existing fleet of vehicles to more sustainable alternatives and reduce the carbon footprint of the council.

Finally, we have had to pull the paper on the Sussex Integrated Care System Governance (Item 139). Since the introduction of the Health and Social Care Bill and its progress between both Houses, Green Councillors have continued to be worried about the lack of democratic oversight in the process and there is more work to do on the

structure to ensure democratic involvement by locally elected representatives. We continue to engage in discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Group over the next few days and will bring a paper to an Urgency P&R shortly.

131 CALL OVER

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

- Item 135 Cost of Living Response Including the Household Support Fund 2022
- Item 136 Fleet Procurement
- Item 137 Circular Economy Routemap
- Item 138 I360 Loan Restructure
- Item 142 Review of the Council's Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee and Its Member Working Groups
- Item 143 Ukraine Update

The following items on the agenda were agreed without discussion:

- Item 140 Changes to the Coroners Service
- Item 141 Procurement of Electoral Services Registration and Returning Officer Printing Services

132 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

132.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions or Deputations

133 ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

133.1 There were no items referred from Council held on 7 April 2022.

134 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

134.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions, Letters or Notices of Motion.

135 COST OF LIVING RESPONSE INCLUDING THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2022

135.1 The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented an overview of the cost of living crisis, outlining the key causes, impacts and measures being taken to mitigate the impact, including the identification of gaps, and sought approval for proposals on the allocation of the £2.140m 2022/23 Household Support Fund (HSF), which has been re-focused by the government to respond to the cost of living impact.

135.2 Councillor Yates referred to appendix 1 and noted that the report had identified a funding shortfall in being able to deliver the Food Strategy with only £45k of the £200k being available. The Chief Finance officer said that funds available to Council were limited but the HSF would result in a significant amount of money for residents to purchase food, and appendix 5 set out how the previous HSF was allocated.

135.3 Councillor Moonan referred to paragraph 6.4 and the funding available and asked how this would be passed to the public as quickly as possible. The Chief Finance Officer said it would be a challenge as there were several sources of funding all with their own terms

and conditions. The Revenues and Benefits Manager said that the Council had good relations with partners and that was helping with the allocation of funding, and said that if a person applied for one benefit it would be checked to ensure that they would be receiving all they were entitled to.

135.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee –

- (i) Notes the content of the report, and the mitigations set out in Appendices 1 to 4;
- (ii) Noted the £0.200m expected to be set aside from the council's 2021/22 outturn to mitigate some of the cost of living impacts (to be considered at the July Policy & Resources Committee following closure of the 2021/22 accounts);
- (iii) Approved the re-allocation of £0.231m from the provisional Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) underspend, as set out in Appendix 5, to provide match funding for the Household Support Fund to enable a full provision of Free School Meal vouchers at the previous voucher value and to bolster the element of the Household Support Fund provided for support to other households;
- (iv) Approved the proposed allocation of the 2022/23 Household Support Fund set out in Appendix 5, noting the associated Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 6, and delegates necessary adjustments to the approved allocations to the Chief Finance Officer following consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee and Opposition Spokespersons, provided any adjustment is compliant with the council's rules for virement as defined under Financial Regulations;
- (v) Noted that Housing Committee will be considering progress and priorities for both the Warmer Homes and retrofitting programmes at the June meeting, including consideration of how these initiatives will contribute to improving the energy efficiency of homes and mitigating the impacts of fuel poverty to respond to both the cost of living crisis as well as meeting the council's carbon reduction commitments;
- (vi) Agreed that the City Council will promote the package of new support for residents under a new section of the council's website called "Worried about money", which will provide one place where residents can access links to information and support;
- (vii) Agreed that the city council supports co-establishing a new 'Brighton & Hove Cost of Living Support Fund' with CVS partners to run an appeal aimed at helping some of the city's most marginalised residents which will see donations support the work of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership;
- (viii) Agreed that the City Council should work with:
 - (1) Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) partners to lobby government ministers on the cost of living impact, and;
 - (2) the city's MP's to lobby government for sustainable funding for the City.

