





**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Title:	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>16 July 2012</b>
Time:	<b>2.00pm</b>
Venue	<b>Committee Room 3, Hove Town Hall</b>
Members:	<b>Councillors:</b> Morgan (Chair)  Cox Brown Buckley Farrow Follett  Hawtree Marsh K Norman Phillips
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# AGENDA

1.	Apologies and Declarations of Interest		
2.	Minutes of the previous meetings		1 - 26
	To approve the minutes of the final meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission, Culture Tourism and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
3.	Chairs Communications		
4.	Public Involvement		
	To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:		
	(a) <b>Petitions:</b> to receive any petitions presented to the full Council or at the meeting itself;		
	(b) <b>Written Questions:</b> to receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on 9 <sup>th</sup> July;		
	(c) <b>Deputations:</b> to receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on 9 <sup>th</sup> July.		
5.	Issues Raised by Councillors		
	To consider the following matters raised by Brighton & Hove City Councillors.		
	(a) <b>Petitions:</b> to receive any petitions submitted to the full Council or at the meeting itself;		
	(b) <b>Written Questions:</b> to consider any written questions;		
	(c) <b>Letters:</b> to consider any letters;		
	(d) <b>Notices of Motion:</b> to consider any notices of motion.		
6.	Equalities Update Report		27 - 108
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9.	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	189	-
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For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Mary van Beinum, (01273 291062 – email [maryvanbeinum@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:maryvanbeinum@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

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**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
4.00PM 27 MARCH 2012  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL  
MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Mitchell (Chair); Janio (Deputy Chair), Follett, Littman, Morgan, K Norman, Powell, Summers, Wealls and MacCafferty

**PART ONE**

**73. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

Councillor Gill Mitchell the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission welcomed everyone and reminded the meeting that OSC was being recorded and kept on record for repeat viewing.

Members agreed to a change in the running order of today's agenda; Item 79 would be heard after Item 77.

**73a Declarations of Substitutes**

73.1 Councillor Wealls was substituting for Councillor Brown and Councillor MacCafferty was substituting for Councillor Rufus.

**73b Declarations of Interests**

There were none.

**73c Declaration of Party Whip**

There were none.

**73d 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.

**74. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

74.1 Councillor Mitchell said this was the last OSC for this Council year. She thanked all colleagues for their attendance and great work with the Commission throughout the year, and thanked the Scrutiny Team.

74.2 Councillor Follett and Councillor Janio thanked the Councillor Mitchell for excellent Chairing of the Commission.

**75. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2012**

75.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

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

76.1 There were none.

**77. DATA SHARING REGARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE - REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL**

77.1 Councillor Ruth Buckley, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel, introduced the report on Information Sharing Regarding Vulnerable Adults.

77.2 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service had asked for this subject to be investigated and Councillor Buckley was glad that ESFRS representative, Andy Reynolds had served on the Panel. She thanked Councillors Ken Norman and Alan Robins for their work and also Julia Riches of the Scrutiny team for her excellent support.

77.3 Councillor Buckley explained that 'vulnerability' had not been defined as its meaning depended on individual circumstances. However the Panel had been able to make practical recommendations as listed in the report, that would have great benefit to vulnerable people. For example the Panel agreed that processes in place for cases of high risk should be extended to include lower risk cases. An 'unseen' benefit of the scrutiny review had been new links for joint working between organisations, created as a result of Panel meetings.

77.4 Councillor Ken Norman thanked Councillor Buckley for her Chairing of the Panel. He was pleased to have been a Panel Member as these important issues had needed detailed attention for some time, and he fully backed the recommendations. Councillor Norman also thanked Julia Riches for her support for the scrutiny review.

77.5 Councillor Warren Morgan said this was an excellent and worthwhile report. He pointed out that there were other aspects of vulnerability, such as community safety, that were not included within the remit of this Panel. It was important that agencies worked well together to benefit service users, especially vulnerable people. However special care was needed to protect confidential and personal information.

77.6 The Deputy Chair Councillor Tony Janio thanked the Panel for their work and reinforced the need for care over data protection and confidentiality.

77.7 Councillor Stephanie Powell, disability champion also welcomed the report and in particular Recommendation 2, on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for lower-risk cases.

77.8 Members discussed the use of information from Mears housing repairs contractors.

77.9 The Chair Councillor Mitchell thanked Councillor Buckley and on behalf of OSC welcomed the report. The scrutiny findings should be shared with other local authorities, she said.

#### **77.10 RESOLVED**

- 1) that the scrutiny report and recommendations be endorsed
- 2) that the report be referred to the relevant executive committee, requesting that they enact the Panel's recommendations.

### **78. THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY ESTATE**

78.1 Head of Property Services Angela Dymott gave a presentation and update on the Council's Property Estate, worth a total of approximately £2 billion, and how the estate was managed in line with the Council's Strategic Priorities. This included an operational portfolio of 12,350 houses and flats and 500 non-housing properties such as schools; a non-operational portfolio of commercial premises including retail and seafront property, an investment portfolio of 600 properties and more than 10,000 acres of Downland.

78.2 The Head of Property Services is responsible for the Corporate Property Strategy and Asset Management Plan that are available on the Council's website. Because of the size of the portfolios it is particularly important to maximise income from assets (currently around £10million), balanced with customer and service needs, value for money and social and environmental factors, contributing to keeping the Council Tax down.

78.3 Members of OSC were invited to view the Council's Property Performance database that informs the Asset Management Planning process and Building Maintenance Strategy and an explanation was given as to how property performance reviews were used to inform decision making. The building maintenance programme amounted to some £4million per year. Recent work included maintenance and improvements to the operational portfolio and the creation of Bartholomew House Customer Service Centre and refurbishment of some of Bartholomew House through the Accommodation Strategy under the Workstyles transformation programme.

78.4 Sustainability measures are included in property improvements to achieve energy efficiency and reduce the council's carbon footprint eg: Photo Voltaic installations, lighting

schemes and thermal insulation. The Architecture Design team undertake capital works including schools extensions and introduce sustainability and energy saving design features where ever possible to help reduce carbon emissions.

78.5 The Head of Property Services heads the City Property Group of public sector bodies to discuss property matters in the city that look to share accommodation and collaborate on property efficiencies and functions such as procurement.

78.6 She outlined the regeneration team work in Property bringing together land assemblies and redevelopments of sites like the Jubilee Library, Community Stadium, Hollingbury Industrial Estate, and regeneration work on major development sites such as Circus Street, Preston Barracks, New England House, Black Rock, King Alfred and Brighton Centre.

78.7 The Council's non-operational portfolio of retail, commercial and industrial premises is generally managed by outsourced consultants; the seafront portfolio is managed in-house. The Downland Initiative had been developed and led by Property aiming at encouraging diversification on the council's Downland Estate whilst protecting the environment, social and economic factors

78.8 Corporate Landlord Strategy has been delegated to the Head of Property Services that bring together all the Council's property functions. Council and office buildings were being rationalised to concentrate the council's 3,000 staff into the main office buildings at Bartholomew House, Brighton and Hove Town Hall; services are also being brought together and co-located at neighbourhood Hubs across the City, for instance at Whitehawk and Mouselcoomb.

78.9 Councillor Warren Morgan said there were lessons to be learnt from the Whitehawk Hub on coordinating with partner agencies eg lighting and access issues, and how to explain to users the benefits of co-locating services. It would be helpful for local Ward Councillors to be included more closely in the masterplanning to help in communicating with residents in future, he suggested.

78.10 The Head of Property Services answered Members' questions on: car parks; the decision matrix and process for property disposals; corporate funding for the capital programme; the new Hove Town Hall customer service centre and Police accommodation; and rent reviews and market rents including flexibility on a case by case basis to help avoid boarded up shops. She confirmed that freehold premises were preferable assets for the Council compared with leaseholdings as they presented better value for money and are easier to control.

78.11 Referring to a map of the City's West, Central and East Hubs, the Head of Property Services gave a detailed overview and of the buildings including Portslade Town Hall, Locks Hill, Heversham House in the West, Bartholomew House, Brighton Town Hall in the centre and Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk hubs in the East. She agreed with a suggestion that the map could be clearer to show the Hove / Portslade Hubs.

78.12 Councillor Mitchell, Chair of the current Retail Sector Scrutiny Panel commented on the high value of retail properties as a proportion of the total figure and asked about supporting small local shops, and policy on 'pop-up' shops. The meeting heard the Council currently had



no voids and were working pro-actively with landlords and agents where possible, encouraging short-term leasing arrangements.

78.13 Asked about the Strategic Construction Partnership, the Head of Property Services has led on this approach as City Architect that is nationally recognised and the council work collaboratively in a partnership contract with Westridge contractors and design consultants. This approach minimises risks and improves outcomes, so that projects are delivered early or on time and under or within budget. This collaborative partnership had informed the procurement of the 10-year housing partnership with Mears.

78.14 Regarding a question about charity shops from Deputy Chair Councillor Tony Janio, the Head of Property Services noted that there was no specific policy but this could be investigated.

78.15 On accessibility to customer services by disabled people, queried by Councillor Stephanie Powell, the meeting heard that the team's Access Officer worked to ensure public buildings with access to the public are accessible under the former Disability Discrimination Act under the Equality Act. Accessibility and sustainability were an integral part of the property programme and customer services across the city were being designed to be focussed on the needs of services users and neighbourhoods.

78.16 The Chair welcomed the report and thanked the officers. She reflected comments from a number of Members; that this information was of key interest to all Councillors. It would be useful for Scrutiny to be kept updated at a suitable time, she said.

**78.17 RESOLVED** that an update on the Council's Property Strategy be recommended for a future scrutiny committee.

## **79. TRANS SCRUTINY SCOPING REPORT**

79.1 Councillor Mitchell reminded the meeting that Councillor MacCafferty had asked for a scrutiny review of trans equality issues in Brighton & Hove at the 31 January OSC meeting. The scoping report on today's agenda gave more information to enable OSC to decide whether scrutiny action was needed.

79.2 Councillor Warren Morgan thanked Councillor MacCafferty and welcomed his request. He summarised the main local concerns and related research and projects in this area. The issue was overdue for scrutiny and he would be pleased to serve on a Panel, hearing directly from representatives of local communities and organisations, he said.

79.3 Councillor MacCafferty gave details of his request for scrutiny and the reasons for it. This was a less known subject that should be investigated. Councillor MacCafferty wanted the Council to help eliminate discrimination and lead on best practice to benefit the trans community. He would be honoured to serve on a Panel, he said.

79.4 Councillor Janio said, having heard some of the issues, he was in full support of a scrutiny panel. Other Councillors also spoke in favour.

79.5 The Chair Councillor Gill Mitchell referred to the Count Me in Too research published in 2008 and said work needed to be updated. Councillor Mitchell summarised OSC's general agreement for setting up a scrutiny panel.

79.6 Councillors Morgan and MacCafferty would be Panel Members and the third Member nomination would be requested from the Conservative group. Councillor MacCafferty's information would be passed on to the Panel.

**79.7 RESOLVED;** that a Scrutiny Panel be established on trans equality issues in Brighton & Hove.

## **80. ICT STRATEGY - UPDATE**

80.1 Head of ICT Paul Colbran gave a presentation on the ICT Strategy. He remarked that today's agenda included informing sharing re vulnerable adults, the Workstyles programme and the Police moving into Council accommodation. These examples illustrated ICT's central role in supporting city-wide changes in public services; multi-agency working, commissioning and closer relations with customers and citizens. ICT was working towards common aims, removing technical barriers, protecting information assets and maintaining proper governance controls on information.

80.2 He welcomed the involvement of Members, not least because ICT was often seen as a 'back-office' function. ICT was key to help achieve savings eg by reducing service delivery costs, maximising mobile working, reducing office space requirements and improving collaborative working, he said.

80.3 Paul Colbran outlined areas for improvements in the current ICT systems and described the workstyles programme. He gave examples of recent work developing web services for better on-line transactions, mobile solutions for sessional workers that improved staff flexibility plus a more effective room booking system. He was closely involved in supporting the cross-Sussex LINK consortium, updating key networks involving County Councils, Districts and Boroughs, libraries, universities and joint procurement, to deliver services in partnership with public, private and third sector organisations.

80.4 The Head of ICT explained how better use was being made of information as a core asset, by improved data capture, analysis and presentation that supported for instance decision-making, the reporting requirements of education and social care services and Human Resources and health and safety programmes.

80.5 Paul Colbran was looking to extend successful work with schools to new areas such as GP Commissioning. Early involvement of the ICT department in corporate change processes, meant that risk management and business preparedness could be improved, he said.

80.6 The investment programme was based on economies of scale, good use of existing assets, and linking facilities, data and budgets with the Council's partners. It took into account constantly changing markets at a time of reducing budgets and higher business demands.

80.7 Answering a question from Councillor Warren Morgan on the balance between maintaining existing systems and replacing with new equipment, the Head of ICT pointed out that replacing legacy systems did give good opportunities for new services and solutions. He gave the example of customer records.

80.8 There was a drive to update desk-top systems with laptops. In due course, tablets would likely have a role in reducing printing and paper requirements of the Council's Committees. However, in his view tablets presented unnecessary data protection risks for the local authority at present.

80.9 Replying to a comment from Councillor Tony Janio on high-profile failures of large national IT programmes and centralised systems, Paul Colbran said a recently-appointed Records Manager would be looking at the quality and relevance of data currently held, to help determine where migration would be worthwhile. Cloud computing had security implications and required a major change from capital to revenue based funding. At present the approach was to make better use of existing facilities.

80.10 The Chair Councillor Gill Mitchell thanked the officers and congratulated the team on the wide range of work in progress. It would be useful for Scrutiny to be kept updated with progress.

**80.11 RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and ICT be recommended for adding to the scrutiny work programme.

#### **81. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET, CABINET MEMBER MEETING OR FULL COUNCIL**

81.1 Members noted the Scrutiny Panel report would be referred to Cabinet. The Scrutiny Annual report would go to full council.

The meeting concluded at 5.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of



**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4.00PM 7 MARCH 2012**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Morgan (Chair); Sykes (Deputy Chair), Cobb, Gilbey, Hawtree, Janio, Jones and Littman

**PART ONE**

**44. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**44.1a Declarations of Substitutes**

There were none.

**44.1b Declarations of Interests**

There were none.

**44c Declaration of Party Whip**

There were none.

**44d 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.

**45. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2012**

45.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

**46. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS**

46.1 Councillor Warren Morgan, Committee Chair welcomed everyone to the final meeting of ECSOSC. He said Councillor Pete West Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability had given his apologies for today's meeting, and had thanked the committee for its comments at the January meeting on the waste management and waste planning reports.

46.2 Councillor Morgan was proud to have served as Chair since the Committee was formed in 2008. He thanked the officers who had prepared reports and answered questions especially

those who appeared regularly at Committee, and the Scrutiny Team. Thanks were also due to members of the public and external contributors.

46.2 Councillor Morgan was grateful to Councillors from all political groups who had served on ECSOSC over the years and to Cabinet Members and those who had been involved with the Committee in other ways.

46.3 Comments from scrutiny would be reported to Cabinet where relevant.

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

47. 1 There were none.

**48. REPORT OF THE TRAVELLER STRATEGY SCRUTINY PANEL - FOR AGREEMENT**

48.1 Chair of the Scrutiny Panel Dr Aidan McGarry of Brighton University School of Applied Social Science, introduced the report of the Traveller Strategy Scrutiny Panel as set out in his Foreword. He particularly thanked Councillors Littman, Robins and Simson who had served on the Panel, also everyone who had provided evidence to the review, plus the Housing Strategy Team and the Scrutiny Team.

48.2 Dr McGarry said the Travellers Strategy 2012 was a significant step forward in balancing the needs of the settled and travelling communities.

48.3 Together with Karen Amsden Scrutiny Officer and Nick Hibberd Head of Housing and Social Inclusion, Dr McGarry answered questions.

48.4 On the role of the press, it was encouraging that recently there had been more positive reporting by the Argus on Traveller issues. The 'Planning Made Plain' Guide for Gypsies and Travellers from Clearwater Gypsies, was helpful as a basis to provide local advice to Travellers. It was pleasing that experience with Van Dwellers elsewhere such as in Bristol, was being investigated potentially for inclusion in the 2012/2013 protocol.

48.5 The Traveller lifestyle might be regarded by some people in the settled community as a romantic ideal, however travelling is in their blood and Travellers can suffer from living in bricks and mortar. Primary and Secondary Schools do work with Traveller groups, inviting speakers to talk about Traveller lifestyles; this raises awareness and helps to limit discrimination and bullying.

48.6 As regards benchmarking, local authorities could not be directly compared, especially between rural and urban areas. However some, such as Fenland and Bristol were being proactive; in the latter case, costs had been shown to be significantly reduced over 5 years by listening to the local needs of local Travellers and the settled community.

48.7 On transient Travellers, Dr McGarry said short-term visitors (not only Travellers) without links to the area, would not necessarily have any commitment to fostering relations with others. Education was of paramount importance, as in Belfast where projects focussing on children were helping to overcome the effects of segregation.

48.8 Site selection was a separate process and not a part of the scrutiny review. However the Panel had heard some good ideas for criteria, for inclusion in the Strategy. At present a single site seemed more practicable.

48.9 Regarding the different roles of Traveller support and enforcement, (that in some areas such as East Sussex and West Sussex were carried out by separate teams) the Panel were impressed with the work of Brighton & Hove Traveller Liaison Team officers, who combined both aspects well sometimes under difficult circumstances.

48.10 Members discussed at length what both the settled community and Traveller community can do, to improve relations between Gypsies and Travellers and mainstream society. The Committee Chair Councillor Warren Morgan summarised this; that the Council has a key role in ensuring that barriers between the settled and Traveller communities are broken down.

48.11 The Head of Scrutiny Tom Hook pointed out that a detailed Action Plan (not reported here) would be attached to the Traveller Strategy.

48.12 Councillor Littman, a Panel Member, thanked Dr McGarry, fellow councillors and the 'extraordinary' officers for a very positive scrutiny which he hoped would continue in the new governance arrangements.

48.13 The Chair Councillor Warren Morgan, a Member of the constitution working group, said he was keen that Scrutiny Panels would be able to continue producing similar constructive work in future.

48.14 Councillor Morgan thanked Dr McGarry and the Panel for their positive work on this scrutiny review.

**48.15 RESOLVED** i) that the report be endorsed

ii) that the report be referred to Cabinet with the request that Cabinet enacts the recommendations

iii) that the key role of the Council in ensuring that barriers between the settled and Traveller communities are broken down, be noted

iv) that the minutes of ECSOSC be reported to Cabinet

#### **49. MONITORING SCRUTINY REVIEWS: RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL**

49.1 Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy, Thurstan Crockett, introduced the progress report on renewable energy potential following the 2010/2011 scrutiny review. He said the planned photovoltaic (PV) programme had been significantly affected by national changes to the Feed in Tariff; the City's Climate Change Strategy was now published; the Sustainable Energy Working Group terms of reference had been drawn up and scoping had started on the City Energy Study.

49.2 Going through each recommendation (Appendix 1) Thurstan Crockett said photovoltaic installations at Hove Town Hall, Bartholomew House and the Learning Development Centre had now received planning permission. Shoreham Port had signed a 10-year agreement on renewable energy schemes. At recommendation 5 (Sustainable energy team), available

resources were key to progressing these initiatives. Complex data issues were involved in the monitoring of sustainable energy (Recommendation 9).

49.3 A three-month photo exhibition on renewable energy was being held at Brighton Station and a Big Lottery partnership bid to tackle climate change under the 'Communities Living Sustainably' programme had now been shortlisted. On Community Energy, the city partnership behind this was bidding for funds amongst other things to investigate the feasibility of anaerobic digestion, a community wind turbine and solar photovoltaic energy in partnership with Brighton Energy Co-operative.

49.4 The Chair Councillor Morgan welcomed the short-listing of the Big Lottery Bid. He pointed out that on-shore wind turbines had previously been discounted.

49.5 The Strategic Director, Place Geoff Raw referred to efforts to bring forward renewable energy proposals. He emphasised that these were required to be 'investable' propositions. PVs installed on roofs were commendable but changes to the Feed In Tariff had had a big impact and companies were looking for alternative solutions. The government's new Green Deal would open up more opportunities for various energy efficiency markets and measures that the Council and partners could take up where appropriate.

49.6 A report to Cabinet would be looking at the 'workstyles' programme in the context of PV; this was a relatively small but important part of the investment plan.

49.10 Regarding Shoreham Port, the Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy said a range of schemes, such as insulation and the potential for wind turbines were at the early discussion stage. Joint planning arrangements between Brighton & Hove, West Sussex and Adur were already established.

49.11 The Committee heard answers to further questions. On the capacity of the Sustainability Team; the Council would use its available resources to prioritise work to best advantage. Power from the Rampion offshore wind programme was not being brought ashore at Shoreham; capacity had been identified elsewhere and this was a commercial decision by the developers in discussion with National Grid.

49.12 The Sustainable Energy Working Group was an advisory body. The linked work programme would be commercially orientated to bring active solutions (Thurstan please clarify?)

49.13 In relation to traffic movements linked with Shoreham Port, these would be limited to an extent by the transport of oil by sea into the Port, and the positioning on-site of the electricity generators. Department for Transport was looking at significant investment in transport infrastructure via the Coast to Capital LEP.

49.14 The focus of the scrutiny panel had been on PV rather than solar thermal, for which at that time the Feed in Tariff gave the higher rate of return, intended to have been invested across the Council's housing stock to spread the benefit. Business models were now changing; the Council would consider any 'investable' proposition that stacked up financially.

49.15 Marine technology was considered to be less feasible here than elsewhere in the UK; best potential for tidal and wave energy was around West and Northwest coasts eg Scotland,



Cornwall, the Severn estuary. Brighton University was working on a wave energy model. Window glass and roof tiles were dealt with by Planning.

49.16 Members congratulated the sustainability team for its work that was nationally important. The Chair thanked the Strategic Director and officers.

**49.17 RESOLVED:** that the actions from the scrutiny review continue to be monitored via scrutiny under the new governance arrangements.

## **50. STREET LIGHTING**

50.1 The Head of Highways Operations Christina Liassides and the Team Manager, Street Lighting and Design, Gillian Packham gave an update report on the street lighting review. At the time of the previous report to Committee, the limited service had been mainly reactive and capital investment had been needed. A small team with a new manager was now established that was able for example to draw up an inventory, improve contract management and start to plan ahead.

50.2 This was a complex area of work involving 25,000 items and each lighting column comprised network cabling, column, lantern and lamp. Condition of the assets, day-burning lanterns and heritage/conservation lighting columns were the main issues being addressed. A regular patrol helped identify issues but members of the public were also encouraged to send in reports, particularly on day-burning lanterns. Day-burning lanterns were a problem but did not necessarily cause extra financial costs to the Council.

50.3 The team was working to achieve the best levels of lighting, according to local conditions and the road usage, though lighting levels were a personal preference. More efficient white light schemes and part night dimming had been introduced in some streets. In the longer term it was hoped to implement further measures such as solar powered lights.

50.4 Cast iron columns had long lifetimes but cost around ten times the standard steel version. There were a few spares in stock but it was difficult to justify buying more of this type when steel columns could be modified to match them in appearance. Heritage lighting was being maintained at the seafront and Local Transport Plan capital funds were being allocated here.

50.5 Members welcomed the report that showed the progress achieved thus far. To keep informed especially on maintenance, energy efficiency, light pollution and cost, the Committee asked for a future update to scrutiny.

**50.6 RESOLVED** that a further progress report be made to Scrutiny.

## **51. WINTER SERVICE PLAN VERBAL UPDATE**

51.1 The Head of Highways Operations Christina Liassides gave a verbal report on the Winter Service Plan, following the scrutiny review.

51.2 Communications had been one of the main learning points from recent severe weather events; the Head of Highways Operations had provided regular briefings especially to Ward Councillors during the February snow and ice. Less than half of the City had been affected but the western side saw snow and ice for 8 – 9 days.

51.3 Each cold weather event was different and experience of the various local conditions had again been used to advantage. The team had worked well and had been able to open up the bus routes quickly. The new gritters including the pavement gritters had performed much better than previous equipment and the new ploughs had been put to good use. New techniques had been tried – for instance gritters had followed each other to track the grit in and this had been effective. The team's drivers were pleased; finer gritting could now be achieved, to produce a lower spread rate over a greater width and with more accuracy.

51.4 Many of the affected areas had asked for more gritting; however the CityClean staff in the team also needed to continue their regular work on waste and recycling collection rounds. It was important that services were provided consistently; so it had been impossible to grit everywhere. Access could perhaps be improved a little on some hilltop areas and the gritting routes here would be adjusted if necessary.

51.5 A covering for storing salt was the only scrutiny recommendation that had not been achieved. Hollingdean depot was being redeveloped and a temporary covering was prohibitively expensive. Stores were being kept at premises in West Sussex and at Shoreham Harbour. A thatching agent produced a natural cover to the outdoor stockpile, so that very little salt was lost. However this salt formed lumps that had to be broken up and produced a less fine spread compared with salt stored indoors.

51.6 The Head of Highways Operations said the Scrutiny process had helped to publicise the City's response to severe weather and led to significant improvements in the service.

51.7 Members noted it was unfortunate that some grit bins (not on the highways) had been locked during the icy period.

51.8 On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked the officers for maintaining routes throughout the city and for providing information during long working hours.

**51.9 RESOLVED;** that if necessary a further update be made to a future scrutiny meeting.

## **52. OFFICIAL FEED AND FOOD CONTROLS SERVICE PLAN**

52.1 The Head of Regulatory Services, Tim Nichols, presented the report on Official Feed and Food Controls Service Plan 2012 – 2013 that will be reported to Cabinet and Full Council in March.

52.2 With 3,165 food businesses registered in Brighton & Hove, this is a significant local trade. It was mostly catering, rather than food production. There was a relatively high turnover of businesses, leading to some 300 new premises being inspected each year.

52.3 The approach to inspection is risk-based and consistently high levels of compliance were achieved throughout the City. Only three businesses had been prosecuted during the year (none from an ethnic minority). The service promotes training and record-keeping and produces a newsletter that included changes in national legislation and local issues. It is shortly to receive a fact-finding visit from Chinese Central Government regarding food regulation.

52.4 Brighton & Hove's Scores on the Doors scheme was well-liked and produced a demonstrable raising of standards. As many as 500 premises achieved 5\* rating compared

with 78 in the initial year. This had now been replaced by a national scheme; Brighton & Hove joined the new National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme from 1 March.

52.5 The safer food better business training scheme provided 1:1 coaching. The Head of Regulatory Services described this as a regulatory partnership, which addressed issues together.

52.6 Answering questions, Tim Nichols explained that the National Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme was wider, including many more types of businesses such as confectioners and others providing no catering, that did not necessarily focus on risks. The scheme was expected to require a further 300 inspections each year, though these were unlikely to be time-consuming. The Food Standards Agency had funded an ICT changeover. The new Brighton and Hove NHS commissioned role of Health Development Advisers, promoted public health, for example breastfeeding in restaurants, fitted well within the food safety team.

52.7 The Chair thanked Tim Nichols and the team of officers for their important work in a vital area for the City.

**52.8 RESOLVED** The Committee welcomed the report.

### **53. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN**

53.1 The Head of Regulatory Services presented the health and safety annual report. A rigorous consultation process was being undertaken, including with businesses and trades unions.

53.2 He summarised recent nationally commissioned studies indicating a move away from interventions, regulations and inspections to a lighter touch approach of advice support and assistance; for example Lord Young's report Common Sense, Common Safety; Good Health and Safety, Good for Everyone and Reclaiming Health and Safety for All.

53.3 There was also a shift towards closer involvement in partnerships such as with the police in registering and inspecting scrap metal businesses. There was more partnership working with NHS organisations for example with hotels and swimming pools, and on firework displays.

53.4 In the year there had been only one prosecution, relating to an accidental release of disinfectant gas at a leisure centre.

53.5 Currently there are some 9,000 businesses subject to Council health and safety regulation resulting in reduced inspections annually; this figure would now reduce as only the Category A, high risk areas would be focussed on although service would also focus on sector and industry wide initiatives, working with those at risk, education and awareness and reactive interventions to incidents and complaints.

53.6 Nurses had now joined the Environmental Health Service, to carry out health checks for certain manual workers, and to give advice on lifestyle, obesity, blood pressure and diabetes.

53.7 Regarding the City's 101 cosmetic piercing premises, Members discussed the changing picture of cosmetic piercings and treatments and the close links with medical practices such as botox and laser treatments, scarification and acupuncture.

53.8 Answering a question on workplace violence at BME takeaways, the Head of Regulatory Services referred to the team's database that enabled self-reported racially motivated incidents to be surveyed. Jointly with the Police, an inspection and advice programme on community safety had been developed to help premises take extra precautions against violence.

53.9 Members discussed the reputation of Health and Safety as a discipline, that had been set up in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to limit children's working hours, and since the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, had led to a declining fatality rate. There had been phases of regulation followed by deregulation and it was acknowledged that health and safety could sometimes be used as a 'scapegoat' for other reasons (eg financial). Local information including from Councillors and officers was key, to help prioritise inspections and advice.

53.10 The Chair thanked the officers and commented it was important to monitor the changed approach to the service, to ensure that preventable accidents did not happen. This would be a continuing role for scrutiny.

**53.11 RESOLVED;** that the report be welcomed and scrutiny continue to monitor local health and safety.

**54. ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO CABINET MEMBER, CABINET OR FULL COUNCIL**

54.1. It was noted that Items 48, 52 and 53 would be reported to Cabinet.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**CULTURE, TOURISM & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4.00PM 1 MARCH 2012**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Brown (Chair); Cox, Wealls, MacCafferty, Farrow and Hawtree

**Co-opted Members:**

**PART ONE**

**38. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**Declarations of substitutes**

Cllr Graham Cox for Cllr Carol Theobald.

Cllr Andrew Wealls for Lynda Hyde.

Cllr Phelim MacCafferty for Cllr Ania Kitcat.

**Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**Declaration of party whip**

There was none.

**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 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 1001(1) of the said Act.

**RESOLVED:** that the press and public are not excluded from the meeting.

### 39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from 24 November 2011 were agreed.

### 40. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Royal Pavilion and Museum (RP & M) services were to be congratulated on a number of fronts. The service has been successful in gaining approx £2.5m for 2012-15 through the Renaissance Programme from Arts Council England and £100k from the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund for a gallery refurbishment. RP&M had successfully bid at auction for a Turner watercolour – which features the Pavilion, *The Chain Pier at Brighton (1824/5)*. It was purchased with a significant grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund who have helped secure the picture for the city and nation, plus an award from the Art Fund and a generous donation from an anonymous RP&M Foundation Patron. Members were shown a slide of this at the meeting.

An exciting exhibition of new work by three contemporary painters and printmakers called **Dreams of Here** had opened at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery. The artists are all nationally recognised but at the same time have strong connections to Sussex and the exhibition was on until 10 June 2012.

There was good news on the Children's Festival for this year which had been awarded £9k from the Arts Council. The festival – which originated from the Brighton and Hove Arts Commission was being run in partnership with Komedia for the first time.

The Brighton Festival had been launched last week, along with the Festival Fringe and both programmes looked varied and exciting.

Vanessa Redgrave had been appointed as artistic director and would be leading the Children's Parade which traditionally opened the Brighton Festival as well as featuring throughout the programme – in films and debates.

In relation to Tourism and Conferences: from April to January footfall at the Visitor Information Centre was more than 5% up on last year. VisitBrighton had for the first time achieved more than 400 Partners. VisitBrighton's Convention Bureau recently held their major sales and networking event at the House of Lords to showcase the city to an audience of conference organisers.

The Volks Railway would be opening earlier this year to coincide with the start of the Easter school holidays. The first service will operate from 10.15am on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March. Newsreader Nicholas Owen who is a railway volunteer will be cutting a ribbon at Midday to commemorate the time of the very first train journey back in 1883.

The Sports Development Team had organised the Indoor Athletics Competition for primary and secondary schools on 23<sup>rd</sup> February and 368 pupils took part. The Active for Life Team delivered half term fun and free physical activity sessions in areas of deprivation in the City to over 300 people. Two Soup and Stomp events in Portslade and Hollingdean saw over 120 families get involved in tree planting, healthwalks and soup making. The Street Games

Festival took place at Stanley Deason Leisure centre and had 56 young people taking part in activities ranging from climbing, Basketball and Street Dance. The day was a great success as the team had worked in partnership with the Youth Offending Service and the Youth Team. Brighton Sea Swimming Club have secured with support from the council £50,000 from Sport England to relocate and refurbish the clubs facility and £1030 to deliver 'Girls Get Active' sessions for 14 – 19 year olds at King Alfred, Stanley Deason and Moulsecoomb Leisure Centres.

#### **41. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

#### **42. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS**

There were none.

#### **43. PRESENTATION FROM FRANK GRAY ON FILMING IN BRIGHTON**

The Chair welcomed Frank Gray, the Director of Screen Archive South East who has also lectured on art and film history at the University of Brighton for many years. Dr Gray gave a presentation then took questions (for copy see minute book).

Brighton & Hove should become a 'film city' because it had a powerful cluster of film related activities and organisations but they have yet to be brought into an effective whole. The cluster included:

- Screen heritage e.g. film pioneers, Duke of York's
- Screen heritage organisations e.g. Royal Pavilion & Museums (e.g. dedicated film gallery at Hove Museum and new gallery planned for Brighton Museum) , Screen Archive South East
- Festivals e.g. Cinecity (which he co-directed) , Oska Bright
- Education Strong film/media culture in place at all levels e.g. Universities of Brighton & Sussex, Brighton Film School, primary and secondary schools with a media interest such as Patcham High hosting annual film awards.
- Production. The city has an attractive range of locations and architecture. Range of mature and emerging production organisations e.g. Lighthouse
- Cine-tourism e.g. Visit Brighton's promotion of film heritage
- Special events e.g. dedicated team at BHCC which co-ordinates arrangements for council owned land.

Up until now there had not been a concerted effort to bring all these activities and resources in a strategic way and develop Brighton & Hove as a city of film. Such a film cluster could bring the following benefits:

- Create a new, dynamic identity for the city
- Make the best use of existing resources
- Attract new inward investment

Dr Gray hoped that the Council and the Arts Commission would support this initiative, so that the cluster could take shape as soon as possible. The first phase of developing this cluster, using the agencies of the Council and the Arts Commission (AC), could include:

- Organise structured meetings with key players and stakeholders
- Work towards developing a set of recommendations to establish this cluster
- Establish its policy and strategy
- Make the business case for a film office

It could be an aspiration to apply to UNESCO to become a City of Film. The criteria for this would be met very well by Brighton & Hove, these include:

- Notable infrastructure related to filmmaking
- Historical links
- Cinematographic legacy
- Tradition of hosting film festivals
- Famous film people associated with the city
- Depiction of the city in films

Dr Gray finished his presentation by saying he would welcome endorsement from BHCC and the AC.

In response to questions, Dr Gray replied that rather than introduce a further festival in the city it would be most productive to use existing ones and look to their adaptability. For example developing the relationship between Cinecity and the Brighton Festival, including Vanessa Redgrave this year's Director. He believed that the city could engage in the whole range of issues relating to film-making, not just encouraging film-makers to film here. The breadth of potential platform was illustrated by the Oska Bright festival and the digital revolution which meant that all could make films. Now there was such a range of opportunities, rather than just cinema, from expensive productions to something made by a child on a phone. He felt that people were becoming more visual, which placed a greater onus on schools and universities to get the balance between being visual and the older skills of reading and writing. 'Cine literacy' was a key part of film education.

The cluster would encourage the synergy of sectors as film making included diverse areas such as:

- Writing
- Acting
- Set design

When asked if there was an example of a cluster elsewhere to learn from, Dr Gray told the committee that the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) commissioned a film review chaired by Lord Smith which produced a set of recommendations this January. Their report had a separate chapter on each activity, so was not a good model to draw on. Dr Gray believed that in the lean times it was important to have cross-sectoral approaches and work well with public funders such as the AC. He also believed that it was most important to invest in individual, such as encouraging new writers to write new scripts. One should invest in films that say something about the city and its people, to encourage films that grow out of the city rather



than just visit it. For example, Peter James wants the films of his novels to be made in Brighton.

