

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 13 SEPTEMBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Janio (Deputy Chairman), Davis, Drake, A Norman, Rufus, Smart and West

Also present: Councillor Kennedy

PART ONE

12. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

12a Declarations of Substitutes

12.1 There were none.

12b Declarations of Interests

12.2 There were none.

12c Declaration of Party Whip

12.3 There were none.

12d Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was 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 section 100I (1) of the said Act.

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

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2010

13.1 The Head of City Services updated the meeting on the Chalk Downland Restoration in Wild Park (see minute 6.8 (2)). A Wild Park Focus Group had been set up; involving ward councillors, the Chairs of Local Action Teams, Friends of Wild Park, Natural England, other groups and individuals who are local conservationists and/or members of the Brighton Urban Wildlife Group. It had been involved in the current consultation which included producing newsletters for circulation to local households within 15 minutes walk of the Park. Individuals and groups could be included on the mailing list on request. Further information was available in City News and on the council's website. She said the Council is grateful to all these people who are giving their time to progress Wild Park

13.2 **RESOLVED**; that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

14. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

14.1 The Chairman circulated copies of the draft minutes of the 5 July Community Safety Forum (CSF) which had received presentations on three issues referred from ECSOSC;

- Dealing with Serious Violent Crime,
- Reducing Re-offending by Prolific Offenders and
- Fire Risk Assessments in High Rise Blocks of Flats

15. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS/REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES/NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

15.1 There were none.

16. OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

16.1 Councillor Amy Kennedy referred to her letter in which she had asked a number of questions about the Open Spaces Strategy. She welcomed the officers' thorough report but reiterated that she was disappointed that three recent planning decisions relating to development on open spaces may have set an unwelcome precedent.

16.2 Councillor Kennedy called for a workshop on Open Spaces.

16.3 The Strategic Planning and Monitoring Manager emphasised that every planning decision should be judged on its merits. Other planning decisions should be taken into account when determining applications and the Council had a number of policies seeking to protect or increase the amount of open space. New arrangements were anticipated with the forthcoming Localism Bill expected in November/December this year.

16.4 It was agreed that a workshop on the Open Spaces Strategy would be arranged for Members of ECSOSC in the New Year when national policy would be clearer.

16.5 A number of questions were raised about the Urban Biosphere; particularly as this was a new concept; such as the definition, and meaning and aims of a biosphere, the community engagement process and financial implications. The meeting heard that a meeting with UNESCO had been held and a de-briefing was awaited.

16.6 It was agreed to ask the officers for a short update on the urban biosphere for agenda planning for the next ECSOSC meeting, 8 November, with a view to considering an opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny early in 2011.

16.7 ECSOSC agreed to forward the concerns that had been raised to the Chair of the Planning Committee.

16.8 **RESOLVED:** (1) That an informal workshop on the Open Spaces Strategy be arranged early in 2011.

(2) That an officer update be requested for the agenda planning meeting for 8 November Committee, with a view to considering the Urban Biosphere at Committee.

(3) That the recommendations above be forwarded to the Chair of the Planning Committee for information.

17. PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

17.1 The Head of Scrutiny introduced the report on Pedestrian Crossings that had been requested by the Committee.

17.2 Members were disappointed at the level of detail provided by the officers' written report, and asked additional questions, regarding: public perception of unsafe roads; taking into account residents' fear of crossing busy roads; impact of road crossings on community cohesion; meaning of minimum requirements and explaining priority criteria for crossings, to residents.

17.3 Answering queries the Head of Transport Planning and Policy and Planning said the minimum requirements were complex calculations as given by the current government policy and guidance, Local Transport note 1/95. To define levels of priority in the light of available funding, local authorities can also take into account other criteria such as suppressed or latent demand and public opinion.

17.4 Funding for pedestrian Crossings was via the Local Transport Plan capital funding from government, or contributions from developers via S106 agreements.

17.5 The Chairman asked that further clarification of the prioritisation process for pedestrian crossings, based on government guidance, be circulated to Members of the Committee.

17.6 **RESOLVED;** That Members receive clarification as minuted above at 17.5

18. ECSOSC WORK PROGRAMMES

18.1 The Head of Scrutiny presented the report on the Committee's Annual work programmes.

18.2 Members wished to invite the new Strategic Director of Place to the next meeting 8 November and asked for confirmation on the next discussion with the Environment Cabinet Member.

18.3 It was suggested that a representative of the South Downs National Park Authority be invited to provide a progress report on the establishment, planning role etc of the new Authority, though an appropriate timing for this was debated. Locations for accessing the South Downs was questioned.

18.4 It was agreed that a session would be arranged jointly with the Culture Tourism and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who had already approached the SDNPA for further information within its own O&S remit.

18.5 With regard to the potential workshops on LTP3 for ECSOSC Members, the Head of Transport Planning and Policy described the timelines as set out in the report paragraph 3.8. Members agreed to the two workshops as proposed.

18.6 Members discussed in detail the proposals for scrutiny review and agreed to set up a Panel on Renewable Energy Potential. A report on dog fouling and Dog Control Orders would be added to the work programme. A generous invitation to visit the Sussex University Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects (LASI) would be accepted and a report on Bees also requested.

18.7 **RESOLVED** (1) that the Committee Work Programme be agreed
(2) that LTP3 workshops be arranged as proposed
(3) that a Scrutiny review of Renewable Energy Potential be set up
(4) that other topics be added to the work plan as minuted above.

19. ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO CABINET MEMBER, CABINET OR TO FULL COUNCIL

19.1 It was noted that Item 16, Open Spaces Strategy, be forwarded to the Chair of the Planning Committee.

The meeting concluded at 5.20pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of