136 FLEET PROCUREMENT

- 136.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture which set out the Council's approach to converting the fleet from diesel and petrol vehicles to low emission vehicles, set out the procurement plan for City Environmental Management (CEM) for 2022-23 and sought permission to enter into a contract to procure four electric powered side-loading RCVs at a value of £2.400m, and authority to increase borrowing by £0.200m in 2022-23 to enable the purchase of new electric fleet for the recently insourced Toilet Cleansing Service.
- 136.2 Cllr Appich had a number of questions and asked: how often vehicles broke down and what the cost of repairs were over a year; if it was correct that for procurement purposes a direct award could be made through an existing framework on the basis that this was a specialist item that is only provided by one supplier; if there would be savings from buying electric vehicles; did the council have a carbon budget and if so how would the reduction in carbon emissions impact on that; and asked for more information on the toilet cleaning vehicles? Officers confirmed that on average a vehicle broke down once a week with an average cost of £26k - £30k per year; any procurement was done in accordance with the approved framework; there would be savings due to a reduction in the cost of maintenance of the vehicles; there would be carbon savings and would provide a figure after the meeting; the council currently had 6 'toilet vehicles' which were small electric vans which were able to transport cleaning equipment.
- 136.3 Councillor Moonan asked how long the warranties would be on the new vehicles and was advised it was five years.
- 136.4 Councillor Druitt thanked officers for the report and said there many advantages to electric vehicles and this was welcomed.
- 136.5 Councillor McNair thanked officers for the report and said that improvements to the service would be welcomed.
- 136.6 RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- (i) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Economy & Culture, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to enter into a contract up to the value of £2.400m for four electric powered side-lifting RCVs;
 - (ii) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Economy & Culture, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to enter into future contracts for low emission RCVs up to a maximum value of £2.500m per year, or any alternative value approved by Budget Council as part of the Capital Programme, for the duration of the Fleet Strategy 2020 to 2030;
 - (iii) Agreed that the use of the delegated authority as set out in 2.2 will be reviewed annually at Policy & Resources Committee as part of the Fleet Strategy Update report;
 - (iv) Agreed additional borrowing of £0.200m to purchase electric fleet required for the Toilet Cleansing Service.

137 CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROUTEMAP

137.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture which provided an update and sought endorsement and commitment from members on the refreshed BHCC Routemap & Action Plan.

137.2 Councillor Evans referred to appendix 2 which said that the Council wanted to create a '*A resilient city, reducing reliance on raw materials by keeping products in use and balancing local production with global supply chains*', and asked what that meant. Officers said that the city was not going to be able to create all resources at a local level and so would be reliant on the global economy but to use local supply chains wherever possible.

137.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee –

- (i) Agreed the Routemap updates;
- (ii) Agreed the Routemap Action Plan.

138 I360 LOAN RESTRUCTURE

138.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture which sought agreement to a proposed restructure of the loan made to the i360. In attendance were Julia Barfield and Dick Russell (Board members of the i360) and a representative from consultants Avison Young.

138.2 Councillor Moonan said that the Labour Group were committed to the attraction and had confidence in the current management to make it a viable business but was disappointed over the lack of detail in the report on how the Council would get its money back. The Labour Group had a number of concerns; was apprehensive about the governance and oversight of the repayments and noted that the Member Working Group was not a decision making body; it was not clear how much money would be set aside for maintenance and would like some clarity on that; the first repayment in the schedule had not been specified; was concerned that the report said that in five years' time the Council would be allowed some incentives but the focus now was to ensure that the resident's money was repaid. In response to those issues the Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture said that the i360 was a commercial entity and had its own shareholders and the Council's involvement was only through the loan. The repayments would be governed by a strong contract, and it was expected that the loan would be paid in full but if not the matter would be referred back to the working group and this committee. With regard to maintenance payments, it was felt that it would be preferable to set money aside each year but the Council could give a minimum or maximum amount if appropriate. The first payment had not been specified because if money had to be set aside to top of the reserve, it didn't want them to miss the first payment and fail before they'd started and so that had been left open but the minimum payments over 25 years would be enough to pay back the loan. Mr Russell (Board Member), referred to the maintenance payments and said that in the existing agreement which was set up in 2014, there was provision for the company to set aside some funds for maintenance for any major work was expected to be needed after around 20 years. The company did continually maintain the asset, and currently there was no need for a major reserve but there would be a need in the future and that would be incorporated into the new loan agreement.