The Chair thanked Dr Gray for his enthusiasm and was sure that all the Councillors would welcome the idea of a cluster.

#### **44. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY PANEL ON THE RETAIL INDUSTRY**

Cheryl Finella, Economic Development Manager, provided a verbal update on the scrutiny panel which is being run on the retail industry drawing on the first public meeting of the panel and the use of the internet and Twitter to engage stakeholders in a 'live chat' on the issues relating to this sector. Retailers were feeling the effect of the economic downturn, although Brighton & Hove was faring better than nationally in terms of vacancy rates. A cross party panel had been established and was holding three public sessions to hear evidence from retailers and organisations supporting them such as the Chamber of Commerce. The witnesses had been asked the following questions in advance:

- How can the city's unique retail offer be supported and the impact of high inflation and the economic downturn be reduced?
- How can the independent retail sector and multiple/ larger chains work in partnership to ensure work towards sustaining the viability of the retail sector?
- What effective marketing and promotion would benefit the city's retail sector?
- How can retailers, landlords, prospective developers and agents develop the city's retail sector?
- How can regulations and advice regarding the retail sector be utilised and accessed by retailers?
- How can street markets have a more positive impact on retailers?

The first session raised the following issues:

- Poor signage at Brighton Station
- The need to encourage shoppers to go beyond the city centre e.g. to Portland Road
- Parking costs - that shoppers were in effect paying a 'premium' to shop in the city
- The wish for a town centre strategy which involved the key stakeholders e.g. BHCC, the police, which looked at how to maintain a good mix of opportunities including retail and restaurants
- Desire for a Town Centre Manager (a recommendation of the Mary Portas review), a particular request from those in Hove
- More influence over Use Class Orders, which relates to councils' ability to exercise control over the types of businesses that can move into an area e.g. systems to avoid the oversupply of one type of retailer or the number of chains

Ms Finella agreed to provide members with further information on the 'live chat' element of the scrutiny panel.

In response to questions Ms Finella told the Committee that her team recognised the need to look at retail across the whole city and is working with the sector to develop a new support programme. (This is one of the suggestions that arose at the retail scrutiny session) Sharing premises has been suggested, but this could present some challenges partly because the

lease arrangements have to be entered into with private sector landlords. The council was working with partners on how to use empty properties creatively, which was important as empty premises presented the biggest threat to the city as a tourism centre. There had been a decrease in the share of independents from a 73% share to 70% in the city centre, but the BID has seen an increase in the share of independents from 68% to 69%. The city had a large independent business sector. There was a good balance, but the issue of the retail mix can become problematic when an area ends up with low value retail such as, pound shops and betting shops which can dissuade other high value retailers. Once the panel has heard all of the evidence it will consider recommendations for relevant committees; some of the recommendations may have fiscal implications for the council and for retailers; others may be able to be incorporated into future policy.

The Business Improvement District (BID) covers over 500 businesses and Gavin Stewart the BID manager visits every shop to ensure that members are aware of the benefits of the BID and to address any concerns relating to the BID. He provides quarterly reports on vacancies and footfall. The Council's Property Services Team had also purchased information on vacant properties and Local trader associations are beginning to gather their own vacancy details. The Economic Partnership feels that retailers need to share the budgetary challenges. The Business Rates are the biggest chunk of business expenditure but are unavoidable. The role of the council was to work with the business community to help create the conditions for business growth and sustainability.

The budget for decorating empty shops is no longer available, but this issue will form part of the review, along with how to make retailers leave shops in a better state. Members asked if there might be more flexibility in the new planning strategies, e.g. use classes. Ms Finella said that Brighton & Hove Business Forum were encouraging retailers to diversify their markets at a time when 16% of last year's Christmas shopping had been done on-line. Workshops would encourage retailers to think of E-commerce.

#### **45. LIBRARIES SCRUTINY WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**

The Chair thanked officers and members for attending this workshop. Sally McMahon, Head of Libraries and Information Services, confirmed how successful this workshop had been and the report today captured the key issues raised there. It then set out the values and priorities for the future of the service. The next step would be to produce a draft Libraries Plan, which would be put out to public consultation for 13 weeks, then be presented to Committee and Full Council.

Issues raised by Councillors included welcoming the priority placed on the book stock, querying why the report did not refer to Kindles or shelving. Members were concerned that following the budget, there was a gap in funding for mobile libraries but wanted to thank Alan Issler for the work done in Woodingdean. A significant number of residents had come to a meeting about the new library and medical centre and they would like to discuss with them to continue. The Children's Library was vital, but there were restrictions on opening hours due to budgetary restrictions. This represented an opportunity to make it a flagship community library. It was seen as a dramatic decision to continue the mobile library service, but Members

wanted to know if the service could be overhauled to get extra use out of it, for example to cover at Woodingdean.

David Murray, Strategic Director: Communities, stressed that he was keen to keep the dialogue going. The team was examining the impact of the budget amendments on the service, for example if the vehicles were not used they would decay. It may be possible to update members after the Culture CMM meeting next week.

Members asked if it would be possible to use other suppliers for books in order to build up the stock. Ms McMahon confirmed that there had always been the facility to source from elsewhere and they were trying to identify the gaps in the stock.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report and endorse the development of a new Libraries Plan for 2012-15.

#### **46. SEAFRONT STRATEGY WORKSHOP UPDATE**

Ian Shurrock, Commissioner for Sport and Leisure thanked the officers and councillors for the very productive workshop and the Strategy was intended to be reported to Committee in June. Issues raised included:

- Operational issues such as the earlier opening of Volks Railway
- Maintenance issues such as the new phase of painting starting this month and shelters
- Property Management
- Madeira Drive – which was identified by members as a priority for the Strategy
- Other major projects such as the Black Rock site

In response to questions, Adam Bates (Head of Tourism & Leisure) confirmed that there had been a number of metal theft incidents. Where these are council premises the metal had been replaced, otherwise the owners were being chased. There was good CCTV coverage, but this was a real issue. Where possible and appropriate the council was exploring suitable alternative materials which were of less value. Mr Shurrock confirmed that in the King Alfred, lead flashing had been replaced with a less valuable material. He agreed to follow up with City Parks the issue of improving planting. Members, residents and the Hove Civic Society have asked about the possibility of privately funded statues and water features in the area, officers felt that issues relating to cost and maintenance may arise. When asked about the momentum behind these issues, Mr Murray agreed that there were a number of ongoing seafront issues. There was a need to look at how they would fit with major projects and make decisions on those key projects such as Black Rock, Brighton Centre and King Alfred. Some money had been invested in the King Alfred to make it work better. The team was currently to identify ways forward on these complex issues which could then be shared with the Members. Mr Shurrock said that a wide consultation on major sports facilities would be brought to a future Committee. different zones e.g. properties for a predominant type of usage

**RESOLVED:** That members recognise the benefits of the seafront and the importance of the emerging Seafront Strategy.

#### **47. 2012 UPDATE**

The Chair began by stating how pleased she was to see the engagement of children in the programme for 2012. Paula Murray, Commission for Culture explained that the report was an update on the planned programme for 2012. It was a re-statement of the aims of the programme including raising the profile, securing economic benefits and contribute to longer term programmes such as the seafront. The new calendar would run from May to October and will be released in May. The events linked to the Torch relay include People's Day; Big Dance and an event with the National Trust at Devil's Dyke.

Pauline Freestone, London 2012 Co-ordinator, told the Committee that the torch route had been confirmed. LOCOG would be releasing the street level route on March 19<sup>th</sup>, when the council would communicate the details of the route and the timings of the events. Ms Murray explained that although the route could not go through all the wards in the city, a number of the other elements would be about the whole city and young residents. The final event would take place on Hove Lawns which would be very accessible for residents. Same Sky would be leading a number of events which would culminate in the torch event. There would then be a programme of events early the next morning for when the Torch left to go onto Hastings.

The remainder of the report highlighted the breadth of projects associated with 2012 including:

- Two national projects - The Boat project and Stories of the World
- The Children's Festival
- Gold Run which was run by the same organisation behind Oska Bright
- Education and learning projects

It was hoped that the 2012 events would give a boost to regular events in the city, encourage volunteering and participation in sporting events. Such events were also being linked to the celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee. One of the partners the council would be working with was Brighton Zocalo, the city's growing unique annual community event. There were other events which were yet to be confirmed, such as the plans to replace the Steve Overtt Statue.

When asked if the Jubilee celebrations would bring a positive economic benefit to the city, Ms Murray replied that these events were about the community. Although the 2012 events would be contributing to raising the profile of the city and increasing the number of visitors. David Murray, Strategic Director: communities emphasised that the 2012 events were about inclusion, including making the events accessible and for the whole city. A number of Members expressed their hope that the city would play a full role in celebrating the Jubilee and involve all the communities. The council could act as a hub, to provide information about the events which were planned. Ms Murray reassured members that a number of events were planned for the Jubilee which could not be confirmed yet and agreed that the council had a role in providing information.

**RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the contents of the report and plans for activities. The Committee endorsed the approach to supporting a summer of community based

#### **48. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report on the work programme which described some of the key areas looked at by the Committee and highlight potential future work streams. Some of the Members expressed a strong desire to see that the issue of Access to Cultural Services for Older People should be taken forward to a new Committee. Another suggestion for the future was to look at fees and charges to gauge whether they act as a deterrent, for example sports charges. David Murray confirmed that the issue of fees and charges was on their Tracker and so would be addressed in the new committee system. Both Janita Bagshawe, Head of Royal Pavilion & Museums, and Adam Bates, Head of Tourism and Leisure tracked visitor use and compared charges with other destinations. The idea of a dedicated art Gallery in the city was also raised.

The Chair thanked all the members and said how much she had enjoyed chairing the Committee. She then thanked all the officers present and those who could not be there. Cllr Brown finished by thanking the Scrutiny officers for supporting the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the current scrutiny panel looking at the Retail Sector reports to the appropriate scrutiny committee and is monitored by that committee. That the scrutiny panel which CTEOSC agreed should be set up looking at access to cultural services for older people is put forward to any new scrutiny committee as a future panel. That CTEOSC agreed additional suggestions listed above for any future culture committee to examine.

**49. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET, THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETING OR COUNCIL**

The meeting concluded at 18:30

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Equalities update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16 July 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director Communities</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mary Evans</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>291577</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:Mary.evans@brighton-hove.gov.uk">Mary.evans@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Communities and Equality Team reports to OSC regularly on the council's progress in relation to equalities.
- 1.2 Previous reports have focused on the achievements against the Single Equality Scheme. This report provides an update on the new Equality and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan which replaces that Scheme and the council's previous Equality Policy. It also updates on wider equalities work across the council and in the city.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note progress made.
- 2.2 To agree OSC's ongoing involvement in reviews of the Policy and Action Plan, and in overseeing progress more widely.

#### 3. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY AND ACTION PLAN 2012-2015

- 3.1 The previous policy and Single Equality Scheme both came to an end in December 2011 and it was decided to combine the two documents. This enabled us to incorporate the changes from the Equality Act 2010, make our approach more consistent and respond to changes within the council and the wider city.
- 3.2 The Equality Act 2010 places a number of new requirements on the council (Appendix A). These include developing equality objectives which now form the basis of our council Policy (Appendix B).
- 3.3 There was a wide consultation with staff, councillors, statutory partners, and Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups, as well as online, and in line with the Community Engagement Framework we provided feedback on the comments we received.
- 3.4 The new Policy was agreed by full council in March and published.

- 3.5 One of the key points from the consultation was interest in how the Policy would be implemented and we are defining specific actions across the council which will enable progress against each of the objectives identified. This Action Plan is attached (Appendix C).
- 3.6 The Action Plan is currently being circulated internally and externally.
- 3.7 We plan a regular reporting process internally and externally on progress against the Policy and Plan. This will also be an opportunity to identify changes in the city and the council which may require a change in actions or approach and offers a chance for us to explain our approach and learn how it is working for residents, partners, Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups and others in the city.
- 3.8 We are also working with the Communications Team on a plan for making the Policy, the new Act and our duties more widely known within the council. Equally, we aim to raise awareness of our work among our partners.

#### **4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)**

- 4.1 The EIA process itself no longer defined or mandated in law but there is still an explicit legal requirement for public bodies to 'evidence due regard' to the potential impacts on all 'protected characteristic' groups (Appendix A has more information on 'due regard' and 'protected characteristics').
- 4.2 The council has given a commitment to meet this duty by continuing to follow our well-established EIA process on all new policies/services and when they are changed or reviewed. The principles and elements of EIAs are also being embedded in the new commissioning processes.
- 4.3 New EIA guidance has been developed in line with the Equality Act 2010 and training is being delivered based on this.
- 4.4 The EIA timetable for all Units across the council has been updated by equality reps in all areas. This timetable is a record of all the EIAs planned, whether on new services/policies or reviews of existing ones. It is discussed by SLT regularly for monitoring of progress.
- 4.5 During the budget-setting process for this financial year EIAs of all proposed changes and cumulative impact (across changes) were assessed. This enabled us to demonstrate our compliance with the law in giving 'due regard' to the needs of groups protected in law during our decision-making processes. Other authorities have been subject to legal challenge where they have not been able to evidence this.
- 4.6 The EIAs were made available with the overall budget information to Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups in the city, as part of the consultation process. A number of groups provided views which were also considered by members.



## **5. COUNCILLOR CHAMPIONS**

- 5.1 The Disability Scrutiny Review recommended the development of a councillor Disability Champion role which was created under the previous administration. The Green Administration applied the principle to all the Workers' Forums, creating champions for BME staff and LGBT staff. They also identified a need for a women's champion and two councillors have been appointed to fulfil that role.
- 5.2 The 'champion' roles are still being defined: they may include support to forums in completing their business plans (which have gone to SLB – see below, section 8) and developing links with CVS groups in the city. We are working with Human Resources colleagues on developing these roles.

## **6. COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITY PROJECTS**

- 6.1 Neighbourhood Governance: we have been supporting the consideration of how equalities groups are represented in the development of these new structures and how they work. Consultation has already identified that this is an important issue for people in terms of how the governance structures will work.
- 6.2 Community Development Commissioning: further embedding equalities into the process so that bidding organisations make explicit how they will work with equalities groups and evaluate their progress against agreed equalities outcomes.
- 6.3 People's Day: our team has been supporting the planning of this day which has a focus on the diversity of communities in the city, and helps promote understanding between groups and community cohesion. Thus far around 60 activities/performances are planned involving more than a thousand people.
- 6.4 Armed Forces work: our team are supporting the plans for Armed Forces Day and the plans for an Armed Forces Covenant, recognising the significant levels of disadvantage and often exclusion that ex-service personnel may experience in the city and nationally.
- 6.5 Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month: we have co-ordinated the organisation of a series of events to mark this annual event (June) and helped to publicise them.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 7.1 As part of the new requirements of the Equality Act 2010 public bodies are required to publish data on their workforce. This has been produced by our HR department and published (see Appendix D).
- 7.2 The HR Equality group (reps from HR, Workers' Forums and Communities and Equality Team) meets quarterly and has discussed a number of topics, including the extension of LGBT Mentoring, Workers' Forums' Business Plans (see below), and ways to improve data collection and use the data more effectively

## **8. WORKERS FORUMS**

- 8.1 The Forums have developed Business Plans which they presented to the Strategic Leadership Board. They are now starting work to implement these plans. SLB have also agreed actions within them.
- 8.2 The Councillor Champions (see above) are also meeting with the forums to find out key issues and identify next steps.
- 8.3 The Champions for Women have held some meetings with women staff and are planning to set another date to meet.

## **9. CITY INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP**

- 9.1 The focus for the partnership has been to agree a new Work Plan and to agree and sign-off the new protocol with the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership.

## **10. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 10.1 None directly in relation to this report as all costs to be met by existing budgets.

### Legal Implications:

- 10.2 Our statutory responsibilities in relation to equalities are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the implementation of the Action Plan.

### Equalities Implications:

- 10.3 The equalities implications are directly addressed by the work contained within the report.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 10.4 None directly in relation to this report

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 10.5 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Community Safety Team are key contributors to equalities & inclusion work in the city and this is reflected in the action plan

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 10.6 The implications for risk are directly addressed by the actions contained within the report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

10.7 The actions contained within the report have been developed with input from all council Units.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

**A - EQUALITIES ACT 2010**

**B - EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

**C - WORKFORCE DATA**

The Equality Act replaces the previous anti-discrimination legislation with a single Act that simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier to understand. It also strengthens the law to help tackle discrimination and inequality, and expands the Duties placed on public bodies.

The Equality Duty aims to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of all public bodies, and those carrying out public functions, so that they tackle discrimination and inequality. The Duty requires public bodies to engage with the diverse communities affected by their activities and decisions to ensure that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Duty consists of a **general Duty** and **specific Duties** – the specific Duties are designed to enable public bodies to meet the general Duty. The new Duty replaces the existing public sector equality Duties and covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (ethnic or national origin, colour, nationality)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
  - The Duty also applies to 'marriage and civil partnership' but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The general Duty has 3 aims. Public bodies must consciously consider these three aims as part of the process of decision making, and the specific Duties require evidence that this has happened:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people from different groups
- **Foster good relations** between people from different groups

The specific Duties provide a framework to enable public bodies to meet the general Duty. The Duties require public bodies to set specific, measurable, equality outcomes, embedded into core practice and process, and to publish information on their progress to enable public scrutiny and accountability.

The Act is designed to reduce bureaucracy whilst helping public bodies deliver equality outcomes. It will require public bodies to publish more information than before, and to demonstrate how they are delivering improvement so that the public can hold them to account.

# Brighton and Hove City Council

## Equality and Inclusion Policy

**2012-2015**

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## **Section 1 – Our Vision for Equality and Inclusion**

### **About this Document**

This is the Equality and Inclusion Policy for Brighton and Hove City Council.

It covers the period 2012 to 2015 and describes our vision, objectives, key actions and measures to promote, facilitate and deliver equality both within Brighton and Hove City Council and the rest of the city.

It brings together and replaces our existing policies – ‘Working Towards an Inclusive City’ and the ‘Single Equalities Scheme’ – and dovetails as the Equalities Impact Assessment of our Corporate Plan 2011-15. It builds on our strong track record on equalities, including our excellence award from the 2011 Equality Framework for Local Government Diversity Peer Challenge.

The Policy fits within corporate, community and partner service frameworks and sets out key city issues and their impacts on protected equality and key social inclusion groups.

The Policy objectives also meet our requirements under the public sector duty of the Equality Act 2010 and as a strategic and corporate document, does not intend to describe all of the detail behind its objectives. This detail is captured in the council’s range of commissioning and delivery unit business plans and new actions are identified through Equality Impact Assessments, community engagement and service reviews.

Section 2 illustrates some of our example actions and following Full Council agreement to the draft objectives we will work with our internal and external stakeholders to create a fully comprehensive and measurable action plan which will be publically available.

The council is committed to a substantial and ongoing programme of Equalities Impact Assessments which will underpin this Policy and ensure that consideration of potential equality impacts are built into and inform all levels of decision making. Details on this process are available at Appendix 2.

As a live document and process, we welcome feedback on its content and impact and set out the ways in which we will actively seek this during its lifetime.

### **Our vision for Equality**

Brighton and Hove City Council recognises and welcomes the diversity of our city. We recognise that this is part of what makes our city great.

Tackling inequality is one of the three key priorities of our new Corporate Plan and we aim to be pro-active and effective in achieving this. Our additional focus on community engagement and sustainability means that we acknowledge the importance of involving people to create stronger and cohesive communities and will commit to action and measures that do this.

‘We believe that everyone has a right to a decent home, a good education, a job that pays for a decent standard of living, good healthcare and to feel safe in their

community. We also strongly believe that no one should be disadvantaged from birth due to the neighbourhood or family circumstances they are born into’.

Corporate Plan, 2011 – 2015.

We recognise that there can be no fair society if some groups remain disadvantaged because of their legally protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. We also know – from our data and research - that there are additional people and places facing disadvantage in our city and have identified these as ‘social inclusion groups’, (see Appendix 1 for further information on social inclusion groups).

The current economic climate makes this simultaneously difficult and critically, more important than ever to achieve. At a time of recession and significant public spending reform we recognise that many of our most vulnerable groups will face additional challenges during the next few years.

The council recognises, values and seeks to protect basic human rights as the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person. Together with other statutory services in the city we adopted an ‘Equality and Human Rights Charter’ in 2010. This provides a framework for improving services in response to the diversity of communities in the city and progress and impact are reported to the City Inclusion Partnership. Further information on the Charter is available on our Website or from the Communities and Equality Team.

### **Working in Partnership**

The council has a strong history of working with partners and an established City Inclusion Partnership, which brings together the majority of public sector organisations serving local people and representatives from the community and voluntary sector.

The council recognises the specialist role that the community and voluntary sector plays in tackling inequality through its strong roots in service user involvement, community engagement and social justice.

The Council has sought to change the way in which it commissions and delivers services through a new model of working called ‘Intelligent Commissioning’. Equality and inclusion are embedded in this as key criteria for decision making and impact assessment and we are committed to extending this through our service level agreements.

The council also recognises our diverse private sector and the range of opportunities and services it offers the people who live and work in the city. With a large proportion of small to medium sized businesses we work in partnership to support them in promoting cohesion and sustainability.

### **City Issues**

As part of ensuring that this new policy is ‘fit for purpose’, research work has been undertaken to review as many data and intelligence reports as possible. These include the Reducing Inequalities Review, Joint Services Needs Assessment, Child Poverty



Needs Assessment, Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2010 and the State of the City Survey 2011.

From this data we have established a range of priority equality and inclusion issues for the city that are highlighted in our corporate plan and provide a framework for this Policy.

As a commissioning organisation we have also set out our plans to tackle these issues in our new City Commissioning Plan and further detail on this is available on our Website or from the Communities and Equality Team.

#### Community safety.

Community safety issues are high priority for most of our residents, particularly those from minority groups. Identified priorities include tackling hate crime, domestic and sexual violence, substance misuse and fear of crime.

#### Community cohesion.

Brighton and Hove is seen as a tolerant and inclusive city. The city is home to settled communities but also has a high number of transient, seasonal and mobile groups. Inevitably there can be tensions within and between its diverse communities and we will act on our responsibility to promote and support cohesion wherever possible.

#### Financial inclusion

Recession, public spending changes and welfare reform mean that there is likely to be many more people and groups facing economic disadvantage in the city. We want to help tackle this by designing, commissioning and delivering services that reduce and avoid negative impacts wherever possible.

#### Community involvement.

Our commitment to engagement, local decision making and new forms of service delivery provide a stronger focus on volunteering and representation. As a result we recognise the importance of listening to diverse voices and tackling barriers to participation.

#### Employment.

At a time of recession we recognise our role in providing, supporting and encouraging employment opportunities in the city. We recognise that some groups face more barriers to employment than others and commit to tackling this wherever possible.

#### Housing

We recognise that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the city and together with housing benefit reform understand that this will have additional impacts for people facing disadvantage. Together with the mixed economy of housing providers in the city we will work more creatively to help residents find secure housing and prevent homelessness.

#### Health and wellbeing

We believe that life expectancy should not be determined by wealth or postcode. Tackling health inequalities will run through everything the council does and we

recognise the relative high levels of problems with mental health, substance and alcohol misuse need to be addressed through robust partnerships.

### Sustainability

The council recognises that a sustainable city is not just about protecting the environment but building flourishing communities and individuals capable of resilience and action. It is also about sustainable partnerships that help to maximise available resources for tackling inequality and harness assets.

### **Getting Involved**

This Policy and its objectives have been created through a process of consultation. We have incorporated the feedback from this into the final version. Further detail of this consultation process is described at Appendix 4.

However, we recognise that our Policy will only be successful if there is clear action with transparent and measurable reporting of progress. We want to ensure that we hear from our partners and residents about the effectiveness of the objective's set out here. We also want to do this throughout the lifetime of the Policy, not just at the beginning or end.

As a result we intend to introduce a new process of engagement that provides regular opportunities for you to tell us how we are doing. This will involve formal mechanisms for feedback and review and an opportunity to refresh the content of this Policy where necessary.

Further details of this work are available from the Communities and Equality Team and we welcome and encourage your involvement.

### **Contact Information**

This document has been produced by the Communities and Equality Team of Brighton and Hove City Council. Key contact officers for this work are:

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## **Section 2: Equality Objectives, Measures and Key Actions**

### **A. Promoting equality and inclusion through better engagement between the council and communities, groups and individuals**

#### Objectives

A1. We will engage with representative groups, networks and individuals, to ensure that communities of interest, identity and place are given an opportunity to influence review, design and delivery of services

A2. When we engage with communities we will identify which groups should be involved, consider how best to reach and engage with them and use a range of approaches and activities to ensure that engagement is accessible and appropriate for diverse communities

A3. We will make sure that our staff have the skills and confidence to engage with all communities in the city to ensure that engagement is appropriate and positive for everyone.

A4. We will work with communities to raise awareness and create opportunities for working on joint projects to improve community cohesion between 'protected characteristics' groups and to reduce inequality.

#### Measures

- Narrative measures: Equality Impact Assessment and Commissioning Needs Assessments; examples of specific projects and activities
- Corporate Plan: Increase in the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- Learning and Development measures: Take-up and usage of learning services by protected characteristic and narrative measures from evaluations.
- Narrative measures:

#### Key Actions

We will:

- support the City Engagement Partnership (CEP) which oversees the implementation of the city-wide Community Engagement Framework.
- use our Intelligent Commissioning (IC) process to engage with relevant people and groups to inform the development, commissioning and review of services.
- The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process includes a review of engagement feedback to inform assessment of potential impact.
- use Community Development Commissioning to support people in neighbourhoods to have a voice; and to identify and address issues relating to specific 'protected characteristics' groups in neighbourhoods.

- develop two Neighbourhood Council pilots that will enable communities to work with statutory services to direct, manage and run some of their own services within the specific areas. This will include support to specifically engage communities of interest.
- develop appropriate feedback mechanisms that enable communities to know how their views have influenced service design.
- focus additional resources on engaging with communities of interest and identity, specifically Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT).
- work with partners through the City Inclusion Partnership (CIP) to identify city-wide issues and barriers to engagement, and identify solutions and ways to improve joint working.
- continue to work with equality networks across the city to use their links to and knowledge of diverse communities to inform our practice.
- use information gathered through the Neighbourhood Councils consultation focus groups that will support our engagement practices with LGBT, BME, and Disabled communities.
- ensure that relevant diverse groups are enabled to engage with the Intelligent Commissioning (IC) process through appropriate engagement processes.
- raise awareness of and implement the Community Engagement Framework (CEF) standards across the council and with partners and maximise opportunities for integrated approaches.
- develop additional forms of engagement through funding and supporting the use of technology and social media by community and voluntary groups. Many of these focus on engaging 'hard to reach communities' such as those with learning disabilities, gypsies and travellers and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) young people.
- use cross-sector training, like our Community Engagement Framework training, to share skills, knowledge and experience across the statutory and community and voluntary sectors.
- support the integration of Neighbourhood Governance arrangements into the Community Engagement Training programme and if needed develop some bespoke learning.
- develop, share and use resources and guidance which will support positive and appropriate community engagement.
- use local knowledge and data to inform community development activity to support different groups to come together in neighbourhoods.

- deliver our Discretionary Grants Programme 2012-16 'supporting a thriving third sector that promotes engagement and equality by encouraging cohesive communities to have active voices'.
- provide some specific capacity building support for communities of interest to be involved in new forms of Neighbourhood Governance.
- continue to support and facilitate People's Day as a community event which has been designed to increase understanding and to celebrate the diverse communities.
- review the learning from the Breakthrough Lead Commissioner group to develop effective opportunities for partnership bids.
- support initiatives such as Housing Tenants participation, LINK / Healthwatch and Neighbourhood Governance Structures to enable residents to be involved in developing ideas of how collaborative partnerships might work.

**B. Promoting equality and inclusion through more effective joint work with statutory bodies and other partners**

Objectives

B1. We will work in our services and with our partners to ensure that there is an improvement in relations between different 'protected characteristics' groups.

B2. We will continue to improve the quality of our partnerships to make sure that:

- a) we join up more services for vulnerable and marginalised people, households and communities to make them more effective;
- b) we work towards eliminating bullying, harassment, discrimination and hate incidents / crimes and appropriately address them wherever they might take place in the city;
- c) we identify and use opportunities for early intervention and preventative work to stop people experiencing disadvantage or barriers in their lives.

Measures

- Corporate Plan: % of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area; % of people who think that not treating one another with respect and consideration is a problem in their area
- Narrative measure: Commissioning
- Corporate Plan: levels of domestic violence, hate incidents and crimes.
- Corporate Plan: measures of educational attainment; homelessness prevention; care leavers in education, employment or training; family intervention work to better support children at risk; life expectancy between communities; take-up of formal childcare by low income working families.

Key Actions

We will

- use the City Inclusion Partnership to identify opportunities for joint work and to support local and national initiatives.
- Equality Impact Assessments require assessment of the potential impact of a service, policy or strategy on community cohesion.
- work with our partners in health and the emerging CCG to ensure that we are funding and supporting between and across all groups with 'protected characteristics'
- work through the Partnership Community Safety Team to promote an understanding of, and engagement with, diverse communities.
- continue to be involved in key partnerships addressing inequality city-wide.
- use Intelligent Commissioning (IC) to match resources and activity to need, and performance manage our services.

- The Partnership Community Safety Team will continue to work with all relevant partners to raise awareness, increase trust and reporting, appropriately deal with reports and feed back on work.
- use Intelligent Commissioning processes to identify the key points where early interventions can be most effective and work with partners to develop appropriate and effective preventative work.
- develop a range of services and activities to support financial inclusion – targeted at those most affected by welfare reform and recession (lone parents, disabled people, younger people, Black and Minority Ethnic people and those experiencing social-economic disadvantage).

## **C. Promoting equality and inclusion through fair and accessible services**

### Objectives

C1. We will continue to improve the accessibility of our services and our facilities - including buildings, information, communication, appropriate use of different technologies and events – for service-users.

C2. We will develop and provide relevant and appropriate services to ensure that they meet the needs of individual users, targeting those who are most in need and who face additional barriers.

C3. We will develop and use a tailored approach for services to make sure that we identify specific needs and barriers and respond appropriately.

C4. We will ensure full compliance with our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure to ensure that we give due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with 'protected characteristics' in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to our employees – and so we can evidence this

### Measures

- City Tracker: measure of satisfaction with council.
- Corporate Plan: Increase in customer satisfaction levels
- Organisational Health Report: % of publicly accessible council buildings suitable for and accessible to people with disabilities.
- Narrative measure: Equality Impact Assessments, Commissioning Strategies
- Learning and Development measures: Take-up and usage of learning services by protected characteristic and narrative measures from evaluations.
- Staff Survey: measures of fair treatment; listening to customers' suggestions on services improvement; services recognising customer diversity
- Reporting against the Equality Impact Assessment timetable.
- Equality Implications sections of Council reports.
- Papers of council meetings.

### Key Actions

We will:

- use our Improving Customer Experience programme to consider diverse people's needs and publicise a range of ways of accessing services.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) require a consideration of different people's needs to develop responsive and appropriate services.
- embed Community Engagement & Equalities principles in Intelligent Commissioning (IC): support the development and implementation of IC; and engage with learning in the process.
- support ongoing Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) work by council Units and oversee this process.



- provide information and data to Members about the risks to groups of service funding reductions, through Budget Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).
- conduct ongoing equalities monitoring of the impact of budget changes locally and of funding reductions nationally to identify trends in disproportionate or unanticipated impact at an early stage to address them.
- ensure that learning from Intelligent Commissioning (IC) pilots is embedded in throughout the IC process.
- ensure we are using the mechanisms to allow community and services user views to be heard when developing services.
- use the IC process to embed flexible but robust equalities and community engagement related criteria in performance management and contracts.
- keep an up-to-date timetable of all Equality Impact Assessments planned across the council and monitor progress against this.
- quality-check all completed EIAs and offer support to Units and others completing them to ensure they are effective.
- publish summaries of all EIAs and ensure that all EIAs are freely available to ensure that anyone can review our process and the actions we have planned.
- where EIAs identify gaps in monitoring we will prioritise these and address them as part of Unit's action plans.

**D. Promoting equality and inclusion through improving the quality and breadth of information held and used by the council**

Objectives

D1. We will address gaps in our knowledge to ensure that we are prioritising key equality areas in our work; and we will use data and consultation from Equality Impact Assessments and service reviews to fill gaps and inform targeted work.

D2. We will enhance our data collection and analysis processes, working with our partners, so that we can effectively use equality data to improve services.

D3. We will collect, analyse and publish workforce data to meet our duties in the Equality Act 2010, and use the information to inform workforce policies and practices.

D4. We will use internal and external communications to ensure that we raise awareness and share information on equality and inclusion issues with staff, service-users, communities, partners and others.

Measures

- Narrative measures: Commissioning Needs Assessments; Equality Impact Assessments; from City-Wide Needs Assessment Group; on Communications Plan and evaluation of this
- Examples of data and information being used by Human Resources in policy development.

Key Actions

We will:

- share and use information gathered through the Intelligent Commissioning (IC) Needs Assessment processes to inform both the services commissioned and other IC processes.
- use new Neighbourhood Governance approaches to support our knowledge and understanding of both people and place.
- fill data gaps, where appropriate:
  - Planning and completing a consultation on need in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, with other statutory and community and voluntary sector partners.
  - Using the findings of Countability (barriers encountered by disabled people), a partnership project with The Fed Centre for Independent Living, University of Sussex, Sussex Police, and East Sussex Fire and Rescue.
- use the City-wide Data Group to co-ordinate data collection and use across the city, linking in with IC Needs Assessments.
- in compliance with our legal duties we have published workforce diversity data on our website and will do so annually.

- use workforce diversity data to inform the development of the council's People Strategy and actions to implement this.
- develop a wide-ranging campaign to advertise the Equality and Inclusion Policy and its related issues internally and externally, using a range of different media and formats.

## **E. Promoting equality and inclusion through our employment and procurement practices**

NB: The Council's People Strategy will set out a number of actions around promoting equality and inclusion within our workplace (due April 2012).

### Objectives

E1. We will strengthen our employment monitoring and use it to continue to improve the diversity of our workforce at all levels to ensure that we reflect the communities we serve.

E2. The council will not tolerate bullying and harassment at any level of the organisation.

We will develop a workplace environment where all staff feel they are treated with dignity and respect.

E3 We will ensure that our pay and reward system is fair and transparent.

E4. We will adopt a Living Wage for our staff and lead by example to encourage other businesses within the city to pay their employees at a Living Wage level.

E5. We will continue to improve access for staff, including disabled staff, to our buildings and through appropriate employment policies which are developed in consultation with disabled staff to ensure that needs are identified and met.

E6. We will use learning and development to increase staff knowledge and skill to ensure they are confident to:

- plan and deliver services fairly, equally and appropriately to all users;
- consider and respond to the needs of all 'protected characteristic' groups; and
- recognise the issues for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

E7. We will ensure that any organisations contracted by the council through the Procurement Team or using their processes and documentation meet our equality and inclusion objectives / requirements for both their workforce and their service users.

### Measures

- Organisational Health Report: % of top 5% of earners and employees overall who declare that they are Women, from BME communities, Disabled
- Narrative measure: activities to promote recruitment among different communities
- Corporate Plan: Decrease in percentage of employees responding that they have experienced discrimination or harassment or bullying in the last year.
- Staff Survey: measures of bullying, discrimination and harassment at work; respect from colleagues; confidence in employer taking action to tackle discrimination, harassment or bullying; observance of religious festivals and holidays; support in meeting my childcare and caring responsibilities
- Narrative measures on introduction of Living Wage and list of companies adopting it; Disabled Workers' Forum survey; analysis by HR and Premises Teams

- Learning and Development measures: Take-up and usage of learning services by protected characteristic and narrative measures from evaluations.
- Contract compliance and narrative examples

### Key Actions

We will:

- analyse workforce information by protected characteristic.
- publish workforce data by protected characteristic.
- use this information to identify appropriate targets and areas for action.
- increase pro-active approaches to recruitment of under-represented staff throughout the organisation and at senior levels
- analyse data (including the staff survey) to identify perceptions and outcomes from formal procedures relating to dignity and respect.
- review our Dignity and Respect (D&R) procedure for handling complaints.
- work with the minority workers' fora to help us achieve our objectives.
- identify and resolve any potential pay issues post single status implementation.
- The Council adopted a Living Wage of £7.19 per hour with effect from September 2011. This applies to all employees and casual workers.
- ensure that all employment policy reviews involve consultation with trade unions and worker forums
- continue work with Property & Design to ensure access arrangements are suitable and sufficient.
- work with the feedback gathered through the People Strategy and 2011 Staff Survey, to introduce a behaviour and performance management framework that advocates the behaviour and skill we want colleagues to model.
- continue to ensure skills in working with diverse communities are embedded through-out all learning programmes.
- through the Procurement Team will support and lead the adoption of 'Best Practice' Procurement across the organisation.

