

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Janio (Deputy Chairman), Davey, Davis, Drake, Rufus, Smart and Wells

PART ONE

17. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

17a Declarations of Substitutes

There were none.

17b Declarations of Interests

Councillor Geoffrey Theobald declared a prejudicial interest in item 26, and left the room during discussion of that item.

17c Declaration of Party Whip

There were none.

17d Exclusion of Press and Public

The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

RESOLVED: That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

18.1 That the minutes of the scheduled meeting held on 16 June and the call-in meeting held on 13 August be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

19. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

19.1 On behalf of the meeting the Chairman welcomed Councillor Geoffrey Theobald, the Environment Cabinet Member, to discuss his portfolio.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

20.1 There were none.

21. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

21.1 There were none.

22. NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

22.1 There were none.

23. DISCUSSION WITH CABINET MEMBER

23.1 Councillor Theobald said he was pleased to have an opportunity to speak about the Environment service area, covering waste collection and disposal, parks and green spaces, planning, transport, and public safety plus other key areas of work. He spoke about a number of key issues including:

23.2 Opening of the state of the art waste facility at Hollingdean; bringing back in-house car parks formerly managed by NCP; encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport; information for blind people on bus stops;

23.3 Continuing to improve parks and open spaces; for example new facilities in Hove Park and Ditchling Road and South east in Bloom awards.

23.4 Action on the Travellers Strategy; the challenge of street drinkers and drug-takers; works at Hove Town Hall to make better use of work space; strategic planning for major projects and ongoing consultation on the local development framework.

23.5 A new enforcement manager has been appointed; two new conservation areas have been designated and gating orders introduced.

23.6 Improvements to the seafront, for example the bandstand, Madeira lift and Madeira Drive

23.7 The meeting discussed the roles of the Community Safety Forum, Local Action Teams and the ECSOSC.

23.8 The Chairman thanked Councillor Theobald for an interesting overview and for contributing positively to the relationship between decision-making and scrutiny functions.

24. STREET TREES - ACTION FOLLOWING THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

(With the agreement of the Chairman this report was considered before item 25)

24.1 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Environment on Street Trees.

24.2 The Head of Network Management and the Arboriculture Manager gave a detailed presentation and answered questions on street trees and the use of tarmac, efficiency saving through the pruning regime, the Tree Trust, veteran trees, and tree planting schemes including with developers as part of Section 106 agreements.

24.3 The Chairman said a statement from the former Councillor Joyce Edmond-Smith who had requested the scrutiny review, had been made available to the Committee and to officers. She was unable to be present at the meeting.

24.4 RESOLVED – 1) To note the ongoing progress made against each recommendation from the 2007 scrutiny review, as detailed in Appendix 1.

2) To note the Tree and Woodland Strategy and the policies contained within it (Appendix 2) which will take forward a coherent action plan for the city's tree stock.

3) To agree that no further monitoring is needed on the actions of the scrutiny review.

4) To request officers to reply to Joyce Edmond-Smith's statement.

25. AIR QUALITY CHALLENGES FOR THE CITY

25.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Director of Environment on Air Quality Challenges for the City.

25.2 The Head of Transport Strategy and Projects and Senior Technical Officer, Air Quality gave details of Air Quality Management Areas and how the boundaries are drawn. Examples of pollutants, effects on health and ecosystems, ways to ameliorate their effects, experiences from other local authorities and future targets were also discussed.

25.3 Officers stated that there had been some encouraging trends in the monitored levels of nitrogen dioxide in certain areas of the City. Further detailed monitoring has identified that additional locations may be at risk.

25.4 In answer to questions the meeting heard that the introduction of bus lanes and other measures such as encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking together would help to reduce air pollution over time. Most local buses were less than 5 years old.

25.5 Monitoring will continue, and the measures identified within the Air Quality Action Plan will continue to be developed and delivered in line with the UK national Air Quality Strategy and in consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

25.6 RESOLVED – that the Committee welcomes the report and associated presentation outlining the issues faced by the City in improving air quality and supports the principles of the transport and land use strategies and investment programmes in place to address them.

26. NORTH STREET MIXED PRIORITY ROUTE SAFETY SCHEME

26.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Environment on the North Street Mixed Priority Route Road Safety Scheme.

26.2 Councillors questioned the consultation process and asked why the recommendation agreed at Environment Cabinet Member meeting on 4th July regarding the Ship Street/North Street junction was not one that was consulted upon.

26.3 The Assistant Director Sustainable Transport and the Project Manager described how the consultation was done and explained that consultation can generate further issues as part of the formal process. After discussions with Cabinet Members, further options came forward, such as a one-way southbound option for the Ship Street junction with North Street

26.4 The Road Safety Manager and Project Manager stated that road casualties had to be balanced against traffic and pedestrian movements and the agreed recommendation would achieve reduced numbers of casualties. The whole route stretched from Castle Square to Churchill Square.

26.5 Members asked whether a safety audit of the one-way option in Ship Street had been completed. Officers replied that it had and that it included a consideration of two-way cycling in line with the undertaking given in the CMM report.

26.6 The Assistant Director Sustainable Transport stated that the opportunity for future changes or alterations had not been lost and alternatives could be reconsidered when current disruptions and restrictions across the City had ended. The Director confirmed this and said the decision was the best solution at the time, and did not endanger the central government grant funding for the scheme.

26.7 The meeting noted that the ward members would have preferred to have been kept better informed.

26.8 RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

27. ECSOSC WORK PROGRAMME

27.1 The Interim Head of Scrutiny introduced the report of the Director of Strategy and Governance.

27.2 The Committee agreed to defer the report on the night-time economy until the March 23rd meeting, when the Cumulative Impact Policy will have been in force for one year.

27.3 The Director of Environment told the meeting that Councillor Theobald had brought forward the issue of the City's allotments as a matter that the Committee may wish to consider for a Scrutiny Review. The Support Officer would add this as a possible item to the Committee's Work Plan

27.4 Regarding the topic of a detailed Scrutiny Review the Committee agreed that a further meeting be convened of the working group, Councillors Morgan, Janio and Davey.

27.5 RESOLVED 1) that the draft work plan be agreed subject to the above amendment
2) that a further meeting of the working group be convened.
3) that progress against the work plan be monitored regularly.

28. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO THE CABINET OR CABINET MEMBER

There were none.

29. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of