- 138.3 Councillor Appich asked what confidence there was that the first payment would be paid and was surprised that no money had been paid so far to show willing, and why the payments were six-monthly and not each month? Mr Russell said that the next payment was due on 30 June and that would be paid subject to what was required for operating expenses, and the amount would be known in the next few weeks but it was likely to be hundreds of thousands of pounds. Officers advised that it was six-monthly payments as to do it monthly would increase the administration costs.
- 138.4 Councillor Bell said that the report did not include everything which was discussed at the Working Group and felt that there was insufficient detail in the report for members to be able to make a decision today. In particular it would have been useful to have a projection of what money would be retained by the i360 and what would be available to repay the loan. He therefore asked that a decision be deferred until the Committee had all the relevant information.
- 138.5 Councillor Gibson was concerned that full repayments would not resume until 2027. Officers said that the repayments were based on the i360's business plan which had been checked by independent leisure experts.
- 138.6 Councillor Druitt said that it had been hoped that the Committee would have a proposal for a restructure which could be looked at in detail before it was agreed which was not the case. The member working group were looking at finding the right balance to repay the loan but still allowing the i360 to continue as a business. The six-monthly payments being proposed would be for all money available after the minimum repayments has been made, after the maintenance reserve had been topped and after the amount of working capital the i360 would need, and none of those figures were yet available. Those amounts would be reported to the working group before the agreement was signed to allow further questions to be asked. He suggested that be done first and this matter come back an Urgency meeting of this Committee.
- 138.7 Councillor Yates asked if the Council had representation on the i360 Board and was advised that the Assistant Director - City Development & Regeneration had an observational role on the Board. He asked what would stop the company moving available cash into stocks, and was advised that the minimum payment had to be made or they would default on the agreement.
- 138.8 Councillor Moonan said that this was public money, and it was important that all the information be available in order for the Committee to make the right decision.
- 138.9 The Chair referred to Councillor Bell's request to defer making a decision on the recommendations in the report, and asked for legal advice on the matter. The Monitoring Officer said that the Constitution did not have a mechanism to defer an item as such, but under Council Procedure Rule 15.13 the Committee could proceed to the next business on the agenda, which would mean that the recommendations in the report were not being voted against, but it would allow time for more information to be provided. If members wanted to take that course, he suggested that Councillor Bell moves a motion that the Committee moves to the next business on the clear understanding that you are not voting against the recommendations in the report.

138.10 Mr Russell confirmed that the company would make a payment on 30 June 2022. Ms Barfield added that the company were fully committed to making all the payments.

138.11 Councillor Bell said that under Council Procedure Rule 15.13 he moved that the meeting proceed to the next business on the clear understanding that we are not rejecting the recommendations but want to come back to it at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee or Special meeting or Urgency Sub-committee meeting. Councillor Moonan formally seconded.

138.12 The Committee voted and agreed to move to the next item on the agenda.

138.13 **RESOLVED:** That a decision on the recommendations in the report be deferred to a future meeting.

139 SUSSEX INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM (ICS) GOVERNANCE

139.1 This item was withdrawn.

140 CHANGES TO THE CORONER'S SERVICE

140.1 This item was agreed without discussion.

140.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- (i) Noted the interim arrangements whereby the current Senior Coroner for West Sussex is also Acting as Senior Coroner for the city of Brighton & Hove;
- (ii) Noted the proposal, as part of the interim arrangements, for the recruitment of an Area Coroner for the city of Brighton & Hove;
- (iii) Agreed in principle the overall aims of the draft business case being developed by both Local Authorities (latest version attached in Appendix 1) with a view to it being submitted to the Chief Coroner's Office for approval subject to any necessary modifications and consultation with staff and unions;
- (iv) Noted that, as part of the statutory process, there will be consultation with key stakeholders which the Chief Coroner will consider before approving the proposals;
- (v) Authorised the Chief Executive and the Executive Director for Governance, People and Resources, to take all steps necessary to finalise the draft proposals and enter into any agreements necessary for the merger of the Coroner's Service.