## Appendix One

### The Law - The Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998

#### A. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and inequality. All sections of the Act are now in force.

The public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5 April 2011. The Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

The new Equality Duty supports good decision-making: it encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective. The Equality Duty therefore helps public bodies to deliver the Government's overall objectives for public services.

The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender. The new Equality Duty covers the following **protected characteristics**:

- **age** – people of all ages
- **disability** – mental and physical impairments
- **sex** – men/boys and women/girls
- **gender reassignment**
- **race** – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- **religion or belief** – this includes lack of belief
- **sexual orientation** –bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people
- **pregnancy and maternity**

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

**Fostering good relations** involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of an exception or the positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic – such as providing computer training to older people to help them access information and services.

### **Perceptive Discrimination and Associative Discrimination**

The Act introduces two additional forms of unlawful behaviour:

- Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against a person because others believe that they have a protected characteristic, whether or not they do have it (for example discriminating against someone because you think they are of a particular religion, even if they are not).
- Associative discrimination is where a victim of discrimination does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does - e.g. the parent of a disabled child.

### **Taking account of disabled people's disabilities**

The Equality Duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

### **Demonstrating compliance with the Equality Duty**

There is no explicit requirement to refer to the Equality Duty in recording the process of consideration but it is good practice to do so. Keeping a record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies demonstrate that they considered the aims of the Equality Duty. In Brighton and Hove City Council we use the Equality Impact Assessment process to do this.

Producing an Equality Impact Assessment after a decision has been reached will not achieve compliance with the Equality Duty.

Where it is clear from initial consideration that a policy will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics, no further analysis or action is necessary.

Public bodies should take a proportionate approach when complying with the Equality Duty. In practice, this means giving greater consideration to the Duty where a function or policy has the potential to have a substantial effect on discrimination or equality of opportunity for the public or employees, and less consideration where the potential effect on equality is slight.

The Duty requires public bodies to think about people's different needs and how these can be met.

### **Inclusion Groups**

In addition to its duties under the Equality Act the Council is committed to action that promotes equality and eliminates discrimination in all areas, throughout the community it serves.

Research on the city's communities has provided us with very detailed information and enabled us to identify groups of people who may need specific support or services if we are to deliver equality and achieve a truly inclusive city. These groups are often called 'inclusion groups'.

These are:

- Homeless people
- Unemployed people
- People employed on a part-time, temporary or casual basis
- Lone parents
- Carers
- People with substance misuse issues
- Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers
- Ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions<sup>1</sup>
- People experiencing domestic and sexual violence
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

### **B. The Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act 1998 (also known as the Act or the HRA) came into force in the United Kingdom in October 2000. It is composed of a series of sections that have the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

Human rights are based on core principles like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy. They are relevant to day-to-day life and protect people's freedom to control their own lives, effectively take part in decisions made by public authorities which impact upon their rights, and get fair and equal services from public authorities.

They help people to flourish and fulfil their potential through:

- being safe and protected from harm

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<sup>1</sup> An unrelated conviction is a minor conviction which has no impact upon the individual's ability to do a particular job or receive a service where access criteria apply. For instance, somebody with a minor driving conviction would not be prevented from working with vulnerable adults.



- being treated fairly and with dignity
- living the life you choose
- taking an active part in your community and wider society.

The Act applies to all public authorities (such as central government departments, local authorities and NHS Trusts) and other bodies performing public functions (such as private companies operating prisons). These organisations must comply with the Act – and people's human rights – when providing a service or making decisions that have a decisive impact upon people's rights.

This means, among other things, that individuals can take human rights cases in domestic courts; they no longer have to go to Strasbourg to argue their case in the European Court of Human Rights.

The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

- Right to life
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Right to liberty and security
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections

## **Appendix 2**

### **Our approach to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

#### **Aims of Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are about service improvement.

They help us to develop and deliver efficient, appropriate and responsive services that meet the needs of diverse individuals and communities. They also enable us to demonstrate our compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Our duty within the Equality Act is about good decision-making: it encourages councils (and other public bodies) to understand how different people will be affected by our activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

As a public sector body we need to be able to evidence that we have given due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with 'protected characteristics'<sup>2</sup> in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to our own employees. We also consider other groups in our EIA process (see below) and assess the potential impact on community cohesion.

The Equality Impact Assessment process enables us to meet our legal duties and provide better services by:

- assessing impact on different groups consistently and methodically,
- using the findings to inform decision-making, increasing opportunities for positive benefits and reducing or removing negative impacts,
- developing actions and monitoring processes to address issues, and
- evidencing that we completed this process.

The aims of an Equality Impact Assessment become especially important at times of straitened budgets, to enable us to consider:

- what the council is trying to achieve
- what impact the decision will have on different groups
- how to target resources to those who may be most vulnerable
- how to develop and fund services which respond to people's diverse needs and save money by getting it right first time

#### **EIAs and the Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Duty in the Act has three aims. (For full information see Appendix 1 of the Policy) It requires public bodies to have 'due regard'<sup>3</sup> to the need to:

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<sup>2</sup> 'Protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. (Also marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to eliminating discrimination.)

<sup>3</sup> Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

### **The Council's EIA Process**

In the council EIAs should be completed on all new policies, strategies and services; and existing services every three years, or at re-design – whenever is most relevant. Actions defined in the EIAs feed into team/Unit plans or into the commissioning process.

Equality Impact Assessment in the council follows the following steps:

1. Develop a core team who will oversee the EIA, offering different perspectives and challenge, and identify others who will contribute.
2. Define the aims/objectives of the policy/service: what is the most appropriate range of the EIA. The EIA must be proportionate and its findings must be meaningful.
3. Make an initial scope of the groups which might be affected and the potential issues. Consider all aspects of the service (including staff and people eligible but not currently using the service).
4. Assess existing data to identify what is already known (locally and/or nationally) – where there are gaps you may be able to conduct new research.
5. Assess what consultation has already been done (locally and/or nationally) – again if there are gaps you may be able to undertake consultation, using the Community Engagement Framework guidance.
6. Use the data and consultation to assess impact: identify whether there are potential differences in how groups find out about the service, access it, or gain benefit from it.
7. Identify all the possible actions which will reduce adverse and promote positive impacts. Unlawful adverse impact must be addressed.
8. Review all the possible actions and identify which ones are possible within the service, with a rationale for the choices. Actions must be transferred into Unit or Team Plans so that they are monitored and reviewed regularly.

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influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

9. EIAs are signed off within Units and by the Communities and Equality team. They are public documents and a summary version is made publicly available. The full EIA is available on request.

10. The actions from the EIA are then monitored and reviewed as part of usual service delivery. Changes in the service or policy, or in the city, or in data/consultation should be considered to see whether they require a new EIA.

### **Assessing Equality Impact in Intelligent Commissioning**

The EIA principles have been built into the Intelligent Commissioning (IC) process (along with consideration of the other cross-cutting strands of community engagement and sustainability). This means assessment of potential equality impacts is built in throughout the IC stages and informs the development of the commissioned service.

### **Groups Considered in the EIA Process**

All the 'protected characteristic' groups are considered in the EIA process, depending on the service or policy and what differences there are in access or need for different groups.

There are also groups identified locally which may need to be considered by different services. We often call them 'inclusion groups'. They may vary by service or area, but include:

- Homeless people
- Unemployed people
- People employed on a part-time, temporary or casual basis
- Lone parents
- Carers
- People with substance misuse issues
- Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers
- Ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions<sup>4</sup>
- People experiencing domestic and sexual violence
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

For example, in raising educational attainment the needs of White British boys, Gypsy and Traveller children, and Bangladeshi children might be a key focus. In provision of some kinds of housing the needs of disabled people with physical, sensory or mental health impairments, lone parents, or young people leaving care may be the focus.

### **Quality-checking and Monitoring EIAs**

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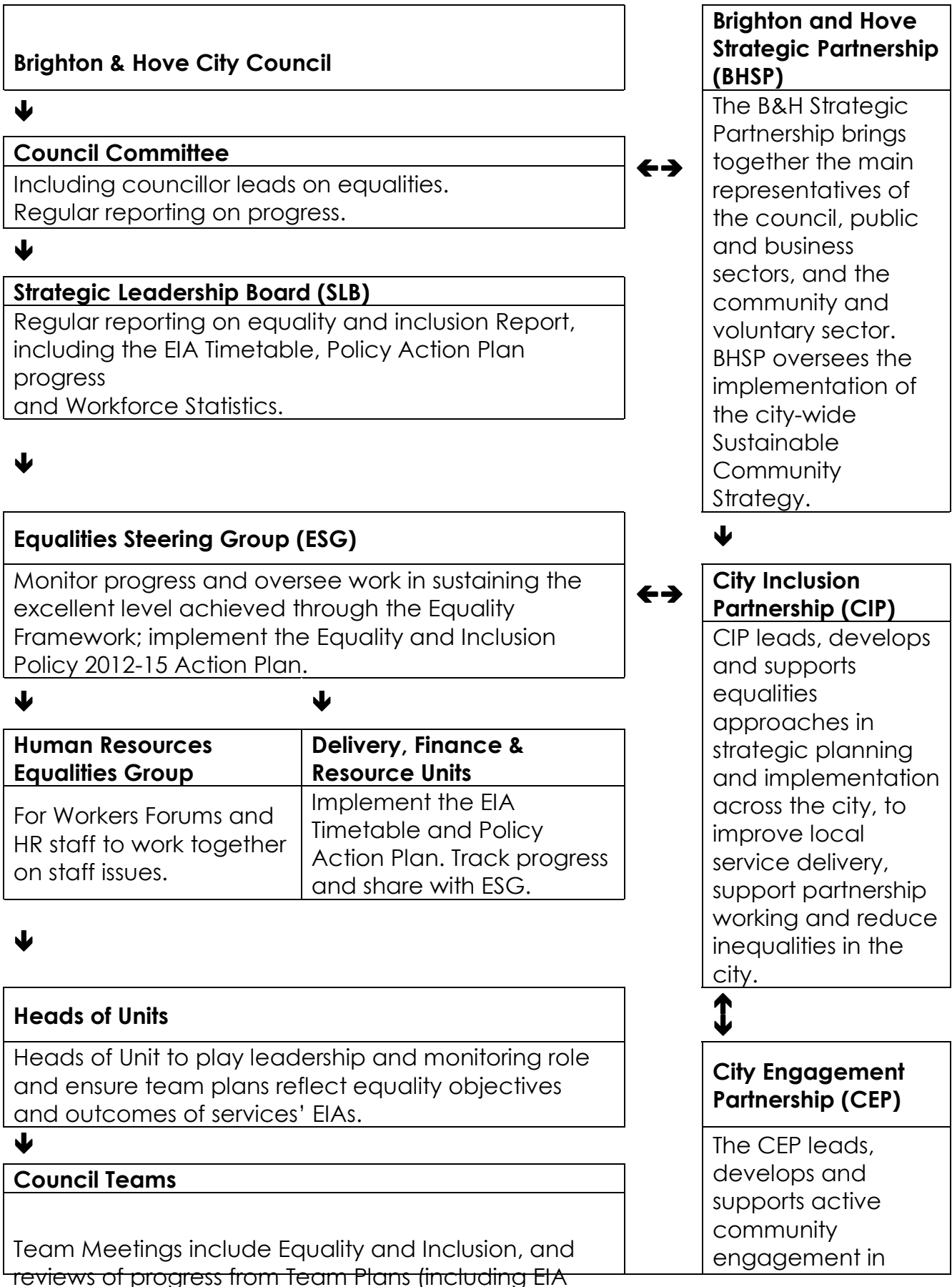
<sup>4</sup> An unrelated conviction is a minor conviction which has no impact upon the individual's ability to do a particular job or receive a service where access criteria apply. For instance, somebody with a minor driving conviction would not be prevented from working with vulnerable adults.

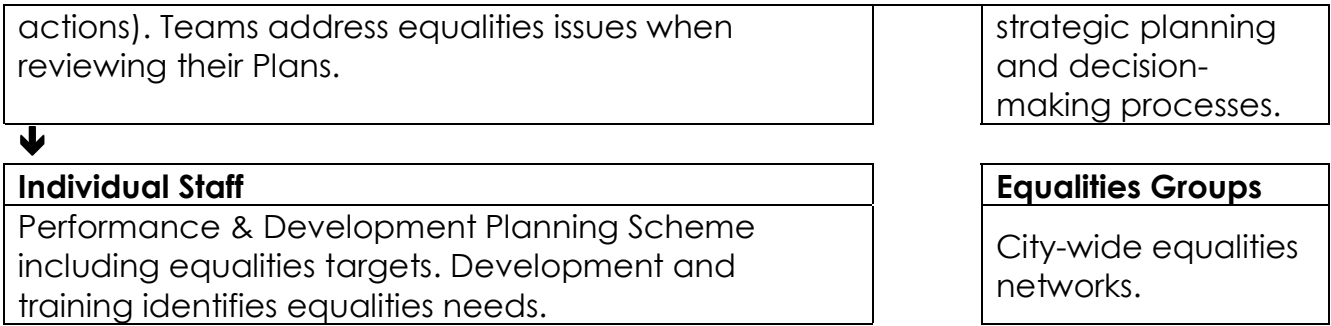
The Communities and Equality Team in the council provides support and guidance on completing EIAs and must sign off an EIA before it is published. The Team also oversees the EIA timetable which contains information on all the assessments planned in the different council units, including commissioning.

The corporate Equality Steering Group, formed of equality champions from each of the Units, also monitors progress against the timetable.

The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) also receives regular updates on progress against the timetable.

## Appendix Three Equalities Performance Management Framework





# Brighton and Hove City Council Single Equality Scheme Action Plan 2010-2012

## Summary Update on Actions - FINAL

This is a summary of the final report on the council's Single Equality Scheme (2010-12). The council has adopted a new Equality and Inclusion Policy which will include a new Action Plan for 2012-15. This will include any actions from this plan where work is ongoing, as well as new actions for the future.

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
<b>Over-arching actions</b>		
Achieve 'Excellent' level in Equalities Framework for Local Government	<p>Range of activities meeting Index standards</p> <p>Collate evidence of good practice</p>	<p>The Council was awarded the highest standard of the Framework 'Excellent' in January 2011, after a peer assessment lasting three days and involving nearly 100 members of staff, partner organisations and community and voluntary groups.</p> <p>Key strengths identified included: Commitment to equalities from political leadership, staff passion for equalities, the Communities and equalities team, City Inclusion Partnership, Community Engagement Framework, Equality Impact Assessments (internally and externally), and good relationships with partners including the Community and Voluntary Sector.</p>
A robust and transparent EIA process that leads to evidenced and appropriate actions	<p>Review of EIA toolkit &amp; inclusion of guidance on community cohesion</p> <p>EIA workshops for managers</p>	<p>The EIA Toolkit was revised to include Community Cohesion as a specific strand and also in light of the changes resulting from the new Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The EIA process was used as part of the consultation on the Council Budget-setting process for 2012-13 and findings will inform decision-making by councillors.</p>



Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
<b>(a) Promoting equality through information</b>		
<p>An up-to-date evidence base that covers all equality areas, fills gaps in existing evidence and is used to inform our ongoing work</p>	<p>Consider research proposal with Uni. of Brighton &amp; Federation of Disabled People to identify barriers to inclusion</p>	<p>This project became 'Countability': the aim was to address a data gap regarding the barriers faced daily by disabled adults living in the city.</p> <p>Guided by the Social Model of Disability the focus of the research was on the barriers, challenges and opportunities shared by disabled people in society.</p> <p>The Countability project gathered data from local service providers on how disabled people use services and their experiences of living in the city. In addition a number of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and 'big meetings' for people with learning disabilities were held.</p> <p>The report has been finished and will be launched in March 2012. Information from this research will be used to inform Intelligent Commissioning processes.</p>
<p>Consistent monitoring systems across the council and improved analysis &amp; use of captured data</p>	<p>Support the City Inclusion Partnership's (CIP) work on making monitoring more consistent.</p>	<p>The CIP members drafted an equality monitoring form which addresses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the changes to census categories (2011) and considers groups in the local area.</p> <p>After partners trialled this, the form was adopted by the council as the standard template recommended by the Performance and Analysis Team.</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
<b>(b) Promoting equality through our partnership working</b>		
<p>Statutory services in the city work jointly through the City Inclusion Partnership to address equality, community cohesion and human rights issues</p>	<p>Agree joint commitment through Equality and Human Rights Charter</p>	<p>This Charter was launched in January 2010 with guest speaker from Equality and Human Rights Commission and attended by chief officers of all the partner organisations.</p> <p>There have been enquiries about the city-wide Equality and Human Rights Charter as a good practice model from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Fife Council and Hastings Borough Council.</p> <p>The City Inclusion Partnership was identified as an example of best practice in the Equality Framework for Local Government assessment (Jan 2011) – see above</p>
<p>New post for Preventing Violent Extremism work</p>	<p>Undertake Community Needs Analysis of Muslim people in the city</p>	<p>This has been the first Needs Assessment of the Muslim communities in the city. Its key aim is to identify the areas that the Muslim community feel are significant to their lives.</p> <p>Within this structure, this research project sought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the needs of the local Muslim communities,</li> <li>- Better understand the access communities have to public services,</li> <li>- Provide local evidence to determine what communities want and establish the programme of activities that respond to these needs.</li> </ul> <p>The Needs Assessment completed and report are being finalised (Jan 2012)</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
Increased number of hate crime incidents reported, and cases of domestic violence supported	Raise awareness of how issues / incidents can be reported (esp. disability & trans)	<p>A new form and process for reporting disability hate crime has been developed and implemented (including changes to the way the police record these crimes).</p> <p>A communications plan advertised this new process in the city and explained people's rights within the law. There is also a form specifically created for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>A cross-sector partnership, including representation from disabled people's groups is ongoing to oversee and monitor this process.</p> <p>Police have received 33 reports of disability hate crime in the period Apr10-Mar11 (up from 17 in the previous year).</p>
Through procurement, (inc. social enterprise) achieve a diverse supply chain which effectively & appropriately delivers our equality agenda	Monitoring arrangements to assess whether contractors comply with our Pre-Qualification Questionnaire which makes clear to current & future contractors our equality requirements	<p>The corporate Pre-Qualification Questionnaire templates have been reviewed to strengthen equalities information requested of organisations applying for contracts through the corporate procurement team.</p> <p>The equalities section of Procurement Toolkit was revised to meet the new needs of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
<b>(c) Promoting equality through community engagement</b>		
<p>People from all equality strands more involved in policy development, challenge mechanisms and developing future priorities (including the Community Engagement Framework - CEF)</p>	<p>Promotion &amp; development of online Consultation Portal</p>	<p>The new Brighton and Hove Consultation Portal has been developed to help improve the way consultation and research is carried out in the city. Residents can find out about current consultations and give their views, as well as find out about past consultations and the outcomes of these, all via the portal.</p> <p>Features include: a calendar of consultation activity across the city, on-line consultation activity (e.g. questionnaires; vox pops; focus-groups etc), details of each consultation and a key contact, findings from consultations, examples of good practice activity, links to other relevant websites, consultations</p> <p>Nearly 100 consultations have been posted on the Portal.</p>
<p>Develop cohesive, integrated and stronger communities</p>	<p>People's Day event to celebrate diverse cultures &amp; faiths</p>	<p>People's Day is a community event which has been designed to increase understanding and to celebrate the diverse communities that make up Brighton &amp; Hove.</p> <p>People's Day 2011 involved hundreds of people from diverse communities in organising and running events and attending on the day. More than 50 activities were run, themed into zones: Discovery zone, Entertainment zone, Food Court, Health and wellbeing zone, History zone, Natural world, Play zone, Quiet zone, TAKEPART sport zone.</p> <p>People's Day 2012 will take place on Saturday 14 July as part of the Olympic Torch relay weekend of festivities.</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
<b>(d) Promoting equality in our service delivery</b>		
<p>Communications &amp; information accessible to all, (inc. websites) and reflect positive images across all equality strands</p>	<p>Plain English campaign across council</p> <p>Handbook guide to plain communication</p>	<p>We often have no way of knowing who will read the information we produce. By using plain English we can make sure that it's easy to understand, the first time our customers read it.</p> <p>A 'Ban the babble' campaign was developed by the Communications Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cut out all the waffle and jargon</li> <li>- encourage writing clearly with simple language</li> <li>- provide our customers with information that is easy to understand</li> </ul> <p>The campaign included the development of a Guide to Plain English, an e-learning course, jargon-buster, and acronym-buster.</p>
<p>Better access to public spaces and services</p>	<p>Improve public spaces with high quality design, better signposting, removal of street clutter (eg: A boards) &amp; more effective enforcement</p>	<p>The Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee oversaw the Access Scrutiny group which looked at all aspects of street clutter.</p> <p>All placements are licensed to leave at least the minimum agreed pavement width clear for pedestrian access and all applications are visited before the licence is granted. Licensing zones were reviewed and modified in 2011-12. A trial programme of marking A board positions and positions of café tables and chairs started in May 2011.</p> <p>Ten Pedal Cycle Parking Places are being installed. The locations were identified through officer recommendation and suggestions from local residents and ward members. There have also been improvements to the processes in removing abandoned bikes.</p> <p>Meetings are ongoing with police, Cityclean and civil enforcement officers to enable easier checking of conditions for each licensed area.</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
Customers receive services appropriate to their needs including Independent Living	Promote self-directed support	<p>Adult Social Care now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete an assessment of needs to include the person, their supporters and a member of staff from adult social care.</li> <li>- Advise people how much money they have available to spend their assessed needs. This is called a 'personal budget'.</li> <li>- Offer support to help people identify the best ways the money can be spent to meet their needs. This will be stated in a support plan and may include a Direct Payment.</li> </ul>
Gypsies and Travellers receive services that meet their needs and legal requirements	Increase awareness of gypsies' & travellers' needs across all service areas	<p>A new Gypsy and Traveller Strategy was begun in July 2011. Brighton &amp; Hove is mainly visited by Irish Travellers, English Gypsies and New Travellers. The review seeks to balance the needs of the Travelling communities visiting Brighton &amp; Hove with the needs of the city's settled communities.</p> <p>Two stages of the public consultation have been held and the strategy will be agreed by full Council.</p>
Improved services for children at risk and with special needs or disability	Targeted mental health in schools (TaMHS national pilot)	<p>The aim of the TaMHS projects across the country is to improve the mental and emotional health of children and young people in schools. This involves developing ways to identify children who may need targeted support and ensuring that good systems of delivering interventions are in place. The projects are developing CaMHS services to schools and offer consultation, training and support to school staff alongside working with children and their families.</p> <p>As part of the TaMHS project a universal screening tool regarding children and young people's emotional health and well-being has been created. There are two sections to a self-reported questionnaire: one looks at peer relationships within a class or tutor group and the other gives pupil measures regarding worries, anger, low mood, how they feel about their social experiences at school and self-worth.</p>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
		The assessment information is now available to teachers in all schools in the city and can be used to inform decision making around interventions for a child or group of children facilitated either by school staff or external agencies.
<b>(e) Promoting equality in employment</b>		
Reduce the pay gap between men and women	Monitor changes resulting from Single Status	All posts in the council have been through the job evaluation process. New grades were implemented from January 2010.
Workforce profile reflects the community as far as possible	Extend workforce monitoring to identify potential areas for action	<p>The People Strategy is the ongoing work on this action point. It will support the delivery of the organisational priorities laid out in the Corporate Plan by describing how we need to attract, engage, support &amp; develop colleagues to provide the best services for the City.</p> <p>An extensive consultation process is being used and the work will align employment strategies to emerging themes and priorities, supported by a series of action plans and programmes to deliver the desired outcomes.</p> <p>The themes may change as a result of the consultation but four broad subject categories are identified which will be addressed by the finished strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our changing environment ~ economic, political, social &amp; technological</li> <li>• the changing organisational culture ~ values and beliefs</li> <li>• our working lives ~ health, wellbeing and development</li> <li>• organisational effectiveness ~ goal clarity and performance</li> </ul>

Intended outcomes	Actions	Progress made
Consistent, effective approach for all staff forums	Review of staff forums' role and activities	<p>Each Forum has reviewed its activity and developed a Business Plan which is being discussed by the Strategic Leadership Board. This is part of a wider process developing the links and relationships between the Forums and the SLB.</p> <p>In addition Councillor Champions have been identified with a focus on each of the groups covered by the Forums, with an additional (shared) post representing women. Individuals in these roles will support Forum activities, attend meetings and raise awareness of specific issues through their roles.</p>
Staff are treated with dignity and respect	Develop, launch & promote Dignity at Work policy	<p>Dignity at Work Policy and procedure have been launched and Dignity Advisers recruited and trained.</p> <p>The Dignity at Work Advisers are council employees who have been specially trained to help if someone is concerned in any way about a bullying and / or harassment issue at work.</p> <p>The Policy is being reviewed in 2012-13.</p>
Maintain rating in Stonewall Index	Collate evidence of good practice	<p>Stonewall's Top 100 Employers is the definitive list of Britain's gay-friendly employers, compiled from submissions to the annual Workplace Equality Index. It assesses employers' performance in areas from tackling anti-gay bullying and harassment to supporting the career development of LGB employees and the presence of senior role models for them.</p> <p>BHCC 2011 assessment: second Local Authority 2012 assessment: top Local Authority</p> <p>We are also exploring options for a comparable Trans workforce index and a Trans Action Plan for the council.</p>



# Brighton & Hove City Council Equality and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015

## Action Plan (June 2012)

This Action Plan shows the key actions we will take in the council to achieve the objectives set out in our Equality and Inclusion Policy. The Policy is available from the Communities and Equality Team (Tel: 01273 292301 or email [equalities@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or on the council's website: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=b1000095> We will monitor progress against these actions and report regularly on progress. For more information please contact the Communities and Equality Team.

<b>A. Promoting equality and inclusion through better engagement between the council and communities, groups and individuals.</b>						
<b>Objective:</b> What we want to achieve (from the Equality & Inclusion Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure progress	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
A1. We will engage with representative groups, networks and individuals, to ensure that communities of interest, identity and place are given an opportunity to influence review, design and delivery of	We will support the City Engagement Partnership <sup>1</sup> (CEP) which oversees the implementation of the city-wide Community Engagement Framework <sup>2</sup> .  Use our new Commissioning process to engage with relevant	We will work with the CEP to analyse effectiveness of engagement across partnerships with seldom-heard/excluded communities and improve approaches.  We will build community engagement and equalities	CEP papers and progress updates.	Ongoing Review in Feb '12	Communities and Equality Team	Michelle Pooley
			Quality-checking commissioned	Ongoing in each	Communities and Equality	Sarah Tighe-

<sup>1</sup> The City Engagement Partnership exists to lead, develop and support active community engagement in city-wide strategic planning and decision-making processes. It was previously called the Stronger Communities Partnership (SCP).

<sup>2</sup> The Community Engagement Framework sets out the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership's commitment to and understanding of community engagement in the city. It also provides a clear definition of community engagement and sets specific standards for community engagement that all Partners must adhere to -

[http://www.cvsectorforum.org.uk/sites/cvsectorforum.org.uk/files/2052%20CEF%20Inserts.V2%203\\_0.pdf](http://www.cvsectorforum.org.uk/sites/cvsectorforum.org.uk/files/2052%20CEF%20Inserts.V2%203_0.pdf)

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
services	<p>people and groups to inform the development, commissioning and review of services.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment<sup>3</sup> (EIA) process includes a review of engagement feedback to inform assessment of potential impact.</p>	<p>into relevant stages of commissioning.</p> <p>EIAs are timetabled across the council by Unit and monitored regularly by strategic directors.</p>	<p>services in partnership with the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS);</p> <p>Support to Units completing EIAs, internal quality-checking of EIAs; external quality-checking of published EIAs<sup>5</sup>.</p>	<p>commissioning process</p> <p>Ongoing review by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) quarterly</p>	<p>Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p>	<p>Ford and Michelle Pooley</p> <p>Sarah Tighe-Ford</p>
<p>We will use Community Development Commissioning to support people in neighbourhoods to have a voice; and to identify and address issues relating to specific 'protected characteristics' groups<sup>4</sup> in neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>We will commission specific community development activities through the Community Development (CD) Commissioning programme.</p>	<p>Performance management; through our CD monitoring and evaluation process which includes feedback from residents.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring data and visits</p>	<p>Communities and Equality Team</p>	<p>Sam Warren</p>	

<sup>3</sup> Equality Impact Assessments are a way for public sector bodies (and others) to assess services and processes and improve them for everyone. They also enable us to show how we are meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 - <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1200096>

<sup>4</sup> 'Protected characteristics' groups are defined in the Equality Act 2010. They are: age (people of all ages), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (this includes lack of belief), sex (men/boys and women/girls), sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people).

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
	<p>We will develop two Neighbourhood Governance pilots that will enable communities to work with statutory services to direct, manage and run some of their own services within the specific areas. This will include support to specifically engage communities of interest.</p> <p>We will focus additional resources on engaging with communities of interest and identity, specifically Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT).</p> <p>Our City Services will continue to proactively seek customer feedback on the quality and accessibility of our services.</p>	<p>We will commission specific capacity building and inclusion activities and internal support to develop the pilot Neighbourhood Governance areas. We have developed a senior level project board to ensure there is a two way conversation between the work on the ground and services change at a strategic level.</p> <p>We will jointly commission engagement activities with NHS Sussex through BME Community Partnership and LGBT Health and Inclusion Project. We will commission BME Domestic Violence peer learning.</p> <p>We will use exit surveys and feedback from service-users and others.</p>	<p>The development of a monitoring programme will be integral to the pilot process and will allow us to measure success and areas for development.</p> <p>Monitoring of 'delivery plans' performance measures.</p> <p>Regular reviews of feedback, and "you said, we did" examples.</p>	<p>Sep 12 – Sep 13</p> <p>Mar '13</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>City Services Unit</p>	<p>Sam Warren</p> <p>Michelle Pooley</p> <p>City Services Management Team</p>

<sup>5</sup> Summaries of EIAs are published on the Council's website (see link in reference 3) and the full documents are available on request.

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	Our Library Service will begin a specific focus on engagement with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities to improve its reader development programme and review and update the LGBT stock.	We will consult through LGBT organisations in the city and ask for customer feedback (till Apr 12). Libraries will continue to support Pride.	Improved stock. Consultation events.	Ongoing informal consultation. Inclusive events part of City Reads in Sep/Oct 2012	Libraries Unit	Library Management Team
	Our Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit will engage with key stakeholders as part of the reviews of Accommodation for People with Learning Disabilities and of Day Services for vulnerable adults.	Facilitate consultation ensuring information is produced in accessible formats and advocates and family carers are involved.	Via Project Implementation Groups and updates to Adult Care & Health Committee as required.	2012-13	Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit	Naomi Cox
	Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will engage with and support a variety of resident groups and improve the extent and nature of engagement.	Innovation Group aiming to improve resident involvement to increase participation by all, particularly less well represented groups.	Continuous monitoring via the Resident Involvement Team.	2012-13	Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Ododo Dafe
	Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will increase Social Inclusion work relating to area improvements.	Resident Assessor training and rate your estate initiative: This is being targeted on a specific	Housing Resident Involvement work and	2012-13	Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Robert Keelan

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	<p>Our Development Control (DC) Team will undertake an annual consultation survey with stakeholders to improve the level of understanding on how the DC service impacts on different groups.</p> <p>Our Children and Families Unit will continue to implement and review mechanisms and process that allow communities and service users a voice in service design and delivery.</p> <p>Our City Infrastructure team will engage with at least one community of interest/identity every six months to further develop our service plans and check our progress.</p>	<p>locality and is then intended to be rolled out city wide.</p> <p>Through a postal survey.</p> <p>We will launch a user's charter in each of the five service areas. Continue to embed mechanisms such as parents' and children's voice in service delivery. Parent involvement workers parent-led advisory groups in children centres.</p> <p>We will proactively approach groups that we have identified through our EIA process where we have identified gaps.</p>	<p>structures.</p> <p>A review of the survey results and actions taken</p> <p>Evaluation and quarterly monitoring in each of the Quality and Standards groups.</p> <p>We will monitor this through our engagement plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing - annual</p> <p>Dec '12</p> <p>Ongoing every six months</p>	<p>Development Control Team</p> <p>Children and Families</p> <p>City Infrastructure</p>	<p>Jeannette Walsh</p> <p>James Dougan</p> <p>City Infrastructure Management Team</p>
A2. When we engage	We will work with partners	Support to other	CIP Workplan	Ongoing	Communities	Sarah

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with communities we will identify which groups should be involved, consider how best to reach and engage with them and use a range of approaches and activities to ensure that engagement is accessible and appropriate for diverse communities	<p>through the City Inclusion Partnership (CIP) to identify city-wide issues and barriers to engagement, and identify solutions and ways to improve joint working.</p> <p>We will continue to work with equality networks across the city to use their links to and knowledge of diverse communities to inform our practice.</p> <p>We will use information gathered through the Neighbourhood Governance consultation focus groups that will support our engagement practices with LGBT, BME, and Disabled communities.</p> <p>We will ensure that relevant diverse groups are enabled to engage with our new Commissioning process through appropriate engagement processes.</p> <p>We will raise awareness of and</p>	<p>partnerships, specifically the City Engagement Partnership (CEP) to increase consistency in identifying and engaging with 'protected characteristic' groups.</p> <p>Continuing engagement with umbrella groups across the city, especially those focused on 'protected characteristics' groups.</p> <p>We will commission some specific engagement work with these groups.</p> <p>We will identify all relevant groups in the Needs Assessment stage and address potential barriers to engagement.</p> <p>We will support the City</p>	<p>and reporting.</p> <p>Attendance at meetings and actions taken jointly and following meetings.</p> <p>Outcomes and progress will be monitored as part of the broader Neighbourhood Governance approach.</p> <p>At appropriate stages in the commissioning process.</p> <p>We will use</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sep '12- Sep '13</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities</p>	<p>Tighe-Ford</p> <p>Sarah Tighe-Ford</p> <p>Sam Warren</p> <p>Sarah Tighe-Ford &amp; Michelle Pooley</p> <p>Michelle</p>

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	<p>implement the Community Engagement Framework (CEF) standards across the council and with partners and maximise opportunities for integrated approaches.</p> <p>We will develop additional forms of engagement through funding and supporting the use of technology and social media by community and voluntary groups. Many of these focus on engaging 'hard to reach communities' such as those with learning disabilities, Gypsies and Travellers and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) young people.</p> <p>Our Children and Families Delivery Unit will use monitoring data to identify groups where outcomes for children are poor and focus support on these groups</p> <p>Our Housing Commissioner Unit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a customer feedback forum for</li> </ul>	<p>Engagement Partnership to oversee the implementation of the CEF and use our internal structures to increase awareness and adherence.</p> <p>We will grant fund projects through the City Camp 2 process.</p> <p>By collecting data on both the population and outcomes. Use of parent involvement workers and targeted groups and outreach work where appropriate.</p> <p>Web based forums effectively utilised.</p> <p>Commissioning joint</p>	<p>feedback to the CEP about the reach of engagement activities.</p> <p>Funded technology projects will be asked to provide an impact report.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring data.</p> <p>Quality and Standards Groups self evaluations.</p> <p>Feedback feeding into strategy, Estates</p>	<p>Mar '12 - Mar '13</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2012-13</p>	<p>and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Children and Families</p> <p>Housing Commissioner Unit</p>	<p>Pooley</p> <p>Nicky Cambridge</p> <p>Quality and Standards Chair</p> <p>Jugal Sharma</p>

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	<p>Homemove and Temporary Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with tenant groups and registered providers to increase the supply of affordable housing in the city</li> <li>Reduce inequality through enabling vulnerable households to remain in their own homes for longer</li> <li>Ensure residents are able to benefit from the Government's 'Green Deal' and Energy Company Obligation to improve home energy efficiency</li> </ul>	<p>procurement of Housing &amp; ASC Adaptations framework contract for major &amp; minor adaptations. Consider role council plays in delivery i.e. consortium partner, 'Scheme Provider' or promoter</p>	<p>Masterplan, affordable housing local investment plan, Building new Council Homes Tenant Working Group</p> <p>Reporting to Housing Management Consultative Committee. Reporting to Housing Committee.</p>	<p>2012-15</p> <p>2012-13</p> <p>2012-13</p>		<p>Jugal Sharma</p> <p>Jugal Sharma</p> <p>Jugal Sharma</p>
<p>A3. We will make sure that our staff have the skills and confidence to engage with all communities in the city to ensure that engagement is appropriate and positive for everyone.</p>	<p>We will use cross-sector training, like our Community Engagement Framework training, to share skills, knowledge and experience across the statutory and community and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>We will support the integration of Neighbourhood Governance arrangements into the Community Engagement Training programme and if</p>	<p>We will work with the Learning and Development Team and other members of the City Engagement Partnership (CEP) to develop equalities-based engagement training.</p> <p>We will work with the Learning and Development Team and other members of the CEP to develop equalities-based</p>	<p>Through the Learning and Development Team's evaluation process.</p> <p>Through the Learning and Development Team's evaluation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jan '13</p>	<p>Learning and Development</p> <p>Learning and Development &amp; Communities and Equality Team</p>	<p>Michelle Pooley</p> <p>Michelle Pooley and Sam Warren</p>



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	needed develop some bespoke learning. We will develop, share and use resources and guidance which will support positive and appropriate community engagement.	engagement training. Through the CEP meetings where good engagement practice is identified and effective community engagement practice developed through the CEF training and learning.	process. Monitoring of use of resources by CEP partners	Ongoing	Communities and Equality Team	Michelle Pooley
	Our Planning and Public Protection Unit will carry out yearly customer service training to all staff.		Monitoring of staff training identified in the Performance & Development Process or service user feedback.	Ongoing	Planning and Public Protection Unit	Martin Randall
A4. We will work with communities to raise awareness and create opportunities for working on joint projects to improve community cohesion <sup>6</sup> between 'protected characteristics' groups and to reduce inequality.	We will use local knowledge and data to inform community development activity to support different groups to come together in neighbourhoods.  We will ensure delivery of Discretionary Grants Programme 2012-16	We will build more 'protected characteristic' group and community cohesion work and involvement into our community development commissioned projects.  We will use our Three Year Strategic Grants 2013-16; our Annual Grants 2012-	Monitoring of outcomes and progress through the commissioning cycle.  Regular reporting to councillors and	Jul '12 – Mar '14  Ongoing reporting; evaluat-	Communities and Equality Team	Sam Warren  Jonathan Best

<sup>6</sup> Community cohesion is...

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	<p>'supporting a thriving third sector that promotes engagement and equality by encouraging cohesive communities to have active voices'.</p> <p>We will provide some specific capacity building support for communities of interest to be involved in new forms of Neighbourhood Governance.</p> <p>We will continue to support and facilitate People's Day as a community event which has been designed to increase understanding and to celebrate the diverse communities.</p> <p>Our Housing Commissioner</p>	<p>13, 13-14, 14-15 &amp; 15-16; and our 'Grantfinder' Service (internal / external).</p> <p>We will commission some specific engagement work with these groups.</p> <p>We will work with local communities and communities of interest groups to design an event to increase understanding and to celebrate the diverse communities that make up Brighton &amp; Hove.</p> <p>Traveller Commissioning</p>	<p>publicly; assessment of applications / awards by community; applicant evaluation of process; 'Grantfinder' Service User evaluation; full EIA completed.</p> <p>Outcomes and progress will be monitored as part of the broader Neighbourhood Governance approach.</p> <p>Number of community groups taking part and number of visitors. Evaluations to inform future events.</p> <p>Reporting to</p>	<p>ions and EIA completed by Dec '12</p> <p>Jul '12 – Mar '14</p> <p>Annually (14<sup>th</sup> July 2012)</p>	<p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communications Team</p> <p>Housing CU,</p>	<p>Sam Warren</p> <p>Andy Tyrrell-Murphy</p> <p>Jugal</p>

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	Unit will involve Travellers and their advocates in service design and delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a Brighton &amp; Hove Traveller Forum</li> <li>Involve Travellers in development, design, management of permanent site</li> <li>Involve Traveller groups in education services development, cultural awareness and equalities training.</li> </ul>	Strategy 2012.	Environment Committee.	Ongoing	Housing & Social Inclusion DU, Learning & Partnership CU, Traveller Education Team	Sharma

## B. Promoting equality and inclusion through more effective joint work with statutory bodies and other partners

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
B1. We will work in our services and with our partners to ensure that there is an improvement in relations between different 'protected characteristics'	We will use the City Inclusion Partnership to identify opportunities for joint work and to support local and national initiatives.  Equality Impact Assessments require assessment of the	Quarterly meetings of the CIP with working group meetings as needed.  Use EIAs in services and partnerships to increase	Minutes and papers of meetings and reports to stakeholders.  Support to Units completing	Ongoing	Communities and Equality Team	Sarah Tighe-Ford

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groups.	potential impact of a service, policy or strategy on community cohesion.	opportunities for positive interactions and minimise or remove negative impacts, in order to foster good relations.	EIAs, internal quality-checking of EIAs; external quality-checking of published EIAs.	Team	Ford	Ford
We will work through the Community Safety Partnership to promote an understanding of, and engagement with, diverse communities.	We will work through the Community Safety Partnership to promote an understanding of, and engagement with, diverse communities.	Confirm the service offer relating to Hate Incidents & Crime (for further information see also B2).  Quarterly meetings with communities of interest through the appropriate community-led for a.	Reports to stakeholders on case work actions and outcomes  Minutes and papers of meetings and reports to stakeholders	Quarterly  Ongoing	Safe in the City Delivery Unit  Community Safety Partnership	Bruce Mathews  Linda Beanlands
Our Housing and Social Inclusion (H&SI) Team will carry out a range of targeted interventions to improve access to and engagement in learning and skills, provide personal development and progression opportunities; and promote financial capability through the delivery of the Community Banking Pilot.	Our Housing and Social Inclusion (H&SI) Team will carry out a range of targeted interventions to improve access to and engagement in learning and skills, provide personal development and progression opportunities; and promote financial capability through the delivery of the Community Banking Pilot.	Delivery of the Interreg Funded Learning Cities Project in partnership with the Bridge Community Education Centre and Portslade Adult Learning. Delivery of the H&SI Community Banking Pilot Project.	Project Monitoring and Management schedule EIA.  Report to Housing Committee in Spring 2013.	2012-14  2012-13	Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Emma Gilbert
Our Children and Families Unit will continue to work with	Our Children and Families Unit will continue to work with	By providing an integrated children's service that	Targeted group and monitoring	Ongoing	Children and Families	Senior Management

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	partner agencies via section 75 arrangements and Partnerships with other agencies to ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services.	focus support on the most disadvantaged families in the city.	data.			ent Team service leads
<p>B2. We will continue to improve the quality of our partnerships to make sure that:</p> <p>a) we join up more services for vulnerable and marginalised people, households and communities to make them more effective;</p> <p>b) we work towards eliminating bullying, harassment, discrimination and hate incidents / crimes and appropriately address them wherever they</p>	<p>Brighton and Hove City Council will continue to be involved in key partnerships addressing inequality city-wide.</p> <p>We will use our new Commissioning process to match resources and activity to need, and performance manage our services.</p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership will continue to work with all relevant partners to raise awareness, increase trust and reporting, appropriately deal with reports and feed back on work.</p> <p>The Casework team in the Safe in the City Delivery Unit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- combine best practice in dealing with anti-social</li> </ul>	<p>We continually review and improve our partnership working with other statutory and community and voluntary sector services.</p> <p>Using data from pilots and needs analyses and commissioned work to inform other areas of work.</p> <p>Community engagement Developing and supporting Reporting Centres Improved performance monitoring reports.</p> <p>- Revising the legal support and systems to evidence-gathering, statement taking etc;</p>	<p>Data identified in pilots and ongoing commissioning.</p> <p>Agree a data set with partners</p> <p>All partners accountable for data and outcomes</p> <p>Sharing victim feedback and satisfaction and service</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Partnerships Team</p> <p>Relevant lead Commissioner</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Safe in the City Delivery Unit</p>	<p>Simon Newell</p> <p>Lead Commissioner</p> <p>Linda Beanlands</p> <p>Bruce Mathews</p>

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<p>might take place in the city;</p> <p>c) we identify and use opportunities for early intervention and preventative work to stop people experiencing disadvantage or barriers in their lives.</p>	<p>behaviour with that of hate crime and incidents (Hate incidents and crimes are those that are motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or presumed religion, race, ethnic or national origin, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.)</p> <p>- Review, build on and mainstream learning from national and local research to ensure best practice.</p> <p>- Increase public awareness and improve understanding of the harm caused by hate crimes and incidents.</p> <p>We will develop a range of services and activities to support financial inclusion – targeted at those most affected by welfare reform and recession (lone parents, disabled people, younger people, Black and Minority Ethnic people and those experiencing social-economic disadvantage).</p>	<p>- Building skills of staff with partners and agreeing referral arrangements;</p> <p>- A city wide training programme for practitioners;</p> <p>- Collating victim feedback to inform service improvements</p> <p>- Identify, support and protect repeat victims and ensure that effective safety plans are in place.</p> <p>- Prioritise work with high risk victims to reduce risk and harm caused.</p> <p>- Analyse intelligence and data from partners to identify hotspot areas and emerging tensions. Target resources accordingly.</p> <p>We will work with the Advice Partnership to develop a Financial Inclusion Strategy, Commission and Action Plan.</p>	<p>evaluation with stakeholders.</p> <p>Develop robust baseline indicators to measure levels of satisfaction, develop and implement action plan to increase satisfaction.</p> <p>The Advice Partnership has agreed a range of indicators and outcomes that will be used to measure the effectiveness of the work.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Safe in the City Delivery Unit</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p>	<p>Bruce Mathews</p> <p>Nicky Cambridge</p>

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	<p>Our Revenues and Benefits Team will work with partners across the city to minimise the negative impact of welfare reform.</p> <p>Our Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit will work with Health to review its provision of short term services following a person's discharge from hospital or to prevent a hospital admission.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Team (H&amp;SI) will carry out low level adaptations within tenants' homes.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion (H&amp;SI) Team will implement and develop the Financial Inclusion strategy to support disadvantaged residents of council managed homes.</p>	<p>We will share data and information, and provide advice and guidance at six months and two months before their claim is affected</p> <p>A Provider Management Board has been established with representatives from Health and Age UK to implement a new integrated health and social care service to improve the experience of older and vulnerable people leaving hospital.</p> <p>Through Trusted/Enhanced Assessors.</p> <p>Through the H&amp;SI Financial inclusion Strategy Group.</p>	<p>Customers receive two letters of communication detailing the impact</p> <p>The Board will oversee the project plan to implement the new service.</p> <p>Quality checks and customer satisfaction</p> <p>The group regularly reviews progress against an action plan.</p>	<p>During 2012</p> <p>New service by April 2013</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p> <p>During 2012-13</p>	<p>City Services</p> <p>ASC Provider Services</p> <p>Estates Service staff within H&amp;SI delivery unit</p> <p>H&amp;SI delivery unit</p>	<p>Valerie Pearce</p> <p>Karin Divall</p> <p>Rachel Chasseaud</p> <p>Ododo Dafe</p>

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	Our Environmental Health Team will work with partners to make late night take-away business safer for BME workers.	Working with the Racial Harassment Forum, the Business Crime Reduction Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and Police and providing support and advice to business.	Numbers of businesses engaged and feedback from them on effectiveness.	Ongoing	Environmental Health Team	Roy Pickard
	Our Children and Families Unit will provide more joined up services through implementing team around the family process.	The Family Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will address needs of vulnerable families. The Youth Service will implement Quality Assurance framework and peer inspection process in relation to bullying and equalities. Disabled Children's Services will provide Integrated Care pathways.	Monitoring via CAF audits Ofsted inspections Referral meetings and ongoing care pathway.	Ongoing	Children and Families Unit	Senior Management Team leads
<b>C. Promoting equality and inclusion through fair and accessible services</b>						
<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>



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<p>C1. We will continue to improve the accessibility of our services and our facilities - including buildings, information, communication, appropriate use of different technologies and events – for service-users.</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) require a consideration of different people's needs to develop responsive and appropriate services.</p> <p>We will use our Customer Access Programme to support Delivery Units to consider diverse people's needs and improve delivery of and access to services.</p> <p>Our Library Service will continue to provide free access to books and information in a variety of formats.</p>	<p>EIAs are timetabled by Unit and monitored regularly by strategic directors.</p> <p>Improvements will be made as appropriate either on a service by service basis, on initiative by initiative.</p> <p>We are improving the council's website so it is easier for people to use and extend the range of interactive services.</p> <p>We are improving the consistency of our telephone service for customers.</p> <p>We will improve our stock, provide appropriate technologies and develop specific projects, including: interactive and sensory stories to children with</p>	<p>Publication of completed EIAs and monitoring of the EIA timetable</p> <p>Activity and initiatives monitored through the Customer Access Programme Board</p> <p>No. of people accessing and using our website and services by phone to successfully find information and interact with services.</p> <p>Number of users. Customer feedback.</p>	<p>Ongoing Timetable reviewed by SLB quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>First milestone Mar '13</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Communities and Equality team</p> <p>Council-wide</p> <p>Customer Access Programme / ICT</p> <p>City Services (Libraries)</p>	<p>Sarah Tighe-Ford</p> <p>Valerie Pearce</p> <p>Libraries Management Team</p>

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	<p>Our Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit will work with colleagues on a corporate review of transport services for vulnerable children and adults to ensure accessibility and sustainability.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will further implement our Customer Access strategy to ensure that our customers can engage with us in a way that most suits them</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will develop the use of different forms of social media to increase the ways by which service users may contact us.</p>	<p>profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and visual impairment, developing the E-book service and a 'housebound' volunteer service.</p> <p>A project Board has been set up with representatives from Children and Adult Social care and Transport to improve co-ordination and use of transport across services to improve the service provided and deliver more personalised services.</p> <p>Our Facebook site for residents (launched Oct 11) will be used to share events and information (pointing to our website).</p> <p>We also use the council Twitter site and depending on demand may develop a Housing Twitter site.</p>	<p>The Project Board will oversee a project plan and timeline.</p> <p>STAR satisfaction survey results on access preferences Comparing customers engaged with us against tenant profile. Monitoring Facebook and</p>	<p>Single co-ordination of service by Mar '13</p> <p>During 2012-13</p> <p>During 2012-13</p>	<p>ASC Provider Services Delivery unit &amp; Children's Commissioning</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit</p> <p>Housing and Social</p>	<p>Karin Divall</p> <p>Ododo Dafe</p> <p>Mo Lawless</p>

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	<p>Our Environmental Health Team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assist BME communities and businesses comply with regulatory requirements.</li> <li>• complete the taxi equality action plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide information to BME communities and businesses in first languages.</p> <p>An independent survey, consultation and benchmarking exercise with other taxi licensing districts to provide improved service and accessibility for taxi passengers. As part of the transfer of IT system.</p>	<p>Twitter numbers, posts and customer profiling.</p> <p>Monitoring of food safety enforcement activity and evaluation of businesses via the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</p> <p>Survey tendered and awarded</p>	<p>Ongoing – reported in annual service plan</p> <p>Report to Licensing Committee 2012-13</p> <p>Dec '12</p>	<p>Inclusion Delivery Unit</p> <p>Environmental Health Team</p> <p>Environmental Health Team</p> <p>Development Control Team</p>	<p>Nick Wilmot</p> <p>Tim Nichols</p> <p>Jeannette Walsh</p>
	<p>Our Development Control Team will make the entire planning application case files available on-line/externally.</p>	<p>Through the provision of a new internal IT/information management system</p>	<p>By testing the system and obtaining customer and officer feedback once the system has gone live</p>	<p>Ongoing: works</p>	<p>Seafront Team</p>	<p>Toni Manuel</p>
	<p>Our Seafront Team will continue to improve access to our</p>	<p>We will reconfigure and refurbish existing toilets on</p>	<p>Monitoring feedback and</p>	<p>Ongoing: works</p>	<p>Seafront Team</p>	<p>Toni Manuel</p>

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	Seafront facilities and services to ensure all members of our community and visitors can benefit from our seafront environment.	Rottingdean seafront to provide modern, accessible, gender neutral facilities	meetings with the Public Toilet Users Group chaired by B&H Local Involvement Network (B&H LINK) Manager	start on-site Sep '12		
	Our Housing Commissioner Unit will improve access to housing advice	Online housing options and housing register application system in development	Reporting to Housing Committee	2012/13	Housing Commissioner Unit	Jugal Sharma
C2. We will develop and provide relevant and appropriate services to ensure that they meet the needs of individual users, targeting those who are most in need and who face additional barriers.	We will embed Community Engagement & Equalities principles in our new Commissioning process: support its development and implementation; and engage with learning in the process.  Support ongoing Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) work by council Units and oversee this process.  We will provide information and data to Members about the risks to groups of service funding reductions, through Budget Equality Impact Assessments	The Communities and Equality team is involved in the development of the new Commissioning process and will be part of new commissions  EIAs are timetabled by Unit and monitored regularly by strategic directors.  Budget EIA process	Equality and community engagement input in commissioned projects and documentation  Published EIAs and monitoring of EIA timetable.  Published EIAs and Budget decisions.	Ongoing  Ongoing with review by SLT  Annually in budget-setting	Communities and Equality Team  Communities and Equality Team  Communities and Equality Team	Sarah Tighe-Ford and Michelle Pooley  Sarah Tighe-Ford  Mary Evans

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	<p>(EIAs).</p> <p>We will conduct ongoing equalities monitoring of the impact of budget changes locally and of funding reductions nationally to identify trends in disproportionate or unanticipated impact at an early stage to address them.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will promote equality and inclusion of Gypsy, Romany Traveller (GRT) communities, both those who are travelling and those who are housed or settled within Brighton &amp; Hove.</p> <p>Through Children's Centres, Schools and community, and looked after children services our Children and Families Unit will narrow the achievement gap for those children with the poorest outcomes.</p>	<p>Budget EIA process</p> <p>Community leadership role in promoting awareness of GRT culture(s) through GRT History Month, work in schools, tackling racism and discrimination, encouraging GRTs to participate in civic society, and seeking funding for a project encouraging GRT people into employment in the public sector.</p> <p>Ensuring resources are focused on those most in need via assessment and targeting process.</p>	<p>Published EIAs and Budget decisions</p> <p>Details to be provided in conjunction with other service providers, in particular Traveller Education and Neighbourhood Support</p> <p>- Number of children &amp; families identified - Early Years Foundation Stage profile</p>	<p>Annually in budget-setting</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion Unit</p> <p>Children and Families</p>	<p>Mary Evans</p> <p>Jonathan Fortune</p> <p>Caroline Parker, Andy Whippey, Anna Gianfrancesco</p>

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	<p>Our Children and Families Unit will ensure children with disabilities can access childcare places.</p> <p>Our VisitBrighton team will increase the profile of the city to minority groups, including LGBT, black, disabled and retired visitors, and ensure the city's services reflect their specific needs, by:</p> <p>a) Target specific conferences relevant to those named equality strands and</p> <p>b) continue to develop and deliver marketing materials and training to cater for all equality strands</p>	<p>Provide inclusion funding to ensure that children with disabilities can access childcare places.</p> <p>VisitBrighton is bidding to host 30 conferences which would attract 15,000 delegates from these groups.</p> <p>Organise familiarisation trips to hotels for staff specifically to look at their access for disabled guests to increase staff knowledge and awareness.</p>	<p>- Special Educational Needs profile</p> <p>- Asset assessment process</p> <p>- Looked After Children review and Personal Education Plan.</p> <p>Conference bids successful. Delegate and organiser feedback.</p> <p>Increased staff awareness.</p>	<p>As below:</p> <p>End Oct '12</p> <p>Conferences as booked.</p> <p>Dec '12</p>	<p>Tourism &amp; Leisure Delivery Unit</p>	<p>Hass Yilmaz, Jenny Brickell</p> <p>Julia Gallagher</p> <p>John Carmichael</p> <p>Suzanne Mantell</p>

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<p>Our Housing Commissioner Unit will support the implementation of an alcohol pathway across services so that ‘revolving door’ clients can receive personalised and specialist support with alcohol issues.</p>	<p>Continue to check product data to ensure that visitors and staff can search simply and effectively for hotels, attractions and restaurants, both online and via our back office systems.</p> <p>Create LGBT itinerary and add city access information to our iPhone App.</p> <p>Champion diversity of the city through our “City Villages” marketing activity which celebrates the different city communities and add to its uniqueness.</p> <p>Stage 1 alcohol pathway successful and Stage 2 commenced.</p> <p>Develop pilot casework approach across hostel services, led by CRI Complex Caseworker.</p> <p>Provision of support through Alcohol Nurse (BHT) joint commissioned through Homelessness Prevention Grant and PCT</p>	<p>Feedback from visitors. Increased staff awareness.</p> <p>Feedback from visitors.</p> <p>Feedback from visitors and businesses.</p> <p>Alcohol Pathway Steering Group</p>	<p>Dec ‘12</p> <p>Dec ‘12</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2012-13</p>	<p>Housing Commissioner Unit</p>	<p>Jugal Sharma</p>	

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		to target complex alcohol needs cases in the ISP.				As appropriate
	We will ensure we are using the mechanisms to allow community and service user views to be heard when developing services.	Through our commissioning processes and in service reviews.	Ways views are incorporated into services.	Ongoing	Commissioners and Units as appropriate	As appropriate
	Our Library Service will continue to develop Council Connect to improve access for digitally excluded people.	Increase number of sessions.	Number of sessions	Ongoing	Library Service	Library Management Service
C3. We will develop and use a tailored approach for services to make sure that we identify specific needs and barriers and respond appropriately.	Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will explore through the use of trained 'mystery shoppers' how services are actually delivered.	Residents have been trained as 'mystery shoppers' to carry out unannounced checks on the service offered as a means of identifying how improvements could be made.	Where an issue is identified, the mystery shoppers will re-visit the matter within 6-12 months	In place and ongoing	Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Diane Hughes
	Our Trading Standards Team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raise awareness of consumer rights with children with special educational needs.</li> <li>support vulnerable residents to access consumer protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run Consumer Challenge Quiz for children with special educational needs.</li> <li>Provide appropriate consumer advice and support for vulnerable consumers.</li> </ul>	60 pupils across Sussex, evaluations and returning no. each year Up to 100 people attended through groups that were	Annual event, inc teaching in schools  Ongoing	Trading Standards Team	Mel McGinn  Jo Player



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C4. We will ensure full compliance with our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure to ensure that we give due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with 'protected characteristics' in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to our employees – and so we can evidence this.	<p>services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve Children's safety awareness.</li> </ul> <p>We will keep an up-to-date timetable of all Equality Impact Assessments planned across the council and monitor progress against this.</p> <p>We will quality-check all completed EIAs and offer support to Units and others completing them to ensure they are effective.</p> <p>We will publish summaries of all EIAs and ensure that all EIAs are freely available to ensure that anyone can review our process and the actions we have planned.</p> <p>Where EIAs identify gaps in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in Safety in Action week for key stage 4 children in the city.</li> </ul>	<p>requested</p> <p>Approx 500 yr 6 pupils attend. Event open to all schools. Numbers of schools applying increase each year. Evaluation after event.</p>	Annual event		Mel McGinn
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EIAs are part of the process of assessing the impact and potential impact of all new policies, processes and projects on 'protected characteristic' groups.</li> <li>There is guidance and a recommended template for all EIAs in the council and training is available to all staff completing EIAs.</li> <li>A timetable of all planned EIAs and summaries of all completed EIAs are available on our website and/or from the Communities and Equality team (see details in this document).</li> </ul>	<p>EIA Timetable.</p> <p>Completed (and published EIAs).</p> <p>Sign-off by the Communities and Equality team.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of actions identified in EIAs.</p>	Ongoing with regular SLT review and 2-monthly ESG meetings.	Communities and Equality Team	Sarah Tighe-Ford
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	monitoring we will prioritise these and address them as part of Unit's action plans.	- The EIA Timetable is regularly reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team and the corporate Equality Steering Group co-ordinates work on EIAs across all Units.			Team	Ford
	Our Development Control Team will identify equalities issues that arise during the course of planning applications and identify areas for improvement.	Through a review of determined planning applications.	By monitoring the number of applications where such issues have arisen	Ongoing - Annual review.	Development Control Team	Aidan Thatcher
	Our Housing Commissioner Unit will remodel the Single Homeless: eligibility criteria into Band 3 to enable people with multiple needs who would benefit from these services to use them.	Work has already started in regards to young people in rough sleepers services.  Need to commence review of existing criteria for single homeless & consult on draft proposals.	Integrated Support Pathway Working Group	2012-13	Housing Commissioner Unit	Jugal Sharma
<b>D. Promoting equality and inclusion through improving the quality and breadth of information held and used by the council</b>						
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<p>Policy)</p> <p>D1. We will address gaps in our knowledge to ensure that we are prioritising key equality areas in our work; and we will use data and consultation from Equality Impact Assessments and service reviews to fill gaps and inform targeted work.</p>	<p>in Units</p> <p>We will encourage and support use across the council of a standard equalities monitoring template which covers all Equality Act 2010 'protected characteristics'.</p> <p>We will use new Neighbourhood Governance approaches to support our knowledge and understanding of both people and place.</p> <p>We will fill data gaps, where appropriate:  - Planning and completing a consultation on need in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities, with other statutory and community and voluntary sector partners.  - Using the findings of Countability (barriers encountered by disabled</p>	<p>We will promote the form developed by the City Inclusion Partnership as the standard template to be used for all monitoring and support staff to understand how to use it and the data collected from it.</p> <p>We are considering developing neighbourhood plans which will highlight community priorities, ensuring that these emerge from engagement with diverse communities.</p> <p>Undertaking a city wide BME Needs Assessment (NA) in partnership with BME staff forum, communities, groups and organisations.</p> <p>Building Countability information and recommendations for</p>	<p>Through data used in EIAs; meetings and feedback from Units; and examples of use</p> <p>Outcomes and progress will be monitored as part of the broader Neighbourhood Governance approach.</p> <p>Progress and findings from the NA will be shared with the BME staff forum, CIP and other stakeholders. Use of the data to inform services</p>	<p>From Jun '12</p> <p>Sep '12 – Sep '13</p> <p>From Jun '12</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality Team</p> <p>Communities and Equality</p>	<p>Sarah Tighe-Ford</p> <p>Sam Warren</p> <p>Nicky Cambridge</p> <p>Mary Evans</p>

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	<p>people), a partnership project with The Fed Centre for Independent Living, University of Sussex, Sussex Police, and East Sussex Fire and Rescue.</p> <p>- Undertake a city wide Trans Equality Scrutiny looking into the issues affecting those individuals who identify as 'Trans' in Brighton and Hove.</p> <p>Our Children and Families (C&amp;F) Unit will develop Quality Assurance and audit processes to include specific question about meeting needs and improve the collection and analysis of their population and service user data.</p>	<p>solutions into action plans and commissioning.</p> <p>Working with the Scrutiny Team run consultation activities with the local Trans community and also professionals working with and/or part of the Trans community.</p> <p>Implement the C&amp;F Service Improvement Plan. Children's Centres will continue to improve monitoring and use the self evaluation process to consider data. Use Disability Register; Schools and community service quarterly compliance audits. Youth will implement QA framework and peer inspection process. Advice Contact and Assessment Service will conduct EIAs and look at data. Youth Offending Service</p>	<p>Full scrutiny to Overview and Scrutiny Commission by Dec '12.</p> <p>SEFS and Ofsted inspections, EIA findings</p>	<p>Jun '12 – Jan '13</p> <p>Ongoing (see Service Improvement Plan)</p>	<p>Team</p> <p>Scrutiny Team (with support from Communities and Equality Team)</p> <p>Children and Families</p>	<p>Mary van Beinum</p> <p>James Dougan / Children and Families SMT</p>

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		will monitor through the QA framework. Children In Need will add question into review forms; Looked After Children audits; interviews with individuals.				
D2. We will enhance our data collection and analysis processes, working with our partners, so that we can effectively use equality data to improve services.	<p>We will use the City-wide Data Group to co-ordinate data collection and use across the city, linking in with Needs Assessments.</p> <p>Our Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit will improve service user feedback mechanisms to inform service improvement.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will improve the quality and quantity of electronically held profiling data in respect of service users</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will undertake a survey (STAR) of service users</p>	<p>We will develop a clear method for sharing data and analysis around equalities and disadvantaged groups in the city.</p> <p>Annual Dept of Health survey results will be reviewed to inform service improvement. New Service User questionnaires are being introduced to improve regular service-specific feedback.</p> <p>Increased data capture and recording via OHMS (Housing database)</p> <p>Undertaken with corporate support and using software from HouseMark (to allow</p>	<p>Data available and shared</p> <p>Quality Assurance systems</p> <p>Tailored and ad hoc report running</p> <p>This is a satisfaction survey of 25%</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Next survey scheduled</p>	<p>City-wide Data Group</p> <p>Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion</p>	<p>Group members</p> <p>Karin Divall</p> <p>Diane Hughes</p> <p>Diane Hughes</p>

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	to determine satisfaction and allow benchmarking with other providers  Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will maintain a resident involvement database	for national benchmarking  This sets out details of residents of council managed homes and how they would wish to be engaged	of households Aim to repeat every 2 years  The database is updated as a result of tenancy visits and mail outs to residents	Nov '13  In place	Delivery Unit  Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Becky Purnell
D3. We will collect, analyse and publish workforce data to meet our duties in the Equality Act 2010, and use the information to inform workforce policies and practices	In compliance with our legal duties we have published workforce diversity data on our website and will do so annually.  Workforce diversity data will also inform the development of the council's People Strategy and actions to implement this.	Done	The information is available on the council's website, Human Resources pages and linked to from the Equality pages.	Annually from Jan '12  Ongoing	Human Resources  Human Resources	Katie Ogden
D4. We will use internal and external communications to ensure that we raise awareness and share information on equality and inclusion issues with staff, service-users, communities, partners and others.	We will develop a wide-ranging campaign to advertise the Equality and Inclusion Policy and its related issues internally and externally, using a range of different media and formats.	Engaging with relevant stakeholders we will identify key messages and the most appropriate ways of conveying them, to raise awareness, confidence and skills among staff and other partners.	Materials and messages generated in the campaign and feedback from it.	From May '12	Communities and Equality Team and Communications Team	Sarah Tighe-Ford and John Shewell

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<b>E. Promoting equality and inclusion through our employment and procurement practices</b>						
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<b>The Council's People Strategy will set out a number of actions around promoting equality and inclusion within our workplace (due April 2012).</b>						
E1. We will strengthen our employment monitoring and us it to continue to improve the diversity of our workforce at all levels to ensure that we reflect the communities we serve.	<p>We will analyse workforce information by protected characteristic.</p> <p>We will publish workforce data by protected characteristic.</p> <p>We will use this information to identify appropriate targets and areas for action.</p> <p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will continue to run a local apprenticeship</p>	<p>Develop use of HR systems (in conjunction with system providers) to improve quality and timeliness of workforce monitoring reports.</p> <p>Review available data on community profiles and analyse how this relates to our workforce profile</p> <p>The contractor, Mears, employs 7 female and 27 male apprentices who live</p>	<p>Reduction of 'unknowns'</p> <p>Increase in workforce diversity</p> <p>Staff survey results</p> <p>Aim to take on 20 apprentices</p>	<p>Ongoing. Additional exercise completed by Oct '12</p> <p>Ongoing. Targets reviewed from annual data / Census 2011 data</p> <p>Currently in place and</p>	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion</p>	<p>Charlotte Thomas</p> <p>James Cryer (Mears) – Sam</p>

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
	scheme with partnering contractor	locally and were sourced via local open days and are employed on various trades relating to the repair of council managed homes	each year (200 over 10-year contract) through the recruitment process. A spreadsheet is maintained.	ongoing throughout the contract	Delivery Unit	Smith BHCC contact
<p>E2. The council will not tolerate bullying and harassment at any level of the organisation.</p> <p>We will develop a workplace environment where all staff feel they are treated with dignity and respect.</p>	<p>We will analyse data (including the staff survey) to identify perceptions and outcomes from formal procedures relating to dignity and respect.</p> <p>We will review our Dignity and Respect (D&amp;R) procedure for handling complaints.</p> <p>We will work with the minority workers' fora to help us achieve our objectives.</p> <p>Our Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit will set up a 'Staff Slice Group' to understand causes of bullying and harassment and improve dignity at work.</p>	<p>We will share data and findings with unions and staff fora and management teams.</p> <p>We will consult unions and staff fora on D&amp;R review.</p> <p>Establish a group of different levels of staff for feedback and actions to progress issues.</p>	<p>Establish mechanisms for monitoring effectiveness of the policy eg. feedback from Forums; OH referrals</p> <p>Monitoring of formal complaints</p> <p>Staff survey results</p> <p>Feedback and actions from group</p>	<p>Routinely through HR Equalities Group.</p> <p>Jan 2013 - Annually thereafter.</p> <p>Nov 2012</p> <p>From Jun '12 ongoing</p>	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Adult Social Care Provider Delivery Unit</p>	<p>Charlotte Thomas</p> <p>Management Team</p>



<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
	Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will run safeguarding/mental capacity training for front line staff.	E-learning module and a day training course. 86 staff completed a 1 day course in Jun '12. Further courses to be commissioned to ensure new staff complete this essential training	E-learning to be completed by all tenancy management front line staff. Compulsory in induction for new staff. Face to face training	Completed May '12  In place From Apr '12.	Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit	Helen O'Connell
E3 We will ensure that our pay and reward system is fair and transparent.	We will identify and resolve any potential pay issues post single status implementation.	Continue to ensure the grading of any post is determined by the job evaluation process.  Continue work to modernise the council's pay and reward arrangements.  Done.	Staff survey results  Grading Appeals	Completed	Human Resources	Charlotte Thomas
E4. We will adopt a Living Wage for our staff and lead by example to encourage other businesses within the city to pay their employees at a Living Wage level.	The Council adopted a Living Wage of £7.19 per hour with effect from September 2011. This applies to all employees and casual workers.		The level of this city's Living Wage will be monitored by the Independent 'Living Wage' Commission.	Completed	Human Resources	Charlotte Thomas
E5. We will continue to improve access for staff, including disabled staff, to our	We will ensure that all employment policy reviews involve consultation with trade unions and worker forums.	Ensure that access requirements are identified, at all stages, in the design of new and refurbishment of	Equality Impact Assessments	Ongoing	Human Resources	Charlotte Thomas

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
buildings and through appropriate employment policies which are developed in consultation with disabled staff to ensure that needs are identified and met.	<p>We will continue work with Property &amp; Design to ensure access arrangements are suitable and sufficient.</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion Unit: The new Housing Centre at Moulsecocomb is fully DDA compliant.</p>	<p>existing establishments under the CDM regulations.</p> <p>Rolling programme of access works to public buildings with public access to ensure reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Service managers identify and assess reasonable adjustments required for staff facilitated by Property &amp; Design and ICT. Working to British Standard BS8300: facilitating each request individually according to the needs of the employee.</p> <p>The building was completely refurbished allowing for the necessary adjustments to incorporated at the design stage.</p>	<p>Contractor monitoring group to monitor works</p> <p>Management and monitoring of works and annual target (in council performance plan) which for 12/13 is 85% accessible.</p> <p>Completed assessments &amp; responses.</p> <p>Service contract for lift and other equipment, Regular reviews of</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Housing Centre opened in 2011</p>	<p>Property and Design</p> <p>Facilitated by: Property and Design, ICT and Health &amp; Safety</p> <p>Housing and Social Inclusion Delivery Unit</p>	<p>Angela Dymott</p> <p>Service Managers</p> <p>Sam Smith</p>

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
E6. We will use learning and development to increase staff knowledge and skill to ensure they are confident to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan and deliver services fairly, equally and appropriately to all users;</li> <li>• consider and respond to the needs of all 'protected characteristic' groups; and</li> <li>• recognise the issues for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.</li> </ul>	We will work with the feedback gathered through the People Strategy and 2011 Staff Survey, to introduce a behaviour and performance management framework that advocates the behaviour and skill we want colleagues to model.  We will continue to ensure skills in working with diverse communities are embedded through-out all learning programmes.	Feeding from the People Strategy we will invite and work with colleagues across the organisation, e.g. via discussion groups, to produce a framework useful to BHCC.  - Ensure 'working with diversity' is included as a requirement at the briefing and design stage of all learning programmes. - Work with HR and Dignity at Work Advisers to identify patterns of grievances and use information appropriately to build mock cases studies into learning programmes. - Facilitate quarterly sessions with Corporate L & D learning providers to	building use  Induction will identify specific requirements for staff	Dec '12	Human Resources lead.  Whole organisation to engage and deliver.	Charlotte Thomas on behalf of Corporate Management Team  Charlotte Thomas

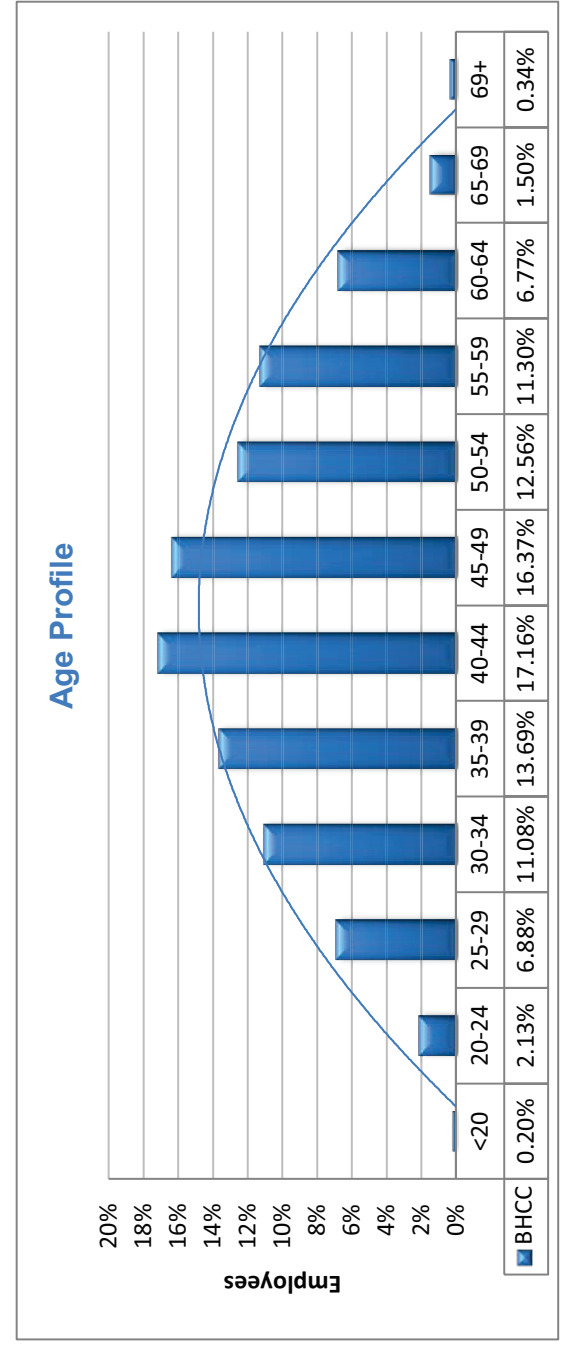
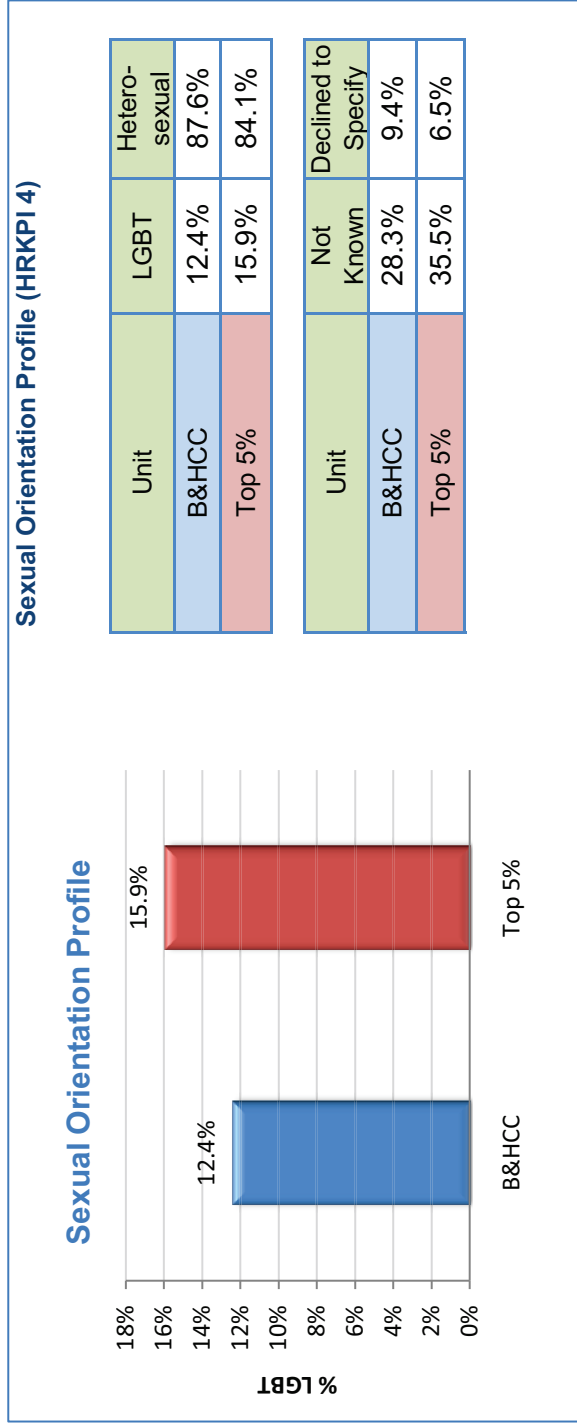
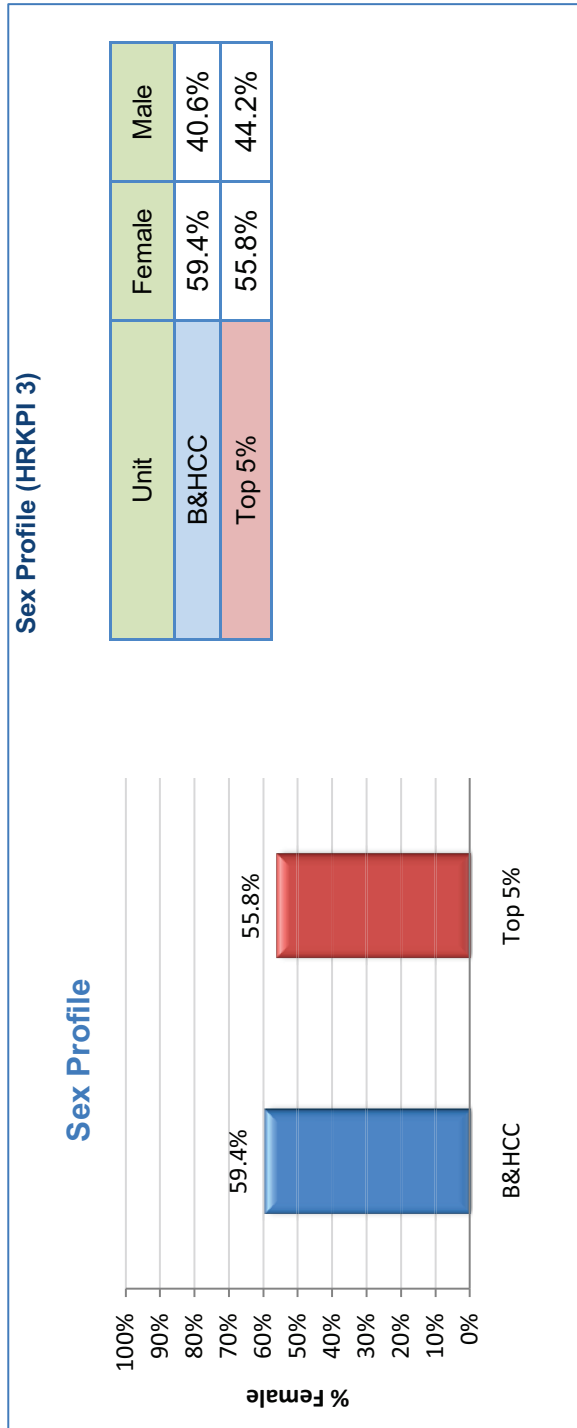
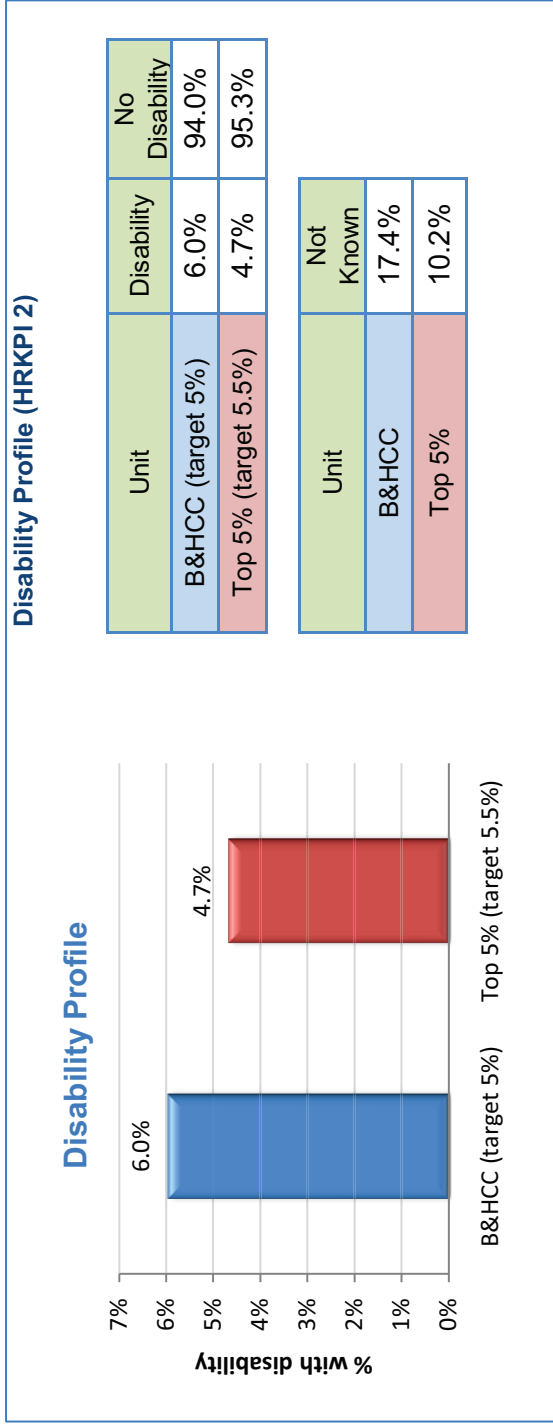
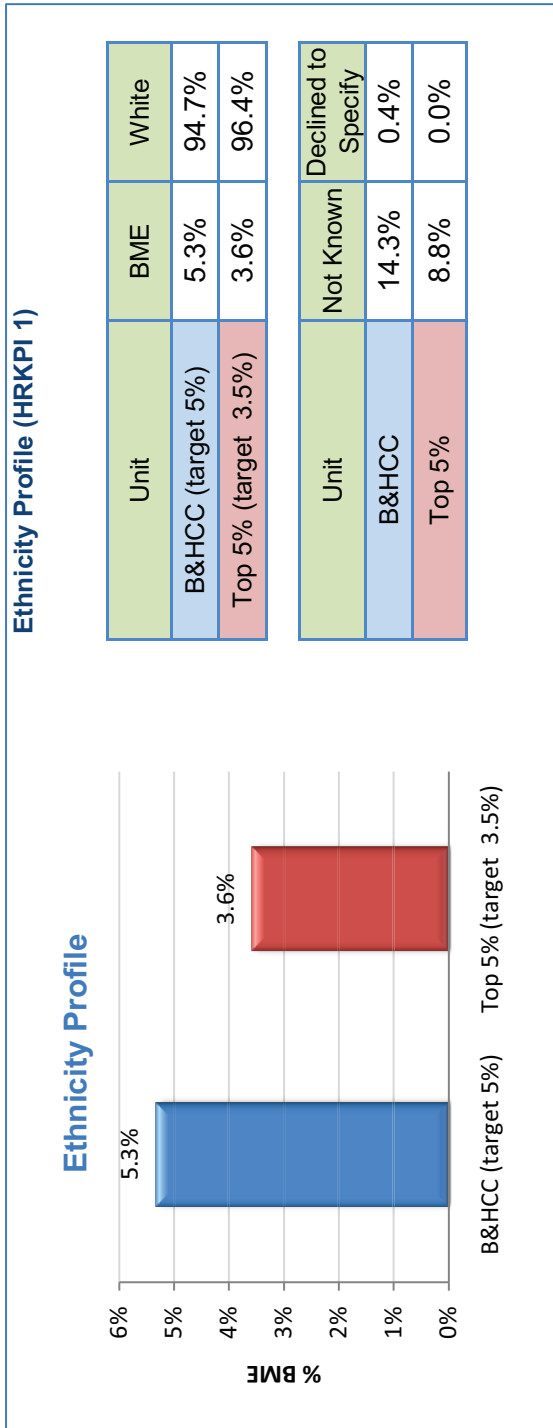
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	<p>Our Housing and Social Inclusion Unit will use qualification bursary schemes to help support staff in their role and career aspirations</p>	<p>review and continuously improve service quality and use of equality/ diversity case studies in corporate learning programmes. - Applications will be considered on in June and December by the Learning &amp; Development Forum.</p> <p>Applications will be considered on in June and December by the Learning &amp; Development Forum.</p>	<p>Line Manager and Qualifications Coordinator, Workforce Development Team</p>	<p>Annually Jun and Dec</p> <p>In place</p>	<p>Housing and Social Inclusion Unit. NB this is also available via other Units</p>	<p>Diane Hughes &amp; Lindsay Cockram</p>
<p>E7. We will ensure that any organisations contracted by the council through the Procurement Team <b>or using their processes and documentation</b> meet our equality and inclusion objectives / requirements for both their workforce and their service users.</p>	<p>The Procurement Team will support and lead the adoption of 'Best Practice' Procurement across the organisation.</p>	<p>- To consider the use of equality-related award criteria and equality-related contract conditions where they relate to the subject matter of the contract and are proportionate. - By providing training to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), CVSF and Contract Officers - By communicating the Equalities and Diversity in Procurement Code of Practice and the</p>	<p>Regularly review the number of SMEs and third sector organisations applying for contracts through the pre-qualification questionnaire and annual contractor equalities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Procurement Team – Finance Unit</p>	<p>Claire Jones</p>

<b>Objective:</b> What will change as a result (from the E&I Policy)	<b>Activity / Actions:</b> What we intend to do – key actions across the council and in Units	<b>Process:</b> How we will do it	<b>Monitoring:</b> How we will measure it	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Unit</b>	<b>Named Person</b>
	<p>Review of the OH Service.</p>	<p>Sustainability Policy and Supporting Toolkit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By ensuring that the Passport to Procurement e-learning module contains relevant and up to date information on Equalities and Diversity issues.</li> <li>- By providing relevant and up to date information at Contract Officers Forums</li> </ul> <p>Following the procurement of a new OH Provider, a continuous process of service improvement monitoring and planning from the service provider to ensure we are receiving value for money'</p>	<p>monitoring.</p> <p>Promote the contractor feedback form (on the council's website) and analyse responses.</p> <p>Contract monitoring meetings, Setting KPI's, Management Information Reporting, Consultation with relevant stakeholders, Recording processes for regular feedback from staff, Auditing</p>	<p>Contract awarded on 1.4.12, service improvement meetings scheduled on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>Charlotte Thomas</p>



# Workforce Profile as at 30/09/2011

Structure	Unit
Level 1	Brighton & Hove City Council







# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 7

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Support for the Retail Sector</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16 July 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director, Resources</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tom Hook</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-1110
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This report details the findings of the Scrutiny Panel established to examine the support needed by independent retailers in the city.

1.2 The Scrutiny Panel's report is re-printed as Appendix 1 to this report.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Members endorse the report of the Scrutiny Panel on Support for the Retail Sector and agree to refer the report recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee, requesting that a lead officer be given responsibility for responding to all the recommendations.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Scrutiny Panel comprised Councillors Gill Mitchell (Chair), Phelim Mac Cafferty and Carol Theobald. It was established to progress the issues raised from the Streets Ahead event in 2011. This brought together local independents, large chain stores and council officers to look at how to support the city's retail offer.

3.2 The Panel focused on how independents could be supported through the economic downturn, partnership working with chain stores, effective marketing, landlords and commercial agents developing the retail sector, how regulations and advice could be accessed more easily and how street markets could have a more positive impact for retailers.

3.3 In the course of its investigations, the Panel talked with local retailers, experts, multiples, commercial agents, council officers and others. The Panel also received evidence via e-mail and various types of social media.

3.4 Common issues which arose from the evidence included the increase in parking charges, business rates and rents, street markets, the need for a town centre strategy, support with running a business, more flexibility with planning regulations governing the introduction of retail quarters. The panel agreed 14 recommendations. The full panel report is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

#### 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 No formal consultation was undertaken in preparing this report, although some of the witnesses who gave evidence to the panel were asked for their comments and these have been used to inform the final version.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

5.1 The financial implications from the reports recommendations will be highlighted when reported through to Policy and Resources Committee.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley*

*Date: 29/06/12*

### Legal Implications:

5.2 In accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, once OSC has agreed the Panel's recommendations it will prepare a report and submit it to the Chief Executive for consideration at the relevant policy committee.

*Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon*

*Date: 29/06/12*

### Equalities Implications:

5.3 The Scrutiny Panel process was fully scoped. In responding to each of the recommendations, equalities implications should be addressed.

### Sustainability Implications:

5.4 None identified.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None identified.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 None identified.

### Public Health Implications:

5.7 None identified.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 issues raised within the report should be put forward into the City Plan and other relevant city wide consultations.

## **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 None identified.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The report needs approving by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before it is referred to the Policy & Resources Committee.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Appendix 1. Support for the Retail Sector Scrutiny Report.



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**Report of the  
Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**July 2012**

**Support for the Retail Sector**

**Panel Members**

**Councillor Gill Mitchell (Chair)  
Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty  
Councillor Carol Theobald**

## Chair's Foreword

This has been a fulfilling and informative scrutiny panel which it has been my privilege to chair. I think that as a panel we have gained a good all-round understanding of the issues facing our city's retailers.

Brighton & Hove has a unique retail market with large numbers of independent traders contributing to the city's reputation as a major tourist destination. It is important to protect and support these independents to secure their, and the city's, economic viability.

We were privileged as a panel to hear from a number of retailers and sector representatives who spoke passionately about their experiences, and came forward not only with their challenges but an array of solutions and ideas.

It was evident from the first public meeting that the most common issue retailers sought to raise was that of parking charges. Other issues raised included business rates, street markets and a city centre strategy.

I feel that this panel captured the voice of our city's retailers, whilst providing the council and partners the opportunity to respond to retailers' concerns.

This was the first time that a scrutiny panel has used "live chat" social media to encourage retailers to put their thoughts into a forum that others could comment on and join in with. It was interesting to see a dialogue forming. Other forms of social media, such as twitter and facebook were used to promote the panel and encourage retailers and experts to come and speak.

I would like to finish by expressing my gratitude to the other members of the Panel: Councillors Phelim Mac Cafferty and Carol Theobald. I know that the Panel were most grateful for the time of all the people who came and gave evidence including independent retailers, traders' association representatives, the Chief Executive of the Business Forum, the BID Manager, FSB Development Manager, Metamorphosis, former City Centre Manager, Graves Jenkins and Tesco's.



Councillor Gill Mitchell,  
Chair of the Support for the Retail Sector Scrutiny Panel

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<b>Appendices (Volume Two)</b>	
• Minutes of public meetings	
• Live Chat Submissions and Written Submissions	

## Executive Summary

- I. Brighton and Hove's retail sector is worth £307 million per annum to the local economy.<sup>1</sup> The city's independent shops account for 70% of the city's total retail portfolio.
- II. The economic downturn has led to a large turnover of retail businesses with well known retailers such as Woolworths, Habitat and Borders all closing. In addition to this on-line shopping is enjoying an ever greater market share as lower overheads create price competition.
- III. The city compares well on vacancy rates of retail premises, with the national figure at 14.3%, compared to just 6% for Brighton (January 2012) and 3.9% for Hove (August 2011).<sup>2</sup> Preston Street, Lewes Road, London Road and North Street are the main vacancy hotspots in the city.
- IV. This scrutiny panel was established to progress issues raised by the 'Streets Ahead' event in 2011. The panel consisted of councillors Gill Mitchell (Chair), Phelim Mac Cafferty and Carol Theobald and the key aim was to look at ways of supporting the city's independent retailers.
- V. The objectives of the panel came from issues raised at the Streets Ahead event, namely:
  - How can Brighton & Hove's unique retail offer be supported and the impact of high inflation and the economic downturn be mitigated?
  - How can the independent retail sector and multiple, or larger, chains work in partnership to help sustain the viability of the retail sector?
  - What marketing and promotion would benefit the city's retail sector?
  - How can retailers, landlords, prospective developers and agents develop the city's retail sector?
  - How can regulations and advice regarding the retail sector be utilised and accessed more by retailers?
  - How could street markets have a more positive impact on retailers?
- VI. Publicity for the panel included a press release which was e-mailed to the Business Improvement District (BID), Chamber of Commerce, Business Forum and the Federation of Small Businesses for circulation to city retailers. It was also publicised in The Argus, on the council's facebook page, website and, with the hashtag #BHRetailScrutiny, on twitter. Retailers and experts on the retail sector were invited to speak,

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<sup>1</sup> Experian's modelled GVA (Gross Value Added) for Brighton & Hove in 2010

<sup>2</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

or submit information, to the panel. Three public meetings were held on 27 February, 01 March & 06 March 2012 and there were additionally two private meetings. A live chat social media forum was also used to encourage retailers and others to put their views on-line.

- VII. The panel heard from 17 witnesses at the public and private meetings. There were 20 on-line submissions on live chat, 8 e-mails and 17 tweets. Common issues emerged including: the increase in parking charges, the challenging business rates and rents, street markets, the need for a town centre strategy and town centre manager support, and more flexibility with planning regulations regarding the introduction of retail quarters.
- VIII. The Portas Review – This independent review into the future of high streets was published in December 2011. It made 28 recommendations which varied from putting into place “Town Teams”, empowering BID’s to become “Super BID’s; “National Market Day”; making it easier to change the use of key properties on the high street; encouraging large retailers to support and mentor independent retailers; and exploring disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant. References have been made to the Portas Review within this report.
- IX. After assessing all the evidence the panel agreed 14 recommendations. A summary of the evidence is set out below.
- X. At the heart of many of the issues explored in this report is an unresolved debate as to how far the council should seek to directly support different business sectors. Many of the challenges identified by retailers require some form of support and/or coordination which would require resourcing.
- XI. A number of the Panel’s recommendations relate to issues already being taken forward through substantial pieces of work, for example the Station Gateway Project and the City Plan. Where this is the case evidence heard by the Panel will be submitted to these workstreams.

### **Parking**

- XII. The most pressing issue heard by the panel was the recent increase in parking charges affecting both traders and shoppers. Retailers were concerned that it could drive potential customers away from the city. Special parking offers were suggested by retailers to help attract shoppers to areas such as Hove and Portland Road. The council said that the changes to parking charges were designed to tackle the city’s high pollution levels, manage parking demand, cut down on traffic volume and encourage residents and visitors to consider more sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport. Recent government research has shown that people base their choice on shopping venues on a variety of factors, not just parking prices.

### **Park & Ride**

- XIII. Some witnesses believed that a park and ride would attract shoppers and visitors as they could avoid queues into the city, stay longer and spend more as it was a cheaper parking option for car users. The council had assessed the feasibility of park and ride and concluded that there are more beneficial and cost effective alternatives that would tackle congestion. The Local Transport Plan seeks to address transport issues including congestion.

### **Rent and Business Rates**

- XIV. Also regularly raised by retailers was the issue of business rates and rents. Retailers spoke about challenging rent review meetings with landlords and asked for support and guidance. Retailers felt that landlords should offer reduced rents during the recession or monthly/weekly rental arrangements. Independents, or multiples, opening in an area could set a precedent on increasing rents which retailers found equally difficult to negotiate against. There was also the need to encourage landlords to fill empty premises by offering more short term leases for introductory businesses e.g. pop-up shops. The council submitted evidence of good practice with their commercial agents, such as offering flexible rent plans to their tenants, which should also be promoted with city landlords. The council has an exemplary occupancy premises rate of 100%.

### **Signage and the Station Gateway**

- XV. 15 million rail passengers used Brighton Station in 2010/11, (up a significant 28% on 2004/5).<sup>3</sup> The panel heard how the entrance into the city from the station was not welcoming and needed improving. Visitors were directed to the seafront via Queens Road, rather than taking them through to the retail attractions of the North Laine which is just a stone's throw from the station. Directional signage was also required to attract customers to other areas of the city. The need to have a tourist information kiosk to advise visitors of the city's numerous attractions was also a priority. The council is currently undertaking a major piece of work to improve the station gateway, and comments from this panel will be fed into this process.

### **Coordination, Strategy and Communication with the Council**

- XVI. Throughout the evidence-gathering sessions the panel heard how retailers needed support and advice on running their business. Retailers spoke about the need for a single point of contact, such as a Town Centre Manager type role and a Citywide Retail Strategy to support and protect the longevity of the city's independent retailers. Further work would need to be carried out on how best to proceed with this.

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<sup>3</sup> Source National Rail Enquiries



## **Trading Associations and the Business Improvement District (BID)**

- XVII. Retailers spoke to the panel about the power of working together in either trading associations – e.g. North Laine Traders’ Association and the Hove Business Partnership - or less formal street group arrangements - e.g. Sydney Street - or other organisations, like the Federation for Small Businesses. The success of the BID was strongly evident as was the potential to expand its area to Queen’s Road and St. James’s Street. The panel heard that these groups successfully managed to:
- procure discounted utilities contracts,
  - dress their retail areas to attract customers
  - provide training on business planning and budgetary skills.

Retailers who were currently not part of such organisations were generally keen to join such associations, or start one, and were looking to the council to support them in doing so.

## **Multiples**

- XVIII. Representatives from Tesco’s gave evidence privately to the panel. Much concern had been raised by witnesses that ‘multiples’ (i.e. chain stores) were taking over high streets, causing them to lose their character. The planning service informed the panel how they had to remain neutral when applications were made; the council does not have the authority to reject a multiple requesting to take over an empty property. The panel were interested in the community engagement work carried out by multiples. Tesco’s said that their company policy was to support independents with promotions and marketing, setting up traders’ associations and keeping the environment attractive. Independents could approach multiples for such support.

## **Planning**

- XIX. A commercial agent spoke about how they felt that the planning process was too lengthy for properties that needed to change the class use of a property – e.g. so that multiple businesses could take over one premises. This process typically took three months, which was deemed too long. The council’s planning service stated that their processes were timely and met regulatory deadlines. The panel agreed to recommend that the new Localism Bill should be used to promote more flexible and responsive timescales for retailers.

## **Street Markets**

- XX. Street markets were seen as a “marmite” topic. Some retailers and experts had encouraged or requested them, whilst others had experienced stallholders selling the same products at cheaper prices than neighbouring retailers. Market stalls were seen as beneficial for new retailers to sell and trial their products. It was agreed by all witnesses and the panel that markets needed tight management regulations as the council did not have the authority to regulate the types of goods sold.

### **Marketing**

- XXI. Traders felt that the promotion of independent retailers was poor in comparison to other city attractions. Feedback was heard that some information was out of date and that the preference was to market the website's main fundraisers. VisitBrighton is the official website for promoting the city. VisitBrighton expressed its belief that retailers were well represented throughout the website and that retailers needed to feedback inaccurate information to the website. Additionally, the marketing of the fundraisers of the website was deemed to be fair and that the retail sector was strongly promoted on the website.

### **Retail Quarters**

- XXII. The promotion of retail quarters<sup>4</sup> was a hot topic. Independents felt that the city needed more retail quarters to attract visitors to other secondary/ tertiary areas<sup>5</sup> of the city retail sector e.g. Portland Road.

### **On- line Retail**

- XXIII. 14% of all purchases are now made through internet shopping. On-line sales can compensate for decreasing city centre footfall.<sup>6</sup> Independents must consider having an on-line presence. However it was uncertain as to where support could come from. Research has shown that staff skills could be untapped and that there may be the potential within current workforces to develop webpages and other IT opportunities if retail staff already have the skills to do so.

- XXIV. The panel agreed on 14 recommendations which are set out below.

## **List of Recommendations**

1. The Council needs to demonstrate that the impact of increased parking charges on the retail sector has been researched and understood prior to changes being introduced. This research and the rationale behind any changes to policy should be published.
2. The Council should increase the flexibility of its approach to parking, utilising special offers and targeted support through parking regulations to promote specific retail areas.
3. There was support evident for a Park and Ride scheme to help tackle traffic congestion. In developing the City Plan evidence presented to the Scrutiny Panel should be taken into consideration when considering a Park and Ride.
4. Flexibility on the part of landlords with regard to rent levels, short-term leases, allowing pop-up shops and individual rent plans can have

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<sup>4</sup> District shopping areas, well established areas were the Lanes, North Laine and Kemptown

<sup>5</sup> Outside the city centre area e.g. Hove, Portland Road

<sup>6</sup> CE, Business Forum - Agenda 6/3/2012

considerable benefits. The council as landlord offers flexibility for its leaseholders; it should seek to promote this best practice to other landlords.

5. Ideas for improving the signing, information and flows of pedestrians heard by the panel should be taken forward as part of the station gateway project, most notably:
  - Clear direction to North Laine from the station
  - A tourist information kiosk on the station
  - Better sign-posting towards retail areas
6. Resources need to be found to provide coordinated support and advice for retailers; this should build upon the work of the current BID and responsibility for developing and implementing a Citywide Retail Strategy; consideration needs to be given as to how best to undertake this in conjunction with contributions from retailers themselves.

The role of Traders Associations and the BID in supporting and securing benefits for their members are very evident; the Council should work with and support such groups. The council should be in touch with large stores, reminding them of opportunities for their increased support to independents across the city.

7. Ways for improving communication with retailers need to be developed; this could include a single council contact point for retailers that allows retailers to access all the information and support they require such as rent reviews, trading standards, etc
8. Larger multiples should be invited to join local traders' associations and support other local retailers with training, for example marketing, age-restricted sales, etc.
9. The Council should explore planning options to exploit new 'localism' powers to support retailers through increased flexibility and responsiveness.
10. Street markets should be developed only where they are supported by a majority of local retailers. Street trading controls cannot regulate the goods for sale so great care must be given to decisions permitting new street markets. Existing retailers need to be protected from stalls obstructing shop entrances. The Council should lobby government for increased powers to regulate street markets.
11. The marketing of Brighton and Hove needs to ensure that it makes the most of its retail offer. Retailers felt that they were often the poor relation on many marketing campaigns.
12. The benefits of retail quarters should be investigated further as a means for promoting different areas of the city and providing them with additional support.

13. The need for an on-line presence for independent retailers is clear; support is needed to ensure that the capacity to develop this exists.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Retail plays a very significant role in Brighton & Hove, earning around £307 million per annum for the local economy.<sup>7</sup> In addition to having a relatively large retail sector, the city is unusual in having a plethora of independent shops, with around 70% of city centre retailers being independent traders.<sup>8</sup> As well as contributing a significant amount directly to the Brighton & Hove's economy and providing vital employment to local people, the independent retail sector is an integral part of the city's image as a unique place – an image that plays an important role in our success as a tourist destination, conference centre, site for business set-up and relocation, a favoured locale for people seeking to study at universities, colleges and language schools, and, generally, as a place that people want to live and work in.
- 1.2 The city's iconic independent shopping districts are found between Brighton station and the seafront in North Laine and Duke's Lanes/Old Town. But there are important retail areas throughout the city: Churchill Square and Western Road, Brighton Marina, London Road, central Hove, Portslade, Kemptown and many other smaller groups of shops which provide vital support and employment to local communities.
- 1.3 The council's City Plan is the key planning document which sets out the strategic vision for the city to 2030. The Plan identifies a hierarchy of shopping centres as the city's retail provision.<sup>9</sup> This is set out below from the regional centre to local centres. Within this report there is reference to the City Plan especially in connection with the expansion of Churchill Square, the Station Gateway project and also public spaces.

<b>Centre Definition</b>	<b>Defined Centres</b>
Regional Centre	Brighton
Town Centres	Hove London Road
District Centres	St James's Street Lewes Road Boundary Road/Station Road District Centres Brighton Marina
Local Centres	Mill Lane, Portslade Portland Road, Hove 'The Grenadier', Hangleton Road Richardson Road, Hove

<sup>7</sup> Experian's modelled GVA (Gross Value Added) for Brighton & Hove in 2010

<sup>8</sup> Source: BID healthcheck Feb 2012

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp\\_Draft\\_City\\_Plan\\_FINAL\\_May\\_2012.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp_Draft_City_Plan_FINAL_May_2012.pdf)

	<p>Eldred Avenue, Withdean  Old London Road, Patcham  Ladies Mile Road, Patcham  Seven Dials  Fiveways  Hollingbury Place, Hollingdean  Beaconsfield Road, Preston Park  St George's Road, Kemptown  Warren Way, Woodingdean  Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk  High Street, Rottingdean  Lustrell's Vale, Saltdean  Longridge Avenue, Saltdean</p>
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- 1.4 Whilst the city's independent retail offer is a key dimension to the visitor economy, there are concerns that it is not being sufficiently nurtured and supported. Times are hard for retailers across the country. The financial crisis and subsequent economic downturn have impacted upon both consumer spending and the ability of many retailers to borrow money, leading to widespread business failure, including that of household names such as Woolworths, Habitat and Borders.
- 1.5 At the same time, the growth of the internet has seen a shift towards on-line spending, increasing pressure on high street shops, which have to compete on price with the likes of Amazon despite having additional overheads such as rents, business rates and utility charges.
- 1.6 Local authorities historically have had a key role to play in encouraging and supporting their local retail sectors, but this is becoming more fraught as pressures on council finances mean that money for non-statutory activities is severely limited. In addition, some of the funding routes that councils are increasingly obliged to rely on, such as increased parking charges, can run counter to the interests of retailers.
- 1.7 Nationally, the pressure on retailers has been recognised and a report on supporting retailers was commissioned from Mary Portas. The Portas Review recommendations are discussed later in this report.<sup>10</sup>
- 1.8 Locally, a good deal is being done both for and by local retailers. Notable initiatives and organisations include the Brighton Business Improvement District (BID), North Laine Traders' Association (NLTA), Hove Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and other similar organisations.
- 1.9 However, this is clearly an area in which more could be done. This scrutiny panel was established at the request of the council's administration to resume a conversation with city traders and other

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/p/11-1434-portas-review-future-of-high-streets.pdf>

stakeholders which had begun in the Streets Ahead event. (The event was held in 2011 and brought together local traders, large chains and council officers to look at how to support the city's retail offer). The panel's remit was to progress the issues raised during the event. A number of the issues raised at 'Streets Ahead' became areas of focus for the panel and these are referred to below (in paragraph 1.11).

### **The Panel**

- 1.10 The scrutiny panel was chaired by Cllr Gill Mitchell, with Councillors Carol Theobald and Phelim McCafferty. The panel held three public evidence gathering sessions as well as various meetings in private, such as meetings to scope the panel process and agree recommendations and a meeting with representatives of Tesco and Graves Jenkins.
- 1.11 The panel focused on:
- How can Brighton & Hove's unique retail offer be supported and the impact of high inflation and the economic downturn be mitigated?
  - How can the independent retail sector and 'multiples' or larger chains work in partnership to sustain the viability of the retail sector?
  - What effective marketing and promotion would benefit the city's retail sector?
  - How can retailers, landlords, prospective developers and agents develop the city's retail sector?
  - How can regulations and advice regarding the retail sector be utilised and accessed by more retailers?
  - How can street markets have a more positive impact on retailers?

### **Witnesses**

- 1.12 The panel heard evidence from the following local retailers and retail experts, council officers, commercial agents and others in this order:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service</b>
Gavin Stewart	BID Manager	Brighton Business Improvement District (BID)
Alex Mojee Bell Emma Harley-Jones	Business Development Director Sales Director	The Red Bed Company, Portslade
Peter Allinson	Owner Vice Chair of NLTA	Temptation Café, Brighton & North Laine Traders Association (NLTA)
Martin Searle	Development Manager	Federation of Small Business (FSB)
Alan Moon Nigel Haigh	Owner Owner	Cocoon, George Street, Hove Willow, stores in Brighton & Hove
John Kean	Owner	Guaraná Co Ltd, Brighton
Soozie Campbell	Former Town Centre Manager	

Martin Randall Jeanette Walsh Tim Nichols	Head of Planning & Public Protection, Head of Development Control Head of Regulatory Services	Brighton & Hove City Council
Martin Lawrence	Owner	TN Lawrence & Son, Hove
Tony Mernagh	Chief Executive	B&H Business Forum
Eve Reid	Director	Metamorphosis
Phil Graves	Director	Graves Jenkins (Commercial Agent)
James Wiggam Simon Petar	Regional Corporate Affairs Manager Corporate Affairs Manager	Tesco

### **Social media**

- 1.14 The panel was keen to use social media to involve a wider group of respondents. One of the clear messages from our early scoping of this subject was that retailers whose businesses were outside the city traders' association zones, and who chose not to participate actively in representative groups, could feel ignored by the council.
- 1.15 The panel's work was advertised via Twitter and Facebook and a 'Live Chat' facility was set up to allow people to share their ideas for supporting city retailers. The recommendations in this report reflect both the verbal evidence gathered at meetings and submissions via the Live Chat, email, tweets to #BHRetailScrutiny, Brighton & Hove City Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- 1.16 A summary of all evidence received can be found in Volume Two.

### **Fair Trade**

- 1.17 The scrutiny panel did not have the time or resources to explore every aspect of retail in the city - for example the impact of the 'Fair Trade' campaign on city retail. However, panel members would like to stress that they support the Free Trade movement, which has a long association with the city, with Brighton & Hove one of the first urban areas to declare itself a 'free-trade city'. They believe that the health of our city depends on all sectors of retail flourishing. However, it is vital that Brighton & Hove continues to be seen as a unique destination; that our 'brand' is recognised both nationally and internationally. In recent years an increasingly important aspect of this brand has been the association of the city with ethical thinking and living, and Fair Trade has a significant role to play in maintaining this reputation for equity and fairness. The panel therefore commends the good work being done locally by the Fair Trade Working Group.

### **Traders' Associations and Retailers' Groups**

- 1.18 The panel would also like to commend the excellent work undertaken by bodies supporting retailers across the city, most notably: the Hove Traders' Association, Hove Business Partnership, the North Laine Traders' Association, the Federation of Small Businesses, the



Chamber of Commerce and the Local Enterprise Partnership. These groups form the bedrock of support for retailers in Brighton & Hove.

### **Portas Review**

- 1.19 Mary Portas, described as ‘the UK’s foremost authority on retail’, was asked by the government to undertake an independent review into the future of high street. The review reported in December 2011 and has many themes and recommendations that have provided a useful context to this report.
- 1.20 The recommendations of the Portas Review are set out below:
1. Put in place a “Town Team”: a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets
  2. Empower successful Business Improvement Districts to take on more responsibilities and powers and become “Super-BIDs”
  3. Legislate to allow landlords to become high street investors by contributing to their Business Improvement District
  4. Establish a new “National Market Day” where budding shopkeepers can try their hand at operating a low-cost retail business
  5. Make it easier for people to become market traders by removing unnecessary regulations so that anyone can trade on the high street unless there is a valid reason why not
  6. Government should consider whether business rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers
  7. Local authorities should use their new discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses
  8. Make business rates work for business by reviewing the use of the Retail Price Index (RPI)<sup>11</sup> with a view to changing the calculation to Consumer Price Index (CPI)<sup>12</sup>
  9. Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table
  10. Town Teams should focus on making high streets accessible, attractive and safe
  11. Government should include high street deregulation as part of their ongoing work on freeing up red tape
  12. Address the restrictive aspects of the ‘Use Class’ system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street
  13. Put betting shops into a separate ‘Use Class’ of their own
  14. Make explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework
  15. Introduce Secretary of State “exceptional sign off” for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an “affordable shops” quota

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<sup>11</sup> Measure of inflation

<sup>12</sup> Source: [http://www.ehow.co.uk/how\\_6534585\\_calculate-consumer-price-index...](http://www.ehow.co.uk/how_6534585_calculate-consumer-price-index...)

A consumer price index (CPI) is an estimate as to the price level of consumer goods and services in an economy which is used as a way to estimate changes in prices and inflation.

16. Large retailers should support and mentor local businesses and independent retailers
  17. Retailers should report on their support of local high streets in their annual report
  18. Encourage a contract of care between landlords and their commercial tenants by promoting the leasing code and supporting the use of lease structures other than upward only rent reviews, especially for small businesses
  19. Explore further disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant
  20. Banks who own empty property on the high street should either administer these assets well or be required to sell them
  21. Local authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street retail space
  22. Empower local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent with new “Empty Shop Management Orders”
  23. Introduce a public register of high street landlords
  24. Run a high profile campaign to get people involved in Neighbourhood Plans
  25. Promote the inclusion of the High Street in Neighbourhood Plans
  26. Developers should make a financial contribution to ensure that the local community has a strong voice in the planning system
  27. Support imaginative community use of empty properties through Community Right to Buy, Meanwhile Use and a new “Community Right to Try”
  28. Run a number of High Street Pilots to test proof of concept <sup>13</sup>
- 1.20 Further to the Portas Review, Portas Pilots were created by Government. Recently announced were the 12 successful towns from Round 1. Additionally, Round 2 has been publicised for a further 12 towns. London Road Retail Area, with its higher than the national vacancy rates will be embarking on a bid for Round 2.

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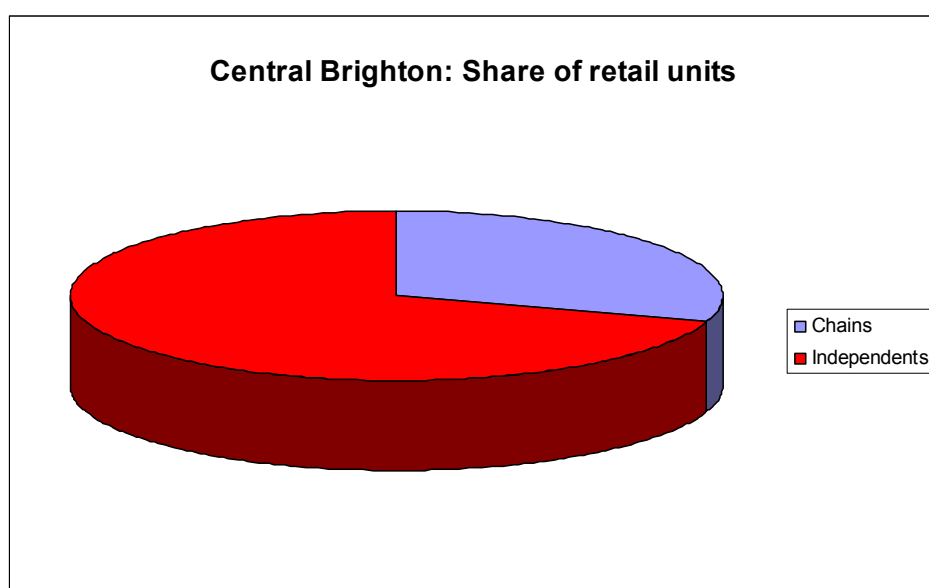
<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/p/11-1434-portas-review-future-of-high-streets.pdf>

## 2. Brighton and Hove Retail in statistics

2.1 Whilst individual evidence presented to the panel indicated that there are significant challenges for retailers in Brighton & Hove, statistics show that in comparative terms the city has to date proved fairly resilient to the nationwide economic downturn. The statistics below provide comparative information regarding retail both in the city and nationally.

### Independents versus Multiples

2.2 Independents account for 70% of the available units in the city centre, with chains taking 30%<sup>14</sup>. In the BID area the split is 69% independent and 31% chains<sup>15</sup>.



2.3 The city centre has experienced **a decrease** in the share of independents from 73% to 70%. The BID area has experienced **an increase** in the share of independents from 68% to 69%. (This is due to multiples exiting the area and independents keeping their numbers constant) i.e. a reduction in multiples and independents remaining static.

### Vacancy Rates

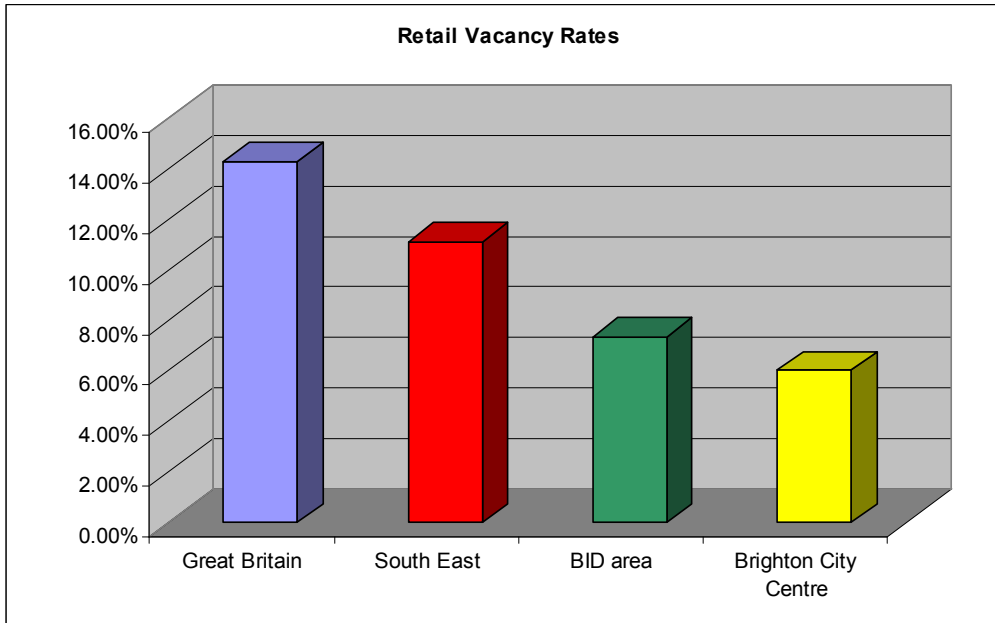
2.4 In comparative terms the city is doing well, and the relatively poor performance of the BID area compared to the centre can be attributed in part to Preston Street, which has high vacancy rates (see below). North Street, also in the BID area had had five extra vacancies in the past quarter, and together these represent vacancy hotspots negatively affecting the overall BID area vacancy rate relative to the city centre overall.

<sup>14</sup> Source: BID healthcheck Feb 2012

<sup>15</sup> Source: BID healthcheck Feb 2012

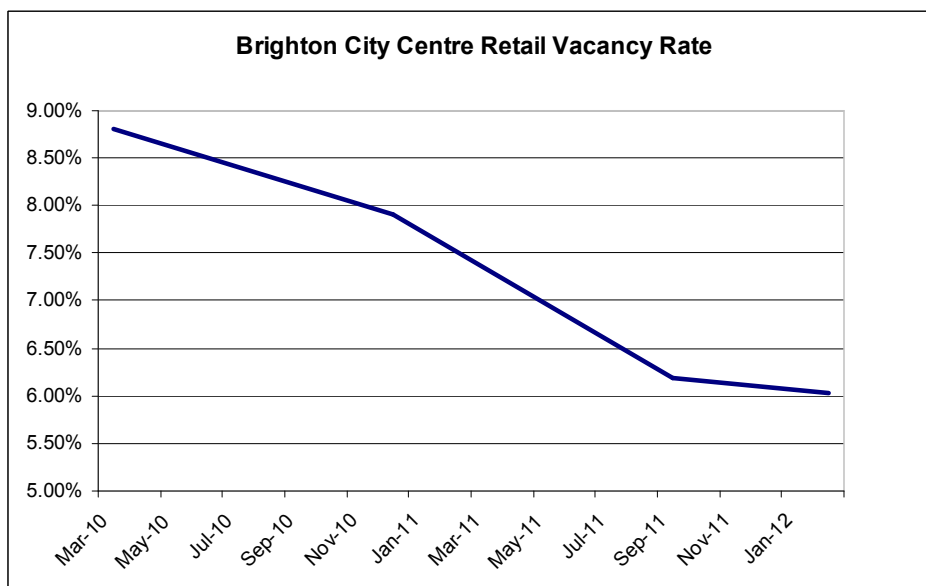
## 2.5 Comparison of vacancy rates:

- National - 14.3%
- South East - 11.1%
- BID area - 7.34%
- Brighton City Centre - 6.03%
- Preston St - 17.4%<sup>16</sup>



## 2.6 Overall, vacancy rates have declined in the city centre since 2010:

- March 2010 – 8.8%
- December 2010 – 7.9%
- September 2011 – 6.19%
- February 2012 – 6.06%

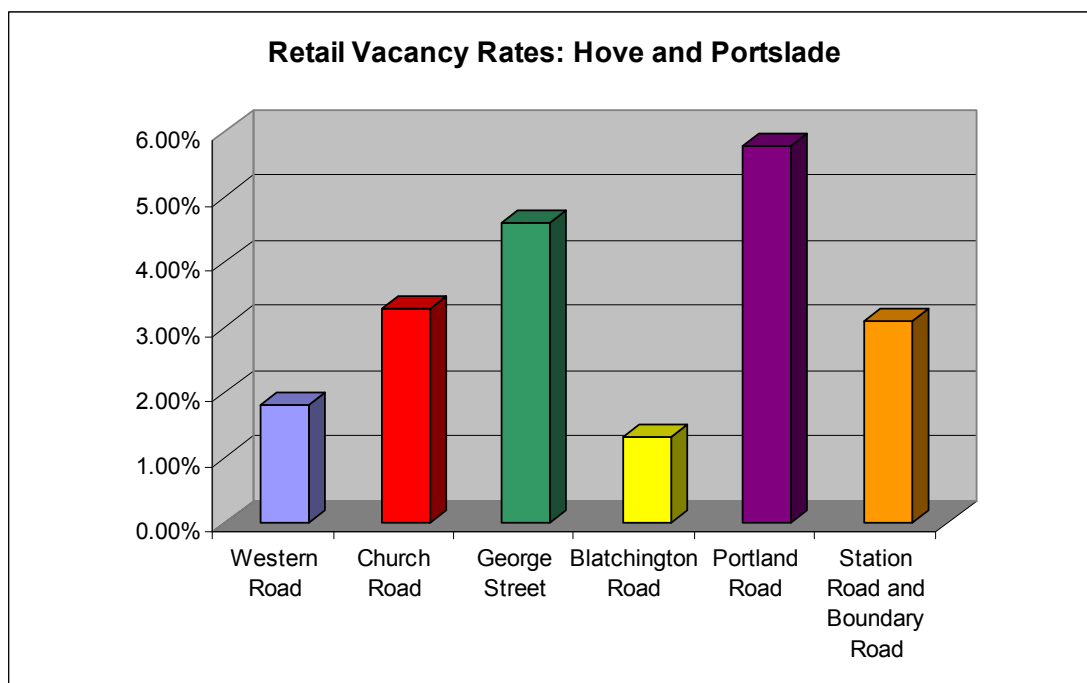


<sup>16</sup> Source: BID 'healthcheck' 2012

2.7 Over the past quarter, vacancy rates have continued to fall in the city centre – from 6.1% to 6.03%. In the BID area, however, they have increased from 6.4% to 7.34%

2.8 The March 2012 vacancy rates for Hove and Portslade, courtesy of Hove Business Partnership’s March 2012 survey, are as follows: -

- 1.8% Western Road
- 3.3% Church Road
- 4.6% George Street
- 1.3% Blatchington Road
- 5.8% Portland Road
- 3.1% Station Road and Boundary Road (ignoring three units at southern end not being marketed)
- Overall: 3.7% (vacancies reduced from 30 to 28 out of 785 units)



### Gross Value Added

2.9 According to Experian’s modelled Gross Value Added (GVA) for the city, retail generated £307m GVA in 2010. This was 6.35% of the city’s total GVA, of £4,831m in 2010. (GVA is a complex measure, but in essence it represents the official calculation of the money generated by individual sectors of industry or geographical areas).

2.10 In Bristol, retail contributes 5.9% of GVA; in Southampton 7.1%; in Portsmouth 6.6%.

### Internet Sales

2.11 British Retail Consortium data regarding on-line sales shows they were up 24% in the last quarter of 2011, compared with the same period last year.

# Findings and Recommendations

## 3. Parking

3.1 The clear message from retailers was that parking charges are having a detrimental impact on business. Evidence heard at every meeting was strongly against the increase of parking charges both to shoppers and to business trader parking permits.

3.2 The Portas Review makes a recommendation in regard to parking that:

*'Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table'.*

The report explains that the league table would rank car parks by their charges. The role of the league table would not just address the cost of parking, but also how councils invest in the quality and security of their parking spaces.

The report says that *"to increase the cost of parking in a locality (when there are alternatives offering free parking elsewhere) is to curtail the appeal of that location to the shopping consumer and therefore the longer term economic viability and wellbeing of the area."*

3.3 The Portas Review has been criticised by the British Parking Association "There is no such thing as free parking: someone has to pay for it." <sup>17</sup>

3.4 Witnesses locally believed that the increase in charges would have a number of impacts, most notably to reduce footfall as shoppers limit the frequency of trips, combine visits and look for cheaper alternatives. It was also felt that shoppers may reduce the amount of time spent in the city due to the increase in the cost of parking for longer stays.

3.5 Retailers felt that it was important that parking charges reflected how worthwhile visits into the city were for users<sup>18</sup>. What value did visitors and shoppers place on their shopping and city experience and how did this compare to the price of parking/travel? Witnesses believed that anecdotally the cost of parking could be more than that of the entertainment that people travel to the city for.

3.6 It was suggested that in many cases consumers may even look to travel elsewhere for cheaper parking and shopping alternatives e.g. the internet or out of town shopping malls with their attractive free parking facilities.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.britishparking.co.uk/Blog/BPA-response-to-The-Portas-Review>

<sup>18</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

- 3.7 Both the BID Manager and the FSB Development Manager expressed the view that to offset the increase in cost of parking consumers may reduce the amount of money spent in the city.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.8 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum reported that “parking provision and parking rates will also be a key element for some consumers when planning their shopping trips and it is essential that the city is able to offer a balanced range of facilities and prices”.<sup>20</sup>
- 3.9 Many witnesses felt it was unclear what the council was seeking to achieve through its parking pricing. The council needed to consider what was their aim by increasing charges? Was it to discourage people using their cars in order to reduce the city’s high pollution levels? If so, what alternative and cost-effective transport was available and how was it marketed to encourage people to make a shift from their car to public transport? Was the council working with train and bus operators to price-match car travel or offer cheaper deals to individual travellers and families? The panel heard how family train travel was considered too expensive, so the car was a preferred option for families<sup>21</sup>.
- 3.10 Continuing the theme, further questions were posed which related to whether the council has a parking pricing policy. What was it based on? Had retailers and visitors been consulted on such a policy?
- 3.11 The panel were advised that research was being undertaken on parking charges and how they compare to those in other areas. This will help to inform at the council’s city-wide parking review. Members were concerned to ensure that evidence heard during the scrutiny panel was considered by the parking review.
- 3.12 The former City Centre Manager believed that the city was contradicting the thrust of the Portas Review and trends in much of the rest of the country in by raising parking charges.<sup>22</sup>
- 3.13 There were a number of comments made on Twitter and live-chat regarding parking some of which are reflected below to contextualise the debate:

*“Make parking more accessible/cheaper for visitors and locals and advertise cheap parking where it is provided.”*

*“Anecdotal feedback from out of town customers is that parking charges will put them off returning, or returning as frequently to the town”*

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<sup>19</sup> BID & FSB, 27/3/2012

<sup>20</sup> CE, Business Forum- Agenda 6/3/2012

<sup>21</sup> The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>22</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

*“The council shouldn't underestimate the impact of increasing parking fees on the day visitor trade (day tourists from London, shoppers from outer districts and surrounding region) ...We should never be so arrogant to think that Brighton will always be the consumer's choice: we do have competition and, as with any market, those competitors will take advantage of any gaps that open up. I haven't heard a single endorsement from local businesses for an increase in parking charges.”*

*“Not increasing car parking charges that would free up much needed cash flows for local businesses.”*

*“Providing an up to date, on-line map that shows Brighton and Hove's various parking arrangements.”*

*“Random free parking offers”*

### **Parking Offers**

- 3.14 A number of witnesses expressed the opinion that it would be worth exploring parking promotions supporting specific areas, events or times of the year.
- 3.15 For example this could be used to support festivals on Hove Lawns, promote outlying shopping areas (Portland Road), or support traders following dips in trade for severe weather - like snow prior to Christmas.
- 3.16 It was also suggested that the council could provide free parking for electric cars to encourage people to think more environmentally and provide car-friendly marketing.<sup>23</sup>
- 3.17 Further feedback was that loyalty discount parking schemes could be beneficial e.g. Eastbourne shoppers received a parking discount for spending £50.<sup>24</sup> Other loyalty schemes mentioned included the free disc parking for 1-2 hours free parking in specific areas out of the city centre.<sup>25</sup>

### **Further parking concerns**

- 3.18 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum told the panel that with the possible expansion of Churchill Square into a regional shopping centre, extra car parking spaces would be needed.<sup>26</sup> The council needs to be clear about its parking policy and consider how additional car parking spaces can be provided for the expansion of Churchill Square.
- 3.19 The Director of Metamorphosis highlighted that some towns had found it useful to identify redundant car parking spaces, for example, at local churches or schools that could be utilised at various times. These can

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<sup>23</sup> TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>24</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>25</sup> Willow, 27/2/2012

<sup>26</sup> CE of the Business Forum, 6/3/2012



generate income for different groups and provide extra parking capacity<sup>27</sup>.

- 3.20 It was suggested that if the council hasn't already carried out a similar analysis of city parking provision, then there could be utility in undertaking such a study. It should be noted however that examples presented to the panel were from considerably smaller urban areas than Brighton & Hove.
- 3.21 The panel heard how free parking could have a positive impact on trade. The Tesco's store on Church Road, Hove offered two hours free parking. This free parking provision was set out in the 'multiples' planning regulations. This enabled customers to shop with a number of retailers in a single supermarket visit.<sup>28</sup> The turnover of the car park was tailored for short stay and was heavily utilised. It was confirmed that a good level of parking did help local retailers.
- 3.22 Multiple food stores were asked to provide free parking for a limited amount of time, ensuring that customers could shop at other local retailers. This approach seemed effective and should be used as often as possible to encourage shoppers to visit other retailers.

#### **Parking Strategy and Price**

- 3.23 Whilst there was anger at the cost of parking and concern over the impact that retailers believed it was having on their businesses; there was also confusion as to what the council was seeking to achieve in its parking strategy and the role pricing played within this.
- 3.24 In changing parking tariffs the council needed to communicate better its aims and create an understanding of what it is trying to achieve. The panel heard that at present retailers feel ignored, confused and frustrated.
- 3.25 The costs involved in travel have an influence on how people travel, how often they travel and even whether to travel or not. These costs include monetary costs as well as non-monetary costs (such as time, risk and comfort). Travelling tends to follow a pattern. When costs, time, risk and discomfort relating to travel decrease, the number of journeys increase; the reverse is also true.
- 3.26 Changes to travel costs can have a variety of impacts on travel: the number of trips taken, route, mode of transport and destination. These changes are measured by economists as elasticities; a percentage change in the use of a commodity or product caused by a percentage change in its cost.
- 3.27 Parking charges can have the following effects:

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<sup>27</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>28</sup> Tesco, private meeting

- car users to change the number of vehicles they own
- larger numbers of motorists to travel at off-peak periods
- travellers switch to another form of transport
- car users travelling to alternative destinations
- making fewer trips, or combining trips for more than one purpose
- car users changing where they live and work.<sup>29</sup>

### **Parking Strategy**

- 3.28 The Parking Strategy: Parking Tariff Review reported the proposed changes to the city council parking charges on November 2011.<sup>30</sup> The proposals were set within the context of the objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP3). The 5 strategic goals were economic growth; carbon reduction; quality of life; equality of opportunity; safety; security and health. Parking tariffs were determined as one of the levers for influencing travel patterns and fulfilling the council's aim to create a safer, cleaner and more sustainable city.
- 3.29 The council's parking tariff structure had developed over time and had been subject to periodic reviews. It was recognised that the existing charges had a degree of complexity and these had been reviewed to improve the understanding for residents, workers, businesses and visitors who drive into and around the city.
- 3.30 There was strong evidence that effective parking controls could have a positive influence on promoting more sustainable travel choices. The introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in 2001<sup>31</sup> contributed significantly to improving road safety and traffic flow along important travel routes, particularly on bus journeys and at bus stops. It had also freed up more spaces for residents to park their vehicles and increased motorcycle parking.
- 3.31 Recent local surveys had shown increases in sustainable transport use. This included a steady rise in bus passengers' journeys from 30 million to 41 million between 2001 and 2010, and 27% more cycling trips between 2006 and 2009. By comparison, the average number of car trips entering and leaving the city every day has reduced by 12,000 between 2007 and 2009. This has helped to curb the growth in traffic congestion, reduce deterioration in air quality and minimise growing carbon emissions. The new Sussex Low Emission Strategy aims to continue this trend through the development control and the planning process.

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/chapter\\_7-5.pdf](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/chapter_7-5.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting- 29/11/2011  
[http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000637/M00003620/AI00024119/\\$20111118152156\\_001066\\_0002944\\_ReportTemplateCabinetMemberMeeting.doc.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000637/M00003620/AI00024119/$20111118152156_001066_0002944_ReportTemplateCabinetMemberMeeting.doc.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Local authorities under the Road Traffic Act 1991 take over city wide parking enforcement and parking management schemes, (also known as Decriminalised Parking). Previously some of this enforcement was undertaken by the Police).

- 3.32 Changes to parking charges are part of a wider strategy which was designed to manage demand, help cut down on traffic volumes in the city and encourage residents and visitors to consider sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport. Recent independent research carried out for the government showed that people base their choice of shopping venues on a whole range of factors, not just parking prices.

The city has serious air pollution problems in some areas which can affect people's health. Serious traffic congestion, with cars queuing miles out of town on summer weekends or driving around the city looking for car parking spaces – has a negative impact on drivers, businesses and residents. Car parking charges are highest where there is most demand for spaces and are set at a level to encourage people to think about alternatives.<sup>32</sup>

- 3.33 Council officers advised the panel that parking charges varied considerably nationally and reflected demand in a particular area. The city had unique attractions, high levels of visitor demand and limited parking capacity. Brighton & Hove was very different from other towns on the south coast, and even London. Therefore it was difficult to find a like for like comparator. Further research was underway to collate more data on parking charges.
- 3.34 The panel requested parking price comparisons from Bournemouth (as an initial starting point), for this inquiry. The comparisons showed that Brighton & Hove's parking charges were higher, with a significant difference in the all day parking charge. It must be noted that the parking officers felt that the city was more comparable to London than Bournemouth.
- 3.35 The council needs to ensure it does not price itself too high, which could make Brighton & Hove a less attractive destination. The council needs to consider how its parking pricing policy, supports retailers and how it markets the city's parking offers regionally.
- 3.36 Interestingly comparative figures for business parking permit rates showed that Brighton was similar to many London Boroughs.<sup>33</sup>
- 3.37 Work is underway to identify parking trends and traffic flows within the city and products that can offer solutions to current issues.
- 3.38 The council has previously introduced a number of flexible and responsive parking tariffs:

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<sup>32</sup> Further information on this issue are available on Parking Questions & Answers : <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1262794> and the Parking Annual Reports : <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1247955>

<sup>33</sup> Public minutes

- A new hotel/guest tariff has been introduced for visitors staying in the city at The Lanes, London Road, Trafalgar Street and Regency Square: £8-£10 between 4pm and 11am the next day.
- There is a shopper tariff £1 for 1 hour, which has been reduced from £2.50 is available at The Lanes, London Road, Trafalgar Street and Regency Square.
- The evening parking tariff had also been reduced.
- Parking offers had been trialled out before at Regency car park, however this was to the detriment to the Lanes car park. It was deemed that this type of promotion was not a viable option.

3.39 After representations were heard against the proposed parking charges for 2012-2013 to the business and trader permits, amendments to reduce the tariffs were made. The increase to parking charges was to allow the council to allocate trader permits to all those who had been on the waiting list.

#### **Business Parking Permits (for retailers)**

3.40 Whilst most concern was expressed about the cost of parking to shoppers, the issue of the cost of parking permits for businesses and traders was also raised. Evidence presented to the panel highlighted a rise <sup>34</sup> of nearly 50%, from £175 per annum to £300 (working out as daily increase of 34p) for Business Parking Permits. Businesses which gave evidence to the panel viewed this increase as an extra and unjustified tax which put additional pressure on retailers' cash flow. It was noted that the BID had secured a discount for retailer parking with National Car Parks (NCP).<sup>35</sup> It was suggested that the Council could support traders by offering a discount at their car parks.

#### **Parking Summary**

3.41 Parking has become a very emotive issue for retailers, one where they feel they are not being listened to.

3.42 During the drafting of this report changes were made to some of the parking charges in central Brighton in response to a robust public debate on the issue.

3.43 A wider review of parking is currently underway. Whilst it is a concern that the council is changing parking charges without any evidence as to where its charges sit with comparative cities and regional neighbours, or how this will affect driver and visitor behaviour; it is to be hoped that the issues picked up in this report will be addressed within the study.

3.44 The council does need to consider the price elasticity of parking charges and the negative impact it could have on shoppers and visitors, especially for its retailers and tourism sectors whose livelihoods depend on these consumers.

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<sup>34</sup> Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

<sup>35</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

- 3.45 Clearly, in times of significant budget reductions, the council is seeking to maximise its revenue streams. However parking should not be seen as an inexhaustible 'cash cow' from which revenue can be raised.
- 3.46 Parking charges are a key factor of the retail mix. The panel wondered whether there is the capacity to increase charges without damaging the independents' trade? Could increases to parking charges be trialled beforehand, so that any negative impact on footfall figures could be measured?<sup>36</sup>
- 3.47 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend:

**Recommendation 1**

**The Council needs to demonstrate that the impact of increased parking charges on the retail sector have been researched and understood prior to changes being introduced. This research and the rationale behind any changes to policy should be published.**

**Recommendation 2**

**The Council should consider developing a more flexible approach to parking, utilising special offers and targeted support through parking regulations to promote specific retail areas.**

**Park & Ride**

- 3.48 A number of local retailers suggested that the city's parking issues could best be tackled through the expansion of park and ride facilities. Witnesses suggested that this would ensure shoppers and visitors had a more welcoming trip into the city by avoiding traffic congestion. Witnesses believed that park and ride encouraged shoppers and visitors to stay longer, buy more and was a less stressful mode of transport.
- 3.49 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum reported that "to supply consumers to service our retailers, we must attract them from greater distances than competing towns with a 360 degree catchment.<sup>37</sup> But weekend intra-city transport links are often disrupted and the absence of a park & ride facility deters some shoppers".<sup>38</sup>
- 3.50 The panel heard how this was a cheaper parking solution for car users, especially for families.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Chief Executive, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

<sup>37</sup> Brighton has a 180 degree catchment area as it's positioned by the sea, those cities that are inland have a 360 degree catchment area

<sup>38</sup> Chief Executive, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

<sup>39</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

- 3.51 The BID Manager believed that a park and ride scheme would make the city more accessible to visitors and attract them from a wider catchment area. The longer people were in the city the more they would spend on shopping, city attractions and restaurants.
- 3.52 The FSB Development Manager expressed a view that consideration should be given to a park and ride scheme from Falmer and the Marina, as these were lower cost parking options for the consumer which encouraged a lengthier stay in the city.<sup>40</sup>
- 3.53 Further evidence related to possible locations for a park and ride site and which logistical issues would need to be overcome for any scheme. Overall when discussing parking, however, retailers were very supportive of a park and ride scheme.<sup>41</sup>

**Other comments received**

- 3.54 *“The Council [must realise that] without serious investment in traffic management and parking infrastructure (and yes that includes... Park & Ride), we put our independent retail and hospitality sectors at risk by ramping up the cost of parking”*

*“The Town should spend time and money in improving access”*

**Other related factors**

- 3.55 The panel were told how issues such as road works spoiled the customer experience and needed to be taken into account when welcoming visitors.<sup>42</sup> Road works add to traffic congestion and lead to delays. Shoppers and visitors queuing in traffic, and then possibly having to queue further to get into city car parks, can find the whole experience stressful. They may even opt to go to other cities or towns in future to spend their money.
- 3.56 The council continues to promote the number 27 bus from Withdean Stadium as a Park and Ride service to the city centre.
- 3.57 A number of studies and reviews of Park and Ride have been carried out in recent years without coming to any firm conclusions or decisions. In 2011, a review began of the principle of including Park and Ride as part of the city's new spatial/planning strategy (the City Plan). Consultation on a Policy Options Paper for Park and Ride took place from 17 October to 2 December 2011 which has now closed. While it is not possible to accept any further representations on this paper, it is hoped that the responses to the scrutiny panel will help inform future policy.

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<sup>40</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>41</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>42</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

- 3.58 The Policy Options Paper<sup>43</sup> considered the key issues that a Park and Ride was expected to tackle, alongside relevant evidence and the changing national planning policy context. The paper set out a number of potential options to address the issues, along with the main advantages and disadvantages of each option. The proposed preferred option was to withdraw Park and Ride as a transport policy from the city's planning strategy. This is because it was felt that more significant benefits could be achieved at less cost, through alternative measures which are more deliverable and will contribute towards tackling congestion. The council are currently examining the responses received during the Policy Option Paper Consultation period and will be consulting on a full version of the draft City Plan by summer 2012.
- 3.59 Other measures to address transport issues, including congestion, will be delivered through the council's Local Transport Plan and the funding will be allocated to various projects by the council when setting its budget. Investment will be made in a number of different areas to manage the movement of people, vehicles and goods to make it easier for everybody to get around the city. This will include measures to increase levels of walking, cycling and public transport as well as improve traffic management including improved signing for car parks. One key priority area, also now identified in the council's 2012/13 (and future years) budget for transport funding, is to improve access to shopping areas and along key corridors that include retail outlets.

### **Summary**

- 3.60 Witnesses thought that to support retailers, park and ride could provide an attractive travel option to shoppers and visitors. It would give consumers the option to extend their shopping stay which could increase income for independent stores. Also park and ride would provide a cheaper, more welcome and stress free journey.
- 3.61 It is clearly beyond the remit of a panel on supporting the retail sector to look at all the costs and benefits of a park and ride scheme, or even to come to a conclusion as to its overall benefit. However the panel felt that serious consideration needs to be given to park and ride as a means of addressing the city's parking problems in the development of the city plan.
- 3.62 The draft City Plan can be found at [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp\\_Draft\\_City\\_Plan\\_FINAL\\_May\\_2012.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp_Draft_City_Plan_FINAL_May_2012.pdf)
- 3.63 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend:

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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/planning\\_strategy/City\\_Plan\\_Park\\_and\\_Ride\\_Option\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/planning_strategy/City_Plan_Park_and_Ride_Option_Paper.pdf)

**Recommendation 3**

**There was support evident for a Park and Ride scheme to help tackle traffic congestion. In developing the City Plan evidence presented to the Scrutiny Panel should be taken into consideration when contemplating a Park and Ride.**



## 4. Rents and Business Rates

- 4.1 Other than parking the most commonly raised issues was the “retailers’ biggest enemy” – business rates and rents. It was felt by retailers themselves that these were by far the biggest cause of business failure.<sup>44</sup>
- 4.2 The Portas Review sets out the following relevant recommendations in respect of rents and business rates:
- Local authorities should use their discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses
  - Encourage a contract of care between landlords and their commercial tenants by promoting the leasing code and supporting the use of lease structures other than upward only rent reviews, especially for small businesses
  - Explore further disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant
  - Empower local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent with new “Empty Shop Management Orders”
  - Introduce a public register of high street landlords
- 4.3 Business rates and rents are set by the Government’s Valuation Office and payments are determined by the national Uniform Business Rate. A 5.6% increase in business rates commenced in April 2012. A deferral scheme (for businesses who want to postpone their payments) has been introduced by government. Future legislation will allow councils to retain business rates. (Currently, business rates are collected by the council on behalf of the government). Business rates and rents represent one of the largest costs to retailers.
- 4.4 A commercial agent identified that landlords wanted to maximise their rents; tenants on the other hand would obviously want to pay the lowest rent possible for their properties, potentially causing friction between the two.<sup>45</sup>
- 4.5 The BID Manager suggested that retailers needed support to lower their overheads. Support was needed for the creation of a Rent Register, so that retailers understood what they should be paying for their properties.
- 4.6 Further suggestions were that the council could provide an information pack on how rents were set, on other costs and business rates. Trade associations also had useful sources of information and skills in relation to rates and rents.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Cocoon, Temptation Cafe (NLTA), 27/2/2012, and The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>45</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>46</sup> Temptation Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012 and Graves Jenkins, private meeting

- 4.7 The FSB Development Manager expressed a view that the council needed to think of short term solutions and look to influencing a reduction in rates and rents.<sup>47</sup> However as mentioned earlier, the setting of rents and rates is undertaken at a national, not local level.
- 4.8 The owner of Cocoon and TN Lawrence & Son believed that landlords should be offering holiday periods, or reduced rent periods to help retailers get through the recession.<sup>48</sup>
- 4.9 It was felt that some retailers e.g. ‘multiples’ were prepared, and able, to pay a higher premium to locate in specific areas; this could then mean rents for nearby properties would increase too.
- 4.10 A commercial agent confirmed that landlords would need to provide evidence that a higher premium was being paid locally, to negotiate an increase. It was identified that multiples paid more for properties as they could generate more footfall due to brand recognition.<sup>49</sup>
- 4.11 The panel heard that retailers needed support with negotiating their rents at rent reviews. It was suggested by the owner of Temptations’ Cafe (and the Vice Chair of the NLTA) that the council could play a broker role with landlords and tenant retailers. This could help prevent landlords from using other retailers to set precedence at rent reviews, with a consequent increase in retailers’ rents.
- 4.12 Information sharing about rents gave traders knowledge about what they should be paying for their premises which helped retailers to negotiate their rents.<sup>50</sup>
- 4.13 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum believed that without professional representation for rent reviews, independents were at the mercy of their landlords. This was because independents did not fully understand the rent review process. Additionally, many are unaware that a proposed rent increase should be supported by evidence of the rents for similar premises rents, in the same street or immediate area. The naivety of retailers at rent review meetings can set a precedent at further reviews resulting in rent increases, which can ultimately lead to an increase in business rates.<sup>51</sup>
- 4.14 The Director of Metamorphosis expressed a view that the Council should use their property register to promote the good work of landlords. This could be done by exposing poor practices and sharing good practices, as well as encouraging landlords to work better with their tenants. Media involvement would raise awareness and show a

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<sup>47</sup> FSB, 27/3/2012

<sup>48</sup> Cocoon, 27/2/2012 & TN Lawrence and Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>49</sup> Temptation Cafe (NLTA), 27/2/2012 and Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>50</sup> Temptation Cafe, (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>51</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

charter for good practice, which landlords could be encouraged to sign up to.<sup>52</sup>

- 4.15 A commercial agent confirmed that retailers would need to provide strong reasons to landlords why their rents should be reduced from, say, quarterly to monthly payments. Traders would need good business planning skills to put forward personal plans allowing temporary rent decreases due to specific circumstances; there is a clear need for support from traders associations in this regard.<sup>53</sup>
- 4.16 Further evidence was heard as to whether the retail economy was in decline, as competition was apparent for the bidding of properties. High street landlords would not always negotiate their rents as any reduction in the rent could affect the capital value of the property.<sup>54</sup> Evidence was presented that empty properties in Brighton & Hove were in most cases not staying vacant for long, so whilst there may be a higher than usual turnover of retailers, there was no shortage of businesses being established.
- 4.17 The panel noted that rents could vary between £25k per annum for a unit in George Street (£500 per week), with rates at £12k p.a. and operational costs on top such as staff and licences. However in North Street rents would be £80k-£100k per annum for Zone A premises and as well as £50,000 per year in rates.<sup>55</sup> These were challenging costs for retailers to meet.
- 4.18 Brighton & Hove City Council owns a considerable amount of retail property in the city, but currently has no empty premises. As custodians of public money and property the council has a duty to act prudently in managing these assets. Nevertheless the council is always conscious of the pressures faced by small businesses in particular and offer support where it can.
- 4.19 Business tenants have an arms length contract with the council which is subject to national legislation and established case law. Therefore the council needs to be careful in engaging too closely with their business arrangements.
- 4.20 Evidence highlighted that when a tenant was finding their rental payments difficult to meet the council via their agents would enter into discussions regarding the state of the business. This would focus on ways to alleviate their trading position.
- 4.21 Examples of such actions include:

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<sup>52</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>53</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>54</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>55</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

- arranging informal rent payments and recommending they seek independent financial advice or property advice to sell their business and / or the lease asset etc.
- agreeing monthly, or indeed weekly, payment arrangements in some circumstances
- general lease restructuring to raise finance,
- sub-letting surplus accommodation to generate additional income.

4.22 A close relationship between landlord and tenant is essential to ensure liaison at an early stage, hopefully before the state of the business is irrecoverable.

4.23 A landlord can only increase rent upon review if there is evidence of comparable transactions which suggest an increase is justifiable, and either party has recourse to arbitration / an expert to determine the figure set. Comparable transactions may be established by multiples or independent traders alike, dependent upon circumstances, location etc.

In an open market setting, it is the tenants making bids which set the rental tone. (Business rates do not influence rental value).<sup>56</sup>

#### **Future City Centres**

4.24 The panel heard evidence how city centres need to have a robust infrastructure and be able to reinvent and renew their shopping patterns as consumer expectations change. Consumers were now demanding more than merely places to shop; rather shopping has now become an experience akin to a day out.<sup>57</sup>

4.25 Landlords and agents needed to recognise these changes and provide the right type of premises, whilst ensuring the use of vacant properties was more flexible and not fixed.<sup>58</sup> They would need to work with the council, city planners, retailers and other partners to deliver this.

#### **Empty properties and ‘Pop ups’**

4.26 A ‘pop-up shop’ is a short-term tenancy that allows a retailer to trial a product or concept over a short space of time, or for a fixed production run. It provides a flexible and lower-risk way of starting or expanding a business. “Pop ups” can provide rent to landlords in spaces that are proving difficult to fill. They can also create a unique and energetic atmosphere as new retailers arrive and seek to maximise their opportunities.

4.27 The panel heard that “pop ups” could be used to fill empty sites.<sup>59</sup> The Director of Metamorphosis believed that “pop ups” were a positive way

<sup>56</sup> Property & Design, Brighton & Hove City Council

<sup>57</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012 & CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012

<sup>58</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>59</sup> FSB, 237/2/2012

forward for empty properties, as they gave energy to an area and were a great way of promoting on-line businesses.<sup>60</sup>

- 4.28 There were also opportunities for small businesses to create a cooperative in one site.<sup>61</sup> Landlords and tenants would have to work in partnership with council planners to deliver this.
- 4.29 Empty property sites on the high street were unattractive and needed to be avoided. Retailers believed that shop closures would have a knock on effect, causing a “churn” (the closing and opening of retail stores).<sup>62</sup>
- 4.30 The panel was impressed by evidence from the council on how they worked closely with their leaseholders to avoid voids and had succeeded in having no voids in their property portfolio. The council needs to look to extend its proactive way of working with its tenants, where possible, and consider how they could work with city landlords to prevent having empty sites across the city<sup>63</sup>
- 4.31 The BID spoke about expanding their services and the potential to employ an empty properties officer to work with landlords and agents to open up empty properties and get “pop up” shop, art installations and theatre groups to use these spaces and invigorate the high street.<sup>64</sup> This would have a positive affect on the city and for retailers by promoting an “open for business” and vibrant atmosphere for shoppers and visitors to enjoy - rather than a row of empty shop units.
- 4.32 The owner of Cocoon pointed out that previously empty sites had shop front posters with pictures of the old city which were more attractive to look at. The panel felt that the council should consider making further funding available to place these posters on empty properties.
- 4.33 **Further evidence:**  
*Reduce Business Rates for small, independent traders, promoting the unique qualities of the North Laine and South Lanes. Brighton’s famous, unique retail sector will lose its character if more of the small, independent retailers are forced to close. If we become one massive Churchill Square, why would visitors come?*

*Rent control for small shops and businesses. The ratcheting up of rents in the North Laine has driven several friends of mine out - they're doing well on-line but it doesn't help keep Brighton alive.*

*Pop up shops have been a great way to create buzz over recent years and I'd like to see empty spaces used in this way more.*

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<sup>60</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>61</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012 & CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012

<sup>62</sup> FSB, Temptation Café (NLTA) & Cocoon, 27/2/2012

<sup>63</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>64</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

*Address the appearance of boarded-up shops right across the city as soon as they are vacant? For example, the art hoardings that were put up in some places in the city centre in 2007 & 2008 were very effective. There are also cheaper ways.*

#### **Other related evidence**

- 4.34 Witnesses believed that there should be complete transparency on what business rates are actually used for. Many businesses still thought that this cost to the council should go towards dressing the city, security and the costs of the alcohol licence and refuse collection (which was not included in business rates).<sup>65</sup>
- 4.35 As mentioned before, new government plans would mean that councils will be able to retain elements of the business rates they collect. (Currently the money is sent to central government and then re-dispersed via local authority formula funding). Evidence heard from independents highlighted that they felt they were hard done by the council. This was because their business rates did not cover refuse collections, displaying A-boards, street licences and decorating the streets: all of which were additional costs to traders. The main issue is that businesses do not know what service provision their business rates pay for. In the future, when the council starts to retain these businesses rates, they will need to be more transparent as to what these rates are spent on in terms of services to traders.
- 4.36 The owner of TN Lawrence & Son believed that the council should adopt a rate-free period to support businesses struggling with recession.

#### **Summary**

- 4.37 Retailers should be encouraged to get support for rent reviews. Previous rent registers have been successful in preventing unwarranted rent increases. Even though it can be an onerous task to produce registers and dependent on volunteers, this gave independents the knowledge to negotiate on a more level playing field with their landlords at rent reviews. The panel wondered whether there was an opportunity for Traders Associations to investigate this further.<sup>66</sup>
- 4.38 There is the need for a mediator to intervene with landlords and agents whose properties were vacant, to find out whether they require any assistance in finding a tenant, and encourage them to trial pop ups. Empty properties on any high street are not appealing to visitors and gave the city an uninviting appearance.
- 4.39 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend:

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<sup>65</sup> BID Manager, Temptation Cafe, (& NLTA), Cocoon, 27/2/2012

<sup>66</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

**Recommendation 4**

**Flexibility on the part of landlords with regard to rent levels, short-term leases, allowing pop-up shops and individual rent plans can have considerable benefits. The council as landlord offers flexibility for its leaseholders; it should promote this best practice to other landlords.**

## 5. Signage & the Station Gateway

- 5.1 Brighton Station has around 15 million passenger journeys in 2010/11 and acts as the gateway to the city for many visitors. It is owned by Network Rail and managed by Southern.<sup>67</sup>
- 5.2 Retailers who gave evidence felt strongly that significant improvements were needed to the station gateway to promote a more open and visitor friendly welcome, with better signage and access to shopping areas and city attractions.
- 5.3 The panel were informed that the renovation to the station gateway had been under discussion for a number of years.<sup>68</sup>
- 5.4 It was suggested that the tourist information function could be outsourced so it could be self-financing.<sup>69</sup> The Director of Metamorphosis confirmed that they had been involved in a similar project elsewhere supporting the development of a self-financing tourist information centre. The outcome of the project was that the tourist centre fully funded itself.<sup>70</sup>
- 5.5 It was felt that the Station Gateway project should consider having a tourist information centre in the station. It should be seen as an essential part of marketing the city. This centre would offer information such as maps, shopping guides to Brighton & Hove's independent retail areas and how to travel to these areas, events, festivals, city attractions, restaurants and where to stay, according to the visitors' needs.
- 5.6 The panel heard that while the current station layout drew visitors to the sea and Churchill Square it did not encourage tourists to discover other shopping areas where the independent retailers were; especially the North Laine area which was in close proximity to the station.<sup>71</sup>
- 5.7 Retailers spoke passionately to the panel about the city's independent traders offering a wide range of unique products. Retailers also felt strongly that these areas should be promoted at the station, because a large percentage of visitors come into the city on the train.<sup>72</sup>
- 5.8 There was discussion regarding the use of technology to provide information on the city to visitors. It was suggested that QR codes<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.1529>

<sup>68</sup> Business Forum, 6/3/2012

<sup>69</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>70</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>71</sup> Temptations Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>72</sup> Temptations Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012 & The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>73</sup> QR is short for Quick Response and a QR code is a two dimensional code that can be read by a special barcode reader on a camera phone. The code is made up of black modules arranged in a pattern on a white background. The information that's encoded into the code



could provide an array of information, which would be useful to tourists. It could also alert them to events and independent shopping areas suitable to their individuals needs. VisitBrighton had an iPhone application which was excellent in promoting the city.<sup>74</sup> It was generally felt that more could be made of different technologies to both promote the city to visitors and help visitors access the different retail areas within the city.

- 5.9 The panel were told that traders were keen to get involved in the development of the station gateway project. It was important that the council and partners ensured that retailers, trade associations, the BID, Business Forum are consulted with and involved in the planning of this important scheme.
- 5.10 It was also suggested that traditional notice boards welcoming people to the city should also be used. The boards should highlight attractions, shopping areas which could be reached on foot or by bus, and QR codes. A kiosk could be established where maps were available with listings of specialist retailers, such as vintage shops, walking tours and local food. Car parks should also have the same information.<sup>75</sup>
- 5.11 Any potential promotional spaces should be utilised to advertise the city's attractions to visitors arriving from Brighton Station, such as the gable end of the Queen's pub.<sup>76</sup>
- 5.12 The Panel were advised that many of these issues, such as signage, improved directions and connections were being actively addressed through the Station Gateway project and different options consulted upon.
- 5.13 Enhanced signage and creating a better welcome was one of the primary objectives of the scheme. This is to include a more effective interchange so that people could continue their journeys more easily. Maps and a tourist kiosk were also being considered.

#### **City Plan- Public Streets and Places**

- 5.14 The Station Gateway is identified as a priority area in the council's City Plan which requires improvements to accessibility and the public realm. The purpose of the Public Streets and Spaces policy in the City Plan is to create a simpler and higher quality urban realm which accommodates the needs of all people. This would include pedestrian and cycle-friendly spaces. The concept is to make it easier to move around the city, by having clear signage, removing obstacles and providing public seating to allow regular opportunities to stop and rest. Tree, and other, planting could be incorporated into the scheme.

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might be a website URL, text or another type of data. Source:

<http://www.theiphonemom.com/qr-codes>

<sup>74</sup> Temptations Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>75</sup> Temptations Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>76</sup> CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012

Different forms of public art in the way of lighting effects, water features and street furniture may also be used to make visitors' arrival in Brighton more welcoming.

### **Summary**

5.15 The Station Gateway consultation is still in progress, so it's important that the views of retailers are incorporated as well as the evidence heard during this scrutiny inquiry. The main factors raised were that the gateway should deliver a welcome to the city which is easily accessible, presents information and signposts visitors to different areas of the city and key attractions.

5.16 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend:

### **Recommendation 5**

**Ideas for improving the signing, information and flows of pedestrians heard by the panel should be taken forward as part of the Station Gateway project, most notably:**

- **Clear direction through the North Laine**
- **A tourist information kiosk on the station**
- **Better sign posting towards retail areas**

## 6. Coordination and Strategy and Communication with the Council

6.1 The first recommendation of the Portas Review is to:

*‘Put in place a “Town Team”: a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets.’*

6.2 Evidence heard from a number of witnesses supported this recommendation, highlighting that the lack of an overall co-ordinating body, lack of co-ordinated vision and strategy were a weakness for the city.

6.3 The former City Centre Manager advised that the previous town centre management initiative had worked well with retailers and the council and that overall it had been a success. Once the funding was cut back, the Brighton Crime Reduction Partnership (which rented out security radios to retailers and provided training) and the BID ran their own schemes. Neither of these schemes developed a town centre initiative.

6.4 Witnesses told the panel how the Business Forum lost funding streams which meant that it ceased its city centre management initiatives in 2010. This included losing both the Hove and Brighton Town Centre Manager (TCM) positions.

6.5 The panel heard that retailers can be hard to engage with as they are obviously concentrating on running a business. What is needed is a positive partnership between the council, business associations and individual retailers. The previous TCM role made regular visits providing information to retailers and acted as a conduit between the Council, traders and other linked organisations.<sup>77</sup>

6.6 The Director of Metamorphosis expressed the view to the panel that the advertising of information on the council website was not enough and more face to face meetings with retail teams were needed, there was considerable sympathy for this view during much of the panel discussion.<sup>78</sup>

6.7 There are a number of sources of information available to retailers: The Business Forum publishes weekly news through [brightonbusiness.co.uk](http://brightonbusiness.co.uk). Sussex enterprise is also seen as a good source of information for retailers. However retailers felt a single point of information and support would be extremely useful. Other suggestions the panel heard, were that the council could provide either “*retail carers or retail officers*” to provide face to face support for

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<sup>77</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>78</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

businesses, or the reinstatement of the TCM position.<sup>79</sup> Independents thought that communication with retailers needed to be improved by the council.

6.8 The panel were in agreement that a central point to go to for advice was needed, as currently traders felt there was no one they could go to for support. It was suggested that whatever form this extra support took it should build upon, and be hosted by existing support structures such as the BID.

6.9 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum submitted written evidence reporting that many independent retail owners have had no training on the running of a business and that there was a noticeable lack of business support for retailers.<sup>80</sup>

6.9 Further feedback received stated that;

*“It is shocking that a city the size of Brighton & Hove no longer has a City Centre Management team. The BID ('Brilliant Brighton') has a manager who is responsible for those streets/businesses within the Brighton town centre business improvement district, however since funding was cut from the Business Forum, we no longer have an organisation looking after the retail sector in the city. Having very recently met with the combined Town Centre Initiative and BID in Worthing, who run an impressive public/private partnership, there is an awful lot Brighton can learn from our smaller neighbours on how to run an effective, integrated city centre. Brighton needs an independent TCI immediately to represent city centre businesses – an identifiable person or persons who understand how businesses think and their needs (security, waste management, promotions, street cleansing...). This must have the support of the city council, even when it is critical of council actions or political policy”*

6.10 Overall, whilst specific statements varied there was a clear message from the evidence gathered that retailers want more support and advice. They feel that the absence of a single coordinating body – both giving a strategic vision and drive, but also acting as an advice and support service – is a drag on what the city could be achieving. The panel were in strong agreement that some more coordinated support is required.

6.11 Whilst a town centre manager position may be the answer to some of the issues raised by retailers, it would seem sensible to base any increase in capacity to deliver these aims by building upon those structures already in place i.e. the BID, Business Forum or the Chamber of Commerce. What is clear is that the council and retailers

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<sup>79</sup> The Guarana Company, and former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012 & TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>80</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

need to work together to develop a town centre strategy, and decide who owns it, resources it, and how to implement it.

- 6.12 It's worth noting at this point that the second recommendation of the Portas Review was to 'Empower successful Business Improvement Districts to take on more responsibilities and powers and become "Super-BIDs"'. There are approximately 120 BIDs in the UK which have an exceptionally high success rate. Although they are not the solution to all business areas. In 2007 there was insufficient support to establish a BID in Hove and strong opposition from Queen's Road and St. James's Street traders when there was a proposal to extend the BID to these areas, (though Western Road and Preston Street were added to the BID area).<sup>81</sup>
- 6.12 The council does already run schemes to promote retail, two recent examples being 'Dress for Success' and 'Ride the Wave'. Both proved popular with retailers and helped to raise the profile of smaller stores.

#### **City Centre Strategy/ City Plan**

- 6.13 The City Plan is currently under development and will include sections on retail and the city centre. Clearly the city centre strategy would have extremely strong synergies with the City Plan, with the two documents supporting each other.<sup>82</sup>
- 6.14 **Brighton Centre and Churchill Square Area and Retail Provision**  
One of the priorities of the City Plan is the redevelopment of the Brighton Centre. This is to ensure that it delivers a minimum of 20,000 sq m new retail floor space as an extension of Churchill Square to secure the city's role as a primary regional shopping centre within the South East. The Regional Centre (which is the regional shopping centre- Churchill Square in Brighton) covers the interconnecting shopping streets from Churchill Square/Western Road to Montpelier Road, Holland Road, Brunswick Town, Queens Road/West Street, the Lanes, Duke Street, East Street, North Laine and North Street. The council recognises the role of small independent retailers in maintaining the Regional Centre's viability and attractiveness. There is potential to improve the pedestrian environment (general appearance, pavements and street furniture) and the size and mix of retailer representation.
- 6.15 The opportunity to develop a new department store to attract new retailers into the city needs to be investigated. There is support for the protection of existing shops and the provision of new small retail premises, mainly for independent traders within the Lanes and North Laine. The balance of mix of retailers will continue to be monitored.

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<sup>81</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

<sup>82</sup> BID Manager, 27/2/2012, Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012 and CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012

- 6.16 *The Brighton & Hove Retail Study Update 2011* identified that in accordance with Government policy the council would prefer to direct retail applications to the town centre in the first instance.<sup>83</sup>
- 6.17 The BID Manager emphasised that the Portas Review recommended that Town Teams were required to invigorate high streets. The team would consist of the TCM, landlords, BID's, retailers, police, the council and residents who would collaboratively work together to identify positive ways forward to build high-streets fit for the future. Town Teams would be coordinated by the TCM, but currently this role did not exist and arguably the city now had a greater need for one.<sup>84</sup> Equally, the former City Centre Manager felt that the council was going against the recommendations of the Portas Review by not supporting city centre management.<sup>85</sup>
- 6.18 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum mentioned that Town Teams" as referred to in the Portas review were unfortunately something of the past. Previously councils had supported town centre management schemes, but with the introduction of BIDs such schemes were largely redundant. Also councils have had to reduce their financial support to a variety of services.<sup>86</sup>
- 6.19 The panel believed that a retail strategy could give the city a chance to plan strong visual retail quarters with vibrant "retail-tainment" areas.<sup>87</sup> This could include landlords working with city partners to prevent empty shop units e.g. "*avoid the void*", gathering information on potential tenants and having the council's planning team on board with responsive changes to the class use of buildings.

### Summary

- 6.20 It is clear that some form of increased coordination and support is required, building upon existing structures. The panel came to no firm conclusions as to how this increased capacity should be resourced. Clearly at a time of fiscal constraint recommending extra recruitment by the council is perhaps unlikely and as discussed previously there is some debate as to whether this is something the council should be funding anyway, or whether retailers themselves need to resource such capacity.
- 6.21 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

### Recommendations 6

**Resources need to be found to provide coordinated support and advice for retailers; this should build upon the work of the current**

<sup>83</sup> [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp\\_Cabinet\\_version.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/ldf/cp_Cabinet_version.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>85</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

<sup>86</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

<sup>87</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

**BID and responsibility for developing and implementing a Citywide Retail Strategy; consideration needs to be given as to how best to undertake this in conjunction with contributions from retailers themselves.**

**Recommendation 7**

**Ways for improving communicating with retailers need to be developed; a single point of contact for retailers should be developed and promoted that allows retailers to access all the information and support they require. This should include information on rent reviews, trading standards etc.**

## **7. Traders Associations and the BID**

- 7.1 In the evidence heard by the panel there was a general, but by no means unanimous, agreement amongst traders as to the benefits of belonging to a trade association or the Business Improvement District (BID).
- 7.2 The BID, known as 'Brilliant Brighton', is funded from contributions by businesses and the council. It is a defined geographical area within which all the traders paid a levy to fund improvements to their trading environment.
- 7.3 Over the next five years £1.8m will be invested in the Brighton city centre by its traders through the BID. The first Brighton BID was established in 2006 and funded a range of initiatives such as Christmas lights and promotional events such as dressing the city in the summer with hanging baskets and buntings as well as on-street security.
- 7.4 In 2011 city centre businesses voted to extend the BID for another five years. The new BID now includes 517 retail and hospitality businesses, and the geographical area it covers has been expanded to include Preston St, Western Rd and the southern end of East St.
- 7.5 A number of teams within the council work closely with the BID team to support its activities, and the council's Economic Development Manager, Cheryl Finella, sits on the BID board.
- 7.6 In addition the BID looked to reduce overheads by bulk buying procurement schemes, such as gas, electricity, refuse collection and phone bills, which made significant savings for businesses. The BID also adds value by partnership working; has negotiated reductions in parking permits with NCP car parks and City College customer care courses. Even though the BID levy was challenging for businesses, they could see the benefit of it.
- 7.7 Other areas like Hove could belong to the BID but the business community would need to decide this. When previously consulted, there has not been an appetite for further expansion.
- 7.8 The BID had strong links with the North Laine Trader Association and had supported the set up of Preston Street Traders' Association.<sup>88</sup>
- 7.9 The investments made by the BID had a positive impact to shoppers, visitors and the city as a whole. Dressing the city schemes made the area look more vibrant, welcoming and attractive to visit.
- 7.10 A number of retailers who were either not in the BID or a Traders' Association, wanted to be part of one so were trying to start traders'

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<sup>88</sup> BID, 27/2/2012



associations in their areas. These retailers had been either part of associations in the past, or were aware of the good partnership work that the BID was carrying out as well as the strong lobbying potentials for procuring discounts and the benefits of information sharing which goes on within such associations. It was agreed by all the witnesses that there was “*strength in numbers*”.<sup>89</sup>

- 7.11 However it should be noted that some organisations voted against joining the BID, but had to be part of it due to larger numbers voting for the BID. A retailer expressed their view to the panel that initially he voted against the BID, but was most impressed by the work carried out since being a member and would now want to extend the BID area to Hove.
- 7.12 Trading Associations were normally operated by businesses who dedicated their free time to improving their area or street. These associations could provide the following: work on marketing and promoting the area, website provision to promote retail offers, negotiating rates, business planning and accountancy advice. These were all highly useful skills for any businesses to gain or make use of. In particular sharing knowledge about rents gave traders an upper hand about what they should be paying for their properties when rent reviews were due.<sup>90</sup>
- 7.13 The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) was also another organisation that retailers could join. For the membership, businesses had banking services, legal advice and competitive contracts, business support through area partnerships and membership to networks.<sup>91</sup> The Business Forum also supported traders with procurement.<sup>92</sup>
- 7.14 Some traders did not feel the levy paid to the BID or trading associations were value for money. However it was recognised the power of working collectively, for example Sydney Street in successfully organising their own Christmas decorations had created a street-market style atmosphere when the road was closed at weekends.<sup>93</sup>
- 7.15 The role of larger retailers within traders’ associations was explored by the panel. Tesco representatives advised that they encourage store managers to play an active role in local traders’ associations, as they see larger stores as anchors to local retail areas and as such there is a mutually beneficial relationship to be had in creating a successful area.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Red Bed Company, Cocoon and Willow, 27/2/2012, Former City Centre Manager, 6/3/2012, Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012 and Graves Jenkins private meeting

<sup>90</sup> Temptations Café , (NLTA), 27/2/2012 and TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>91</sup> FSB and Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

<sup>92</sup> TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>93</sup> The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>94</sup> Tesco, private meeting

- 7.16 However there is some anecdotal evidence that some stores haven't been as active in supporting other local traders as they could be. Clearly contributions and interest will vary between stores, though support from larger companies such as training and advice was welcomed by independents.

### **Summary**

- 7.17 Retailers are trying to be as cost effective and keep their overheads to a minimum. The panel heard how it was advantageous for independents to be part of a trading association, or the BID, as they offered free bulk procurement contracts which could reduce utility costs. An example was that one trader managed to save £1,000 per annum through such a scheme. The panel wondered whether there was the opportunity to offer this on a wider scale for retailers who were not part of the BID or a trading association.<sup>95</sup>
- 7.18 After all the evidence heard, the panel decided to recommend the following:

### **Recommendation 8**

The role of Traders' Associations and the BID in supporting and securing benefits for their members are very evident; the Council should work with and support such groups. The council should be in touch with large stores, reminding them of opportunities for their increased support to independents across the city.

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<sup>95</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

## 8. Larger Multiples

- 8.1 Multiples, depending on your point of view can be seen as ‘anchor’ around which other retailers can flourish, or a major threat to the viability of high streets and a menace that needs to be contained.
- 8.2 The Portas Review makes recommendations with regard to multiples, these are:
- Large retailers should support and mentor local businesses and independent retailers
  - Retailers should report on their support of local high streets in their annual report
- 8.3 Feedback received from residents and independents was that multiples were rapidly moving into high streets. This was changing the character of their high streets which were losing some of their individual identity, causing tension between the two types of retailers.
- 8.4 Other evidence highlighted how multiples and independents were working successfully in partnership through the BID. BID businesses had worked together to deliver a shared objective, which was the delivery of the BID business plan i.e. Dressing the City.<sup>96</sup>
- 8.5 A number of smaller retailers stated they would welcome training and support from larger stores, for example in marketing or displays; representatives from Tesco also stated that were keen for their stores to support local retailers in much the same way.
- 8.6 The FSB Development Manager expressed the view that partnership working with multiples and independents could work through forming retail quarters and traders’ associations. These areas could manage their own arrangements for their area, by providing mentoring advice and support to retailers in that quarter.<sup>97</sup>
- 8.7 The Director of Metamorphosis expressed the view that councils needed to be forceful with multiples to work more collaboratively with other retailers. More creative thinking was needed by all retailers and for both multiples and independents to work in synergy. There was power in numbers and strong partnership work was the key; BIDs were a good example of this and a number of multiples were also good in this way.<sup>98</sup>
- 8.8 The panel heard from Tesco’s that they worked hard to engage with local traders positively when they entered a new high street. There was room for smaller retailers to succeed alongside the multiples and entrepreneurial shops would always prosper.

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<sup>96</sup> BID, 27/2/2012 and former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

<sup>97</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>98</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

- 8.9 Tesco were of the opinion that it was important to invest in the surrounding community and environment to keep the high street attractive, as it was mutually beneficial to them and all retailers.
- 8.10 The panel were informed that company policy was to support independents and regularly give advice on how to dress their windows, how to promote offers, marketing and setting up Traders' Associations. Tesco's already worked closely with the Police on age-restricted sales of alcohol and could possibly offer support to other retailers in the prevention of underage alcohol sales.
- 8.11 Tesco's would support urban villages like Hove and Kempton to promote a clean and smart environment. Store Managers were encouraged to get involved in the local community and the company was keen to progress this further.
- 8.12 There were over 600 "Community champions" in the company. These champions worked up to 18 hours a week in assisting the local community in the local area. The Hove store had an active community champion.
- 8.13 Involvement, and participation in community events was important for the multiple and the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympics presented an opportunity for partnership working.
- 8.14 There was plenty of strong feeling evident regarding the impact of multiples on high streets:
- Strong competition from multiples which threatened the vitality of their business<sup>99</sup>
  - Multiples paid higher rents. Landlords would use this to set a precedent at independent rent reviews and increase the rents of independents accordingly.<sup>100</sup>
  - With multiples moving into the high street it was important to prevent a homogenous high street that looked like any other city<sup>101</sup>
  - It was doubtful that they could work together as they were in competition with one another<sup>102</sup>
- 8.15 There was a strong narrative prevalent throughout discussions on the impact of multiples, arguing that independents *could* compete on service, local produce sourcing, customer knowledge and a unique offer.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

<sup>100</sup> Temptation Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>101</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012 and The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>102</sup> The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

<sup>103</sup> CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012

- 8.16 Independents had strong entrepreneurial skills and skill enhancements compared to multiples, as staff working for multiples tended to do one job role and were not always multi-skilled.<sup>104</sup>

### **Other evidence**

- 8.17 *“Big business isn’t always a bad thing. Brands are welcomed to areas which require regeneration such as London Road, yet are attacked when they look to open in other areas of the city. Supermarkets and convenience stores are here to stay: people like them, we all use them, they do what they do so very well. Perhaps it would be better to engage with them. Encourage them – through legislation if possible – to support community groups, to stock more local produce (perhaps as a condition of their liquor license?). Our city centre only has Christmas lights because the businesses within the BID choose to pay for them, and I dare say that the multiples along Western Road are heavily subsidising the lighting infrastructure of North Laine through their financial contribution. Brighton is renowned for its ‘different’ thinking so let’s think differently rather than throw all of our toys out of the pram every time Tesco or Starbucks are mentioned.”*
- 8.18 Evidence was received from the Education Business Partnership on community projects that Sainsbury’s in Lewes Road had been engaged with. These included:
- Sponsoring £500 per annum for Safety in Action Week for 600 Key Stage 2 students who were transferring from primary to secondary education.
  - The recent national ‘Youth Can’ project to enable young people from age 16 to join the organisation for a training and development programme.
  - Working with Special Educational Needs (SEN) students from Hillside, Downsview Schools and Downs Link College
- 8.19 Multiples requesting to take over an empty property cannot be rejected by the council. In some cases where this has happened, multiples with strong legal representation had taken applications to appeal and won. The Planning Service has to remain neutral when applications are made and look at the use rather than the retailer itself.
- 8.20 Recommendation 7 of this report explored retailers’ needs for more support and information. The council was not the only source where independents could gather evidence and advice. Multiples were experienced in merchandising their stores, promoting offers, dressing windows, managing and training staff and business planning. Independents could utilise this knowledge by approaching multiples.

### **Summary**

- 8.21 Independents wanted support and training from multiples. Tesco’s company policy was to work with independents and offer support with

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<sup>104</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

setting up traders' associations to training on the promotion of retail offers. Evidence was heard from traders in George Street, Hove that they wanted to set up a traders' association and as yet had no success in doing so.<sup>105</sup> There is a huge opportunity for Tesco's to take this forward and lead on such a venture, plus offer training and support. This would cement their relationship with the local community.

- 8.22 There was also a call for a trading association at Portland Road<sup>106</sup> and Sainsbury's could once again lead on this for that area.
- 8.23 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

**Recommendation 9**  
**Larger multiples should be invited to join local traders' associations and support other local retailers with training, for example marketing, age-restricted sales, etc.**

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<sup>105</sup> Cocoon and Willow, 27/2/2012

<sup>106</sup> Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

## 9. Planning and Localism

- 9.1 During the evidence-gathering sessions there was debate as to whether it would be beneficial for it to be easier to change the use class of a property. Some witnesses wanted a more flexible system to promote new start-ups; others however wanted more restrictions to ensure areas retained unique characteristics.
- 9.2 There is an inherent paradox in wanting fewer controls to enable easier start-up and encourage growth and then seeking to restrict the type and location of retailers.
- 9.3 The Portas Review has three relevant recommendations with regard to planning. These are to:
- Address the restrictive aspects of the 'Use Class' system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street
  - Make explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework
  - Introduce Secretary of State "exceptional sign off" for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an "affordable shops" quota
- 9.4 The BID Manager suggested that the National Planning Guidelines needed to take a more holistic view of planning, to make it easier to change use classes for key properties on the high street.<sup>107</sup>
- 9.5 There was also a need to open empty properties for short term lets such as 'pop up' shops, art installations, theatre groups, and shared premises to enable independents to invigorate the high street.
- 9.6 The BID Manager expressed a view that to facilitate a more productive high street it maybe necessary to lobby government to change planning laws on the class use of premises.
- 9.7 The FSB Development Manager confirmed that the council's planning department needed to ensure a balanced retail offer and restrict multiples as it kills the unique shopping experience.<sup>108</sup>
- 9.8 The former Town Centre Manager believed that the city would need to reinvent itself and change retail accordingly. For example the potential for small new businesses to open as a cooperative in one site.
- 9.9 The Head of Planning & Pubic Protection said that supermarkets did not always need planning permission to occupy existing shops. The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order does not distinguish between the different types of A1 shops. (A1 shops are defined as shops, hairdressers, undertakers, sandwich bars, dry cleaners; A2

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<sup>107</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>108</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

financial and professional services: banks, estate agents, employment services; A3 restaurants and cafes; A4 pubs and bars; and A5 hot food takeaways, drinking establishments etc.).

The Order also takes no account of their ownership or their leasing arrangements. This means that multiples can open in any empty A1 site. A Class Use Order does not control the mix of A1 units nor the balance between independent shops and multiple stores.

- 9.10 The Head of Planning & Public Protection confirmed that regulations currently cannot support independent retailers by preventing larger stores locating to an area. Multiples requesting to take over an empty property cannot be rejected by the council. In some cases where this has happened, multiples with strong legal representation had taken applications to appeal and had won. The Planning Service has to remain neutral when applications are made and look at the use class of the property rather than who the retailer was - for example Starbucks in Kempton.
- 9.11 The Head of Planning & Public Protection confirmed that changes to regulations were needed to enable empty shops to be used more creatively. If there was insufficient regulation then the council should lobby central government for a change to the use class order to allow councils to change former premises to more creative units.
- 9.12 The Head of Planning & Public Protection confirmed that with the introduction of the Localism Bill, neighbourhood planning presents an opportunity for a greater understanding of the character of areas, and to link it to an overall strategy for the city in the form of the City Plan.
- 9.13 Currently the Use Class Order is designed to protect the high street by having a proportion of properties that are A1-A5. This is done to protect retailers by giving them a good mixture of restaurants, cafes, pubs, banks and shops. It is not possible to swap the use class of vacant properties in order to protect the high street from being overly dominated by a single class of property. The Localism Bill would give councils the flexibility they needed to change areas according to their needs or uses, thus enabling councils to promote the character of different shopping areas.
- 9.14 Both the Chief Executive of the Business Forum and a commercial agent expressed the view that if larger stores decide to have “showroom” style shops, in order to showcase their on-line presence, these stores may require smaller premises and may want to move into the better secondary locations. The pace of such developments was dependent on improvements to home delivery.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> CE Business Forum, 6/3/2012, and Graves Jenkins, private meeting



- 9.15 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum submitted information suggesting that “...while the city has avoided the “Clone Town” similarity of other locations, it has lost some of the quirks and diversity evident in the 1990s that made it stand out. “
- 9.16 “There is a case for reviewing the default use class of ground floor developments in the city centre and also for reviewing the existing use class of retail units in streets that have a high vacancy rate e.g. Preston Street. Would a change of use from A1 shops or A3 (restaurants) to B1 (office) for some long- term empty units attract tenants that would bring footfall to the street to avoid the dead frontages of empty units? Could this provide inexpensive accommodation for the creative industries sector?
- There was no requirement for more small shop units but they are normally added to new developments as part of the planning process because it is felt that retail at ground floor level adds a sense of security to the street scene”.*<sup>110</sup>
- 9.17 Further evidence suggested that the council could help support retailers if there were more resources to process planning applications. This is because there was concern at the length of time these applications took to complete. Potential retailers who were planning to share premises were normally unaware that it would take three months to change the class use of a property to a retail usage.<sup>111</sup>
- 9.18 Evidence from the council questioned whether there were unreasonable delays within the system, which by its very nature had to follow a well defined decision-making process.
- 9.19 There was a debate regarding the danger of rapid changes of use as economies fluctuate. For example, during a recession office buildings can stand empty for periods of time. However rapidly turning such property into accommodation or retail space makes it harder for businesses to start up once the economy picks up; as such some regulation of use is required and of benefit.
- 9.20 The Director of Metamorphosis highlighted that 70% of people worked and spent their time, in town centres. A mix of services could therefore really invigorate an area – for example post offices, dentists, nurseries could all be successfully located within city centres. Equally, other key city components needed to be identified so it was important to have the right mix of services, shops, entertainment, restaurants and bars.<sup>112</sup>

**Other evidence:**

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<sup>110</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

<sup>111</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

<sup>112</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012 and Tesco, private meeting

*“Stop allowing supermarkets and large chains to open, it ruins the character ...”*

*“Protect independent and local businesses. Put a stop to supermarkets spouting like weeds at every corner...”*

*“Find a way to stop supermarkets opening stores everywhere ....It costs a fortune to live, drive, socialise etc. in Brighton and we all put up with cost because the city has so much character but now I pass 4 Sainsbury’s and 3 Tesco stores on my way to work, it’s getting depressingly like much cheaper high streets out there”*

- 9.21 A review carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government <sup>113</sup> showed that planning processes could be shortened. The planning service should consider investigating such a study if they had not done so already.
- 9.22 The panel had heard how multiples would pay more for their properties as they could generate an increase in footfall due to brand recognition. This had a knock on effect to retailers in that landlords would use the location or site of the multiple to increase rents of independents in the same vicinity. The panel wondered if it would be possible for the council’s Planning and Property Services to work together with landlords to reduce the potential impact of increased rents to independents? This maybe a complex process but would support retailers with one of their most significant costs.

### **Summary**

- 9.23 A number of witnesses felt that the ability to rapidly change the class-use of a building would be advantageous for businesses. It was however pointed out that this could also have a negative impact on an area. The panel felt that consideration should be given to ensure that sufficient flexibility is built into the system to rapidly allow suitable start-up businesses to move into premises, even if this meant a change of use. <sup>114</sup>
- 9.24 The council need to investigate ways that the Localism Act could be used to prevent further multiples moving into the high street to preserve the character of that area.
- 9.25 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

### **Recommendation 10**

**The Council should explore planning options to exploit new ‘localism’ powers to support retailers through increased flexibility and responsiveness.**

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<sup>113</sup> [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/kpr/kpr\\_final-report.pdf](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/kpr/kpr_final-report.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> Graves Jenkins, private meeting

## 10. Street Markets

- 10.1 The Portas Review spoke highly of street markets and how they drew in a regular weekly crowd, created a vibrant atmosphere and encouraged people to stay longer.<sup>115</sup> The following recommendations refer to street markets:
- Establish a new “National Market Day” where budding shopkeepers can try their hand at operating a low-cost retail business
  - Make it easier for people to become market traders by removing unnecessary regulations so that anyone can trade on the high street unless there is a valid reason why not
- 10.2 The panel heard a number of contradictory views on street markets to the extent it became known as the ‘marmite’ issue.
- 10.3 Preston Street in Brighton had a high desire to have a Preston Street Food Festival. The council insisted that 75% of residents and businesses must be in favour of the street market, before it could be considered. The BID Manager believed that involvement from retailers was crucial, and the council should offer retailers free pitches as they already paid business rates, thus working in partnership.<sup>116</sup>
- 10.4 The Red Bed Company, Portland Road expressed a view that a weekend market would help attract more shoppers to the area.<sup>117</sup>
- 10.5 Suggestions from the FSB, Development Manager highlighted that markets needed to complement businesses, be of a high quality and that street entertainment should also be considered. It was important that the street markets were diverse and that the council worked collaboratively with these markets to showcase fledgling retail.
- 10.6 The owner of the Guarana Company told the panel how his business had evolved from London markets and festivals. Markets were a diluted retail offer and were the ideal place to trial a new business.
- 10.7 At weekends when Sydney Street was pedestrianised traders brought out their stock onto street stalls. This had a positive impact for both traders and customers<sup>118</sup> and created a market style atmosphere.
- 10.8 The former City Centre Manager believed that the food festival was a successful market.

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<sup>115</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

<sup>116</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>117</sup> Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

<sup>118</sup> The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012

- 10.9 Upper Gardner Street was also considered to be a successful market which sold merchandise that complemented the retailers in that area.<sup>119</sup> This street was predominantly residential and warehouse properties. No retailers were located on this street.
- 10.10 There were also a number of businesses opposed to street markets, most notably traders from Sydney Street, Brighton and George Street, Hove.<sup>120</sup>
- 10.11 Evidence highlighted that the Food Festival had had a negative impact, on existing food retailers in the North Laine area resulting in a 53% decline in takings on the previous year, for that Saturday. The stalls in the Food Festival provided direct competition to those trading in the North Laine. It was felt by some retailers that this amounted to unfair competition.<sup>121</sup>
- 10.12 The owner of Willow identified that in October 2010 a farmers' market had started in George Street. However the council only had powers to licence traders and markets and could not limit the goods on sale in the market. It therefore did not have powers to intervene in the operation of the market. The result was that different stalls opened, which were not part of the original remit, selling the same merchandise as retailers already in the area but cheaper due to their smaller overheads. Retailers' takings decreased significantly on those days the market was in operation.
- 10.13 It was suggested that the George Street market and the French markets were both unsuccessful as they either took footfall away from traders or competed against existing traders.<sup>122</sup>
- 10.14 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum identified how *“street markets could be controversial, in that they attracted large crowds and enhanced the street scene but retailers often resent them because they disrupt trade and compete against bricks-and-mortar outlets that attract the footfall that makes the location attractive to stall holder in the first place. There is often feeling that stall-holders “ride on the coat-tails” of permanent retailers without giving enough in return”*.<sup>123</sup>
- 10.15 The panel also heard that in general market traders should not sell goods which compete with existing retailers, should locate where access to traders was not impeded, have high calibre stalls which add to the street scene, be professionally managed and rigorously enforced as some stall holders would exceed their licence conditions if allowed. It was important to draw up detailed guidelines and if stall holders did

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<sup>119</sup> Willow, 27/2/2012

<sup>120</sup> BID, 27/2/2012

<sup>121</sup> Temptation Café (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>122</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

<sup>123</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

not agree to these, then they would be prohibited from opening a stall.  
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### **Food Festival**

- 10.16 The former City Centre Manager expressed the view that there should be more support for initiatives like the Food Festival (which was run by volunteers) and home grown arts festivals. The Food Festival on New Road brought in 40,000 people over the weekend and a cost of £1600 for the use of council land. It was suggested that the council should be paying for the event.

### **Other evidence**

- 10.17 *“Themed event markets (i.e. Food Market/Chili Festival/Chocolate Festival etc.) are good, but too expensive for locals to trade at, with little or no profit achievable due to expenses and variables such as the weather.”*

*“Markets should be contained to the New Road area away from the shops to avoid taking business from the permanent retailers”.*

*In reference to the Food festival – “Always happy to talk with any local food business as to how they can become successfully involved with the festival and make a worthwhile return.”*

*From the food festival’s perspective, it never fails to amaze me how little support ...we receive from our city council in terms of supporting and promoting small growers, producers and restaurants. Food festivals across the UK are at the heart of local authority economic development policies whereas here we appear to be little more than an inconvenience to the council.*

- 10.18 The Head of Regulatory Services advised that poor regulatory delivery can hinder businesses so it was important that the council’s enforcement policy included targeting non-compliance, transparency and consistency.
- 10.19 The city’s street trading policy was reviewed in 2008. Currently, New Road held themed street markets and Upper Gardner Street had a weekly Saturday market.
- 10.20 The council cannot restrict the type of goods within any markets. Complaints were raised by George Street businesses that the monthly farmers’ market variety of goods had increased, which meant that they were in direct competition with the George Street retailers.
- 10.21 A charge for a stall at a farmers market was £252 pa. Or £34 per stall per occasion, which mainly covered administration costs.

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<sup>124</sup> CE, Business Forum - 6/3/2012 Agenda

10.22 Successful farmers' markets worked when they were part of an established circuit of cities such as Chichester and Portsmouth. The George Street market had suffered from not being part of this circuit.<sup>125</sup>

### **Summary**

10.23 Street markets had a "marmite" effect in Brighton & Hove. Sufficient evidence was provided of negative experiences and that the key to a successful market was stringent management. With current and possibly future legislation not giving powers to the council to manage street markets, it would fall upon retailers or a market manager to carry this out.

10.24 It was important that retailers needed to be involved in the setting up and scrutinising of the market to ensure that their livelihoods were well protected. Some successful markets had full time volunteers operating them as it was a time consuming venture. If retailers wanted to consider opening a market it maybe best to contact the council for some initial advice, or talk to successful weekly markets like Upper Gardner Street.

10.25 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

### **Recommendation 11**

**Street markets should be developed only where they are supported by a majority of local retailers. Street trading controls cannot regulate the goods for sale so great care must be given to decisions permitting new street markets. Existing retailers need to be protected from stalls obstructing shop entrances. The Council should lobby government for increased powers to regulate street markets.**

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<sup>125</sup> Head of Regulatory Services, 1/3/2012

## 11. Marketing of our Retail Offer

- 11.1 A number of retailers said that they felt they were the poor relations when it came to advertising what Brighton and Hove has to offer and that the city wasn't maximising the opportunity its unique retail offer presented.
- 11.2 Witnesses spoke to the panel about what an exciting retail experience the city has to offer. That Brighton & Hove was an area that once found by shoppers and visitors it would be revisited, due to its independent stores and atmosphere. Independents told the panel they didn't always feel that the retail sector was marketed to its full potential.<sup>126</sup>
- 11.3 The Red Bed Company and others expressed a view to the panel that there was the potential to advertise independents and their retail areas at bus stops, the railway station and car parks.<sup>127</sup>
- 11.4 The FSB Development Manager suggested creating joint on-line promotional offers loyalty scheme to attract shoppers.<sup>128</sup>
- 11.5 The panel heard from the former City Centre Manager who advised that the main promotional VisitBrighton website was predominantly funded by hotels and city attractions. The website then focussed its efforts on promoting those businesses that funded it. The council's tourism website used the VisitBrighton weblink to promote the city.<sup>129</sup>
- 11.6 VisitBrighton is the official tourism organisation for the city. It has links to the national and regional tourism organisations. VisitBrighton supports over 18,000 actual jobs in the city and is worth more than £700m to the local economy.
- 11.7 The two official Visitor Information Points are at Brighton Toy & Model Museum and Brighton Pier.
- 11.8 VisitBrighton.com receives over 1.5m unique visitors to the site each year and holds the number 1 ranking position on search engines (including Google) for a multitude of key search terms.
- 11.9 It was suggested that the current iPhone app – a mini guide to the city, was overpriced at £1.99 and that a free to download app would provide visitors with information on city attractions and the location of specific shops. They could search such an app for specific types of shop, such as shoe shops, and then be directed to all shops selling relevant products.

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<sup>126</sup> Temptations Café , (NLTA), 27/2/2012

<sup>127</sup> BID, Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012 and TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>128</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>129</sup> Former City Centre Manager, 1/3/2012

- 11.10 The Director of Metamorphosis believed that creative projects like “Dress for Success” raised a collective awareness with the publicity and exposure it generated, for example 1000 people participated in the competition to vote for winners. This was an excellent way of getting shoppers to visit stores.<sup>130</sup>
- 11.11 There was already a lot of good work being done to advertise the city’s retail sector. For example the *Time Out* Christmas publication highlighted that Brighton & Hove was an ideal Christmas gifts shopping destination.<sup>131</sup> The council should continue to market the city in national newspapers and on the radio. It would be useful to build on this and ensure that other areas of Brighton & Hove are promoted in the same way, through the use of social media and QR codes. This would help support independent retailers.
- 11.12 VisitBrighton commented that they undertook marketing for the whole city and that the unique retail offer was a fundamental part of the wider tourism economy. The equivalent value of advertising exceeds £2.5m per annum. This included undertaking significant amounts of PR and media work on behalf of the city, which included celebrating and showcasing the city’s retail offer. Over a hundred press trips are conducted each year and one of the aims of almost every one of these events is to ensure that journalists explore the key retail offer.
- 11.13 VisitBrighton produces the official city map for visitors to the city. This was redesigned this year to ensure that the main shopping streets were highlighted for visitors and included within the Welcome panel of the map. Additionally the map includes a list of all VisitBrighton partners, including retailers. For 2012 the front cover of the map features an image of one of the main shopping streets in the North Laine.
- 11.14 VisitBrighton confirmed that they offered the facility for any Partner business to post special offers and discounts on its website for visitors. Additionally the website runs a Partnership scheme for businesses which affords specific promotional opportunities for those who wish to participate (tourism is not a statutory requirement of the authority). The Partnership scheme generates income of approximately £125K each year. The pricing of the Partnership scheme is structured to enable participation by all sizes and types of business.
- 11.15 The Partnership structure meant that larger businesses paid more than smaller ones. This did not mean that the retail sector was marketed less than the sectors who paid more. It was felt that this system was right, and fair, so that those who contributed to VisitBrighton’s work were able to benefit directly from it.

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<sup>130</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>131</sup> The Guarana Company, 1/3/2012



- 11.16 The income generated via the Partnership scheme is ring-fenced and reinvested back into the marketing of the city, including press and PR, and web development. Whilst the majority of the funding comes from accommodation and attraction partners (due to the size and nature of those businesses), the retail businesses feature in the same way as other larger sectors. There is a dedicated shopping section on the site – which is the third most popular section of the site. This section covers all areas of the city including The Lanes, North Laine, Churchill Square, Hove and Kemptown among others. The website also provides links to trading association sites such as the North Laine Traders’ Association and the Hove Business Association.
- 11.17 The total marketing budget for VisitBrighton (including Partnership fees) is less than £200K pa and is reducing year on year. This budget covers every aspect of marketing the city, including press and PR, leisure and business, UK and international, on-line and offline and trade development. The marketing budget for Brighton & Hove is far less than most other UK destinations of similar stature and importance.
- 11.18 The VisitBrighton website contains over 1,500 pages of content. The website endeavours to ensure that the accuracy of information held within the site is as up to date as possible and to respond positively and speedily to feedback regarding out of date information. The information is provided directly by Partners, which means that the website is reliant on those businesses to provide accurate and inspiring details for the site. Partner information is updated annually as a matter of course, but there is also the opportunity for businesses to update their information at any time.
- 11.19 The initial development of the iPhone app, meant that a charging structure had to be introduced which was comparable to similar apps across the UK. It is hoped that the VisitBrighton app will be made free of charge from this summer 2012. At the same time a free android app will also be launched. Without the revenue to offset the costs of development, VisitBrighton would not have been able to launch the app.
- 11.20 In addition to the iPhone app, VisitBrighton has also launched an interactive video map which includes seven videos of different areas of the city.
- 11.21 Further retail promotions offered by VisitBrighton include the introduction of the “Shopping Showcase”, the involvement in the Dress for Success campaign and funding of the Time Out Christmas publication.
- 11.22 The panel heard that one of VisitBrighton’s objectives is to ensure that all areas of the city are represented. Core funding for development work is challenging which means that the Partnership fees allow the

company to continue to market the city both nationally and internationally.

- 11.23 Feedback data from web users of the site shows that 86% of visitors in 2011 rated the site 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of being up to date, and 88% rated the site as 'excellent' or 'very good' in terms of its overall impression of the city.

### **Summary**

- 11.24 More needs to be made of the city as a destination for a unique shopping experience. Traders and VisitBrighton could work more collaboratively in the further promotion of the city's retail offer.
- 11.25 The panel heard how the VisitBrighton website for Hove needed updating and that Brighton retailers were presented in more detail.<sup>132</sup> It was felt that VisitBrighton should check their website was up to date and ensure that retailers were represented and promoted from all areas of the city. Retailers also need to take responsibility in ensuring the website is promoted with accurate information.
- 11.26 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

### **Recommendation 12**

**The marketing of Brighton and Hove needs to ensure that it makes the most of its retail offer. Retailers felt that they were often the poor relation on many marketing campaigns.**

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<sup>132</sup> TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

## 12. Retail Quarters

- 12.1 Evidence showed that traders were keen to promote and form retail quarters in different areas of the city. The idea being that creating a unique marketable identity can greatly aid promotion.
- 12.2 Identifying retail quarters could have benefits to small independents; the quarters could develop their own individual identity and atmosphere or have specialist retail stores. Successful areas like the Lanes, North Laine, and Kemptown were very well established already. Other areas however could benefit from being seen as distinct shopping quarters, perhaps creating specific retail offers or differentiating their area in some manner.
- 12.3 The panel heard evidence from the Red Bed Company how Portland Road could be identified as a retail quarter to help promote the independents in that area.<sup>133</sup>
- 12.4 The FSB Development Manager expressed a view that by forming retail quarters or zones, these could form virtual communities, and these partnership groups could form their own arrangements, invest and revitalise the infrastructure of the quarter, creating mentoring and support advice for retailers in that zone.<sup>134</sup>
- 12.5 The Director of Metamorphosis told the panel that a bold retail vision, promoting the same style shops was needed to promote shopping zones. Large 'multiples' used this principle to predict the future of retail.<sup>135</sup>
- 12.6 The panel heard how 'multiples' could support urban villages; which had a different feel to city centre high streets. 'Multiples' could play a key role in these types of development and could be used as advice and support hubs.<sup>136</sup>
- 12.7 A suggestion heard by the panel was that the retail quarters could be identified by hanging colour coded banners from the street lights.<sup>137</sup> Much in the same way as the city has been promoted during the Council of Europe event.

### **Other suggestions received:**

- 12.8 *Recently it's been suggested that not having a particular name/ identity like other parts of Brighton such as: North Laine, Kemp Town, Hanover etc, does not help the Preston street and Western Rd area, nor does it attract people here. It has been discovered that this area was once*

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<sup>133</sup> Red Bed Company, 27/2/2012

<sup>134</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>135</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>136</sup> Tesco, private meeting

<sup>137</sup> Willow, 27/2/2012

*called **West Laine**. North Laine was renamed North Laine when it became a conservation area. The proposal is to revert this area back to its original name "West Laine"*

**Summary**

- 12.9 The council should investigate and consult with retailers in various areas of the city on what benefits retail quarters could bring. How would these areas have differentiating character from one another? Could colour coded street lamp banners be used to identify them?
- 12.10 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend the following:

**Recommendation 13**

**The benefits of retail quarters should be investigated further as a means for promoting different areas of the city and providing them with additional support.**

## 13. On-line Retail

- 13.1 The nature of retail is changing with more and more transactions taking place on-line. The panel were given evidence showing that to flourish retailers needed to embrace and integrate this with their businesses.
- 13.2 Anecdotal evidence suggested that some smaller retailers had moved away from having a physical presence and purely existed on-line. Witnesses felt there was an opportunity to harness both.<sup>138</sup>
- 13.3 TN Lawrence and Son confirmed that the internet had rapidly changed his arts supplies business, as on-line transactions were now exceeding shop sales.<sup>139</sup>
- 13.4 Tesco's also agreed that independents should have an on-line presence due to the increase in internet shopping. On-line companies such as iTunes and Amazon have had a big impact on the high street by successfully competing against high street stores like HMV and Borders (by bringing them into administration).
- 13.5 The Chief Executive of the Business Forum believed that consumers now could have better or equal product knowledge as sales staff due to sourcing information on the internet. The only way retailers could tackle this was by investing in staff. It was felt that small independents tended to be thrifty in investing in both IT and staff.
- 13.6 The view was prevalent that independents need to improve their internet presence to complement their premises. 14% of all purchases were now on-line which will increase annually. The "clicks and mortar" business model<sup>140</sup> was of significant importance as on-line sales could compensate for declining city centre footfall. Thoughts were that the combination of the internet and home delivery could transform bricks and mortar shops (premises or store) turning these into showrooms with minimal stock holding on site.
- 13.7 Further evidence was that independents should embrace e-commerce opportunities and develop smartphone apps to promote their products. The panel wondered whether Wired Sussex and/or the Chamber of Commerce could train businesses to understand the advantages of such potential sales revenue and to execute this.<sup>141</sup>
- 13.8 Tesco said that their "click & collect" scheme (which customers used to collect on-line goods in-store) was still preferred by some shoppers.

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<sup>138</sup> BID Manager, 27/2/2012

<sup>139</sup> TN Lawrence & Son Ltd., 6/3/2012

<sup>140</sup> "...a company integrates both offline (bricks) and on-line (clicks) presences". Customers can order on-line or in store and get it delivered to the store or to their home. There varying combinations to this. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricks\\_and\\_clicks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricks_and_clicks)

<sup>141</sup> CE, Business Forum - Agenda 6/3/2012 & Graves Jenkins, private meeting

- 13.9 The Director of Metamorphosis was adamant that independent retailers required an on-line presence, but that they often lacked the capacity and expertise to develop this alongside their existing shop(s). Support for this should be offered through trade associations or the council.<sup>142</sup>
- 13.10 It was suggested that retailers could pool together funding to develop an area based on-line presence, advertise offers and market loyalty schemes.<sup>143</sup> These could be linked into existing sites such as VisitBrighton. However this would limit individual brand development.
- 13.11 Retailers also needed to engage with Twitter and Facebook to utilise the potential of social media. There were many good examples of viral media campaigns being utilised to sell specific products or brands.
- 13.12 A report from the Work Foundation<sup>144</sup> has suggested that retail (after hospitality) has second highest under-utilisation of skills in any sector. Figures from the report are that 45% of sales staff are reported to be over skilled and 57% are over qualified. This has a profound effect on innovation in the sector. Utilising these untapped skills could make retailers more competitive, productive and secure.
- 13.13 The panel wondered whether retailers could commission university students to design a webpage for a more competitive fee?

### **Summary**

- 13.14 There was plenty of evidence that independents needed an on-line presence to have a more competitive edge on the high street. Once again the issue of capacity to undertake this support could not be resolved by the panel, but should be considered in the round as discussions on wider support to the retailer sector were considered.
- 13.15 A suggestion was made that the council could best offer tutorials to independents who wanted an on-line presence.<sup>145</sup>
- 13.16 After all the evidence heard the panel decided to recommend that:

### **Recommendation 14**

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<sup>142</sup> Metamorphosis, 6/3/2012

<sup>143</sup> FSB, 27/2/2012

<sup>144</sup> page 17

[http://www.theworkfoundation.com/DownloadPublication/Report/307\\_Skills%20Dilemma.pdf](http://www.theworkfoundation.com/DownloadPublication/Report/307_Skills%20Dilemma.pdf)

<sup>145</sup> Tesco, private meeting

**The need for an on-line presence for independent retailers is clear; support is needed to ensure that the capacity to develop this exists.**

## 14. “Chuggers”

- 14.1 The Argus on the 24 May, 2012 reported that businesses were complaining that groups of charity fundraisers with their clipboards (known as charity muggers - “chuggers”) were deterring customers. The panel had finished their evidence gathering sessions however the Chair of the panel felt that this information should be reported.
- 14.2 The article referred to traders saying that chuggers were hanging around outside stores and blocking shop entrances. In one case a trader blamed that its stores worst day of trading for 17 years was due to chuggers hanging around outside the store.
- 14.3 At present there was no legislation that could prohibit charities from fundraising on the high street. The BID Manager was consulting with Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) to see what agreements could be put in place to reduce the negative impact chuggers have on businesses.
- 14.4 Traders were asked to give their views. Any plans agreed would have a six monthly review period. The PFRA could put sanctions on charities that do not adhere to the proposals.
- 14.5 There was no evidence heard from the panel’s evidence gathering sessions about this issue and therefore this was not a recommendation. It was still apparent though that retailers needed support on how to take this issue forward. Was the council or/and the Chamber of Commerce were best placed to represent traders who fall outside the BID to help them deal with such issues?



## 15. Conclusion

- 15.1 This scrutiny panel was instigated to progress the outstanding issues raised at the Streets Ahead event in 2011. It has sought to listen to the views and retailers and suggest positive solutions to the issues they have raised.
- 15.2 Brighton and Hove has a unique retail offer, which despite genuine challenges has proved very resilient to the recent economic turbulence. Many of the issues facing the retail sector in the city are being faced by retailers across the country; competition from multiples, changing shopping habits and the growth of on-line retail.
- 15.3 Of all the issues raised by retailers the cost of parking was the most emotive and also one of the areas where the council has considerable control over. Genuine concerns that shoppers would go elsewhere, were repeatedly raised.
- 15.4 Retailers requested more responsive and flexible parking arrangements and asked for consideration to be given to a park and ride.
- 15.5 Retailers also repeatedly raised the need for greater flexibility with rents and short-term leases. Rent reviews were problematic for most independents. Empty shop premises were not good for trade or tourism and the consideration of “pop ups.
- 15.6 At the heart of many of the issues explored in this report is an unresolved debate as to how far the council should seek to directly support different business sectors. Many of the challenges identified by retailers require some form of support and/or coordination which will involve resourcing. Support requested was for handling rent reviews, having an on-line presence, to trading standards. This support needs to be sustainable and it is essential that a clear message is given to retailers as to where they can seek this relevant support from, whether it be from the Chamber of Commerce, BID, the Council, Trading Associations or even multiples.
- 15.7 Further issues raised were improvements to the Station Gateway, encouraging multiples to support independents, changing the use of premises, fairer representation of retailers on the city’s marketing website, the promotion of other retail quarters and the limited regulatory controls for street markets.
- 15.8 A number of the panel’s recommendations relate to issues already being taken forward through substantial pieces of work, for example the Station Gateway Project and the extension of Churchill Square shopping centre, all within the City Plan. Evidence heard by the panel should be submitted to these relevant city projects.

- 15.9 The panel agreed 14 recommendations to address the issues raised by retailers and retail experts.
- 15.10 Finally the panel would like to thank all the witnesses, retail experts, council officers and partners for their time into this scrutiny.

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 8

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>New Governance Arrangements and the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16 July 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director Resources</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Name: Tom Hook	Tel: 29-1110	
	E-mail: Tom.Hook @brighton-hove.gov.uk		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report describes the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the new constitutional arrangements. It refers to Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.
- 1.2 The report references the report on the updated New Constitution for Brighton & Hove City Council which was approved by Special Council on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) note the role of the OSC.

#### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### Constitutional powers of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 3.1 The new Constitution confirms that Overview and Scrutiny is:

*'...an important element of the Council's Constitution...[and] concerned with the overall well being of the City and all factors affecting this including not only Council services but those of other agencies (with a particular statutory role in respect of health services).'*

3.2 The table below shows the membership and functions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Panels they can establish, as outlined in the Constitution agreed on 26 April 2012.

Name of Committee	Membership	Functions
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 Members of the Authority  Cllrs Morgan, Cox, Buckley, Follet, Hawtree, Brown, K. Norman, Farrow, Marsh Plus one tba	This Committee discharges on behalf of the Council all overview and scrutiny functions, except those delegated to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It considers requests for scrutiny reviews and establishes policy review and scrutiny review Panels to undertake task and finish work. It is the Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of the Police and Justice Act 2006. It also undertakes scrutiny of flood risk and coastal erosion plans as required by Localism Act 2011.
<b>Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	8 Members of the authority plus 3 non voting cooptees and voting education cooptees where these are required by legislation	This Committee discharges on behalf of the Council all overview and scrutiny functions in relation to health, children and young people (including education) and adult social care.
<b>Scrutiny Review Panels and Policy Review Panels</b>	As determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has power to set up Scrutiny or Policy Panels. Each Panel meets until it has produced a report on the subject it was required to examine.

3.3 The Constitution then goes on to describe in greater detail the work of the OSC, including that it will:

- meet on a quarterly basis
- primarily be a commissioning body, co-ordinating the O&S work programme through the establishment of panels
- undertake limited direct scrutiny of services relating to Place, Communities, Resources and Finances
- report annually to full Council on its workings

- have the power to call-in and review decisions made but not yet implemented by a Policy Committee
  - set its own work programme
  - determine whether to accept a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) referral
- 3.4 For information only for OSC Members, the Constitution also describes in greater detail the work of the HWOSC, including that it will:
- meet 6 times per annum
  - establish panels in relation to its terms of reference to scrutinise specific issues and undertake policy development work
  - have the power to call-in and review decisions made but not yet implemented by a Policy Committee
  - set its own work programme
  - determine whether to accept a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) referral

### **Role of Overview and Scrutiny in the new Committee System**

- 3.5 The establishment of Policy Committees now means that there are now forums to carry out pre-decision, cross-party, debates. This enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees to focus on commissioning panels which can take an in-depth look at complex issues of importance to the city. This report highlights some of the issues which could be included in the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.6 Panels can be extremely flexible mechanisms through which to address issues. From single day sessions to lengthy investigations they can be moulded to suit the issue and timescale needed.

### **Councillor Call for Action**

- 3.7 The CCfA is an extra means for Councillors, as community leaders, to raise issues of local community concern, for consideration by the Council's overview and scrutiny function, on behalf of residents.
- 3.8 A CCfA should only be raised where other means of resolving the matter have been exhausted. Any Member of the Council may raise a CCfA, which should be sent to the Head of Scrutiny. In seeking to raise a CCfA a Councillor needs to:
- State why they consider the issue should be looked at
  - Give a brief description of what are the main areas of concern
  - Supply evidence in support of the CCfA
  - Indicate areas or groups affected by the CCfA
  - Explain what has been done to try and resolve the issue
  - State if there are any deadlines relating to the issue
- 3.9 Once they receive a CCfA, either HWOSC or OSC will use the following criteria to decide whether or not to take the matter further:

- Have all reasonable attempts have been made to resolve the issue by the ward councillor? Do the responses received by the referring councillor show that progress is not being made with this matter?
  - Has the committee considered a similar issue recently – if yes, have the circumstances or evidence changed?
  - Is there a similar or related issue which is the subject of a review on the current work programme? It may be more appropriate to link the new issue to an existing review, rather than hold a separate CCfA hearing.
  - Relevant time pressures on resolving the CCfA should be taken into account.
  - Have all relevant service areas or partner organisations been informed and been given enough time to resolve the issue? What response has the councillor received?
  - Does the matter referred have the potential for scrutiny to produce recommendations which could realistically be implemented and lead to improvements in the referring member's ward?
  - Is this an issue that would be more properly dealt with in another way e.g. the complaints process
- 3.10 Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees in considering a CCfA may undertake any of the activities of a normal scrutiny committee.
- 3.11 The Councillor only has the power to refer a matter if it is of direct concern to the ward they represent. A Councillor can refer a matter even if nobody has asked him/her to consider it, and there is no requirement for Councillors in multi-member wards to jointly agree – any of them may refer a matter.
- 3.12 It is important to recognise that CCfA is not guaranteed to solve a given problem. However it can provide a method for discussing such problems and, through discussion, trying to overcome them.
- 3.13 The following matters are excluded from referral as a CCfA:
- Individual complaints concerning personal grievances or commercial issues.
  - Any matter relating to an individual or entity where there is already a statutory right to a review or appeal (other than the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman), for example:
    - Planning and licensing applications and appeals;
    - Council Tax/Housing Benefits complaints and queries;
    - Issues currently under dispute in a court of law.
  - Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included on the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of its Panels.

### **Call-in of Policy Committee Decisions**

- 3.14 Call-in is a process by which O&S Committees can recommend that a decision made by a Policy Committee but not yet implemented be reconsidered by the body which made the decision.
- 3.15 Call-in does not provide for the O&S Committee to substitute its own decision, but just to refer the matter back to the decision-maker. A decision maker can only be asked to reconsider any particular decision once.
- 3.16 Call-in should only be used in very exceptional circumstances. Day to day management and operational decisions taken by officers may not be called-in.
- 3.17 Any decision made by the Policy Committee, or a key decision made by an officer under delegated powers may be called in up to five working days from the date of the meeting at which the decision was taken.
- 3.18 During this period, any five Members of the Council, from a minimum of two political groups may request that a decision be called-in for Scrutiny by the relevant O&S Committee.
- 3.19 If the Chief Executive accepts the request then he/she is calling-in the decision. This will mean that the decision will be suspended and the Chief Executive shall inform the decision maker e.g. Committee Members, or officer and the relevant Chief Officer(s) of the call-in.
- 3.20 When deciding whether or not to refer a decision back, the relevant O&S Committee shall consider if:
- any further information which may have become available since the decision was made
  - the implications of any delay; and whether reconsideration is likely to result in a different decision
  - the importance of the matter raised and the extent to which it relates to the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities
  - there is evidence that the decision-making rules in the constitution have been breached
  - the agreed consultation processes have not been followed
  - or that a decision or action proposed or taken is not in accordance with a policy agreed by the Council
  - other avenues may be available to deal with the issue
- 3.21 The O&S Committee may refer the decision back to the decision making body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. If it considers the decision is contrary to the policy framework or budget agreed by the Council, the