141 PROCUREMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION AND RETURNING OFFICER PRINTING SERVICES

141.1 This item was agreed without discussion.

141.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- (i) Agreed to the procurement of an ERO and RO printing services contract for an initial term of two years and up to two years additional extension;
- (ii) Delegated authority to the Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources to:
 - 1. Carry out the procurement of the contract referred to in 2.1 including the award of the contract; and
 - 2. Grant the optional extensions to the contract referred to in 2.1 -should they consider it appropriate at the relevant time.

142 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICY & RESOURCES (RECOVERY) SUB COMMITTEE AND ITS MEMBER WORKING GROUPS

142.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Governance People & Resources which proposed changes to the Council's Constitution.

142.2 The Chair noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group and asked Councillor Evans to propose it.

142.3 Councillor Evans proposed the amendment as set in Addendum 3. Councillor Moonan formally seconded the amendment.

142.4 The Committee voted on the amendment and it was agreed.

142.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- (i) Agreed to formally disband the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee, but to ensure the regular reports outlining the council's steps to recovery in the delivery of basic services (waste and refuse collection, parking permits, and street cleanliness) that [Full Council agreed in February 2022 and the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agreed in May 2022] would come to every meeting of the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee, will now come to meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee;
- (ii) Approved the changes to the Council's permanent Member Working Groups and Other Bodies set out in Appendices 1 & 2 respectively, with the understanding that; following the 6 month completion of the Community Wealth Building Task & Finish Group, it will be merged with the Circular Economy Working Group;
- (iii) Approved the amendments to the explanatory text in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution attached as Appendix 3;
- (iv) Authorised the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of the changes agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee, and that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend and re-publish the Council's constitutional documents to incorporate the changes;

- (v) Agreed that the proposed changes recommended at paras 2.1 to 2.4 inclusive come into force immediately following their approval by Policy & Resources Committee.

143 UKRAINE UPDATE

- 143.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities which provided an update on the Council's mobilisation to fulfil the obligations set for local authorities in the delivery of the government's Home for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.
- 143.2 Councillor McNair thanked everyone in the City who had supported the Ukrainians. He asked if there would be an opportunity for Ukrainians to use their talents and skills here, many could teach English or were qualified to look after children etc. Officers said that as with any refugees they would bring skills to the City, but there would be rules and regulations for childcare provision. However, information was available to anyone looking into employment in that field. If councillors had any refugees in their ward to contact either Ukrainian.support@brighton-hove.gov.uk or the Community Hub which could be contacted on 0127 293117 where the relevant advice and support could be found.
- 143.3 Dr Sasidharan asked if there were contingency plans in place to stop any refugee becoming homeless and was advised that a re-matching scheme was currently being looked at. Dr Sasidharan said that were some wonderful opportunities being provided for Ukrainians and asked if other ethnic minorities could also be included in those. Officers agreed that there were inequities in the funding but noted that there was the Communities and Integration workstream which was the multi-agency scheme with both the community and voluntary sector and refugee and migrant sector in the city.
- 143.4 Councillor Appich said that the report did not set out what the income would be and asked how many guests were expected and the Council would do if there was a shortfall in funding. The Executive Director Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities said that if no further guests arrived the Council would receive a minimum £1.5m for the next year, which was a tariff of £10,500 per person, and that did not include money for school placements.
- 143.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –
- (i) Noted the actions taken by officers to fulfil the obligations placed on local authorities by the government's Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme;
 - (ii) Noted the spend to date on the scheme;
 - (iii) Instructed officers to develop a costed proposal to provide support to Ukrainian refugees in the city arriving via other routes, to be considered by a future committee.

144 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

144.1 **RESOLVED:** No items be referred to the next meeting of Council being held on 21 July 2022.

145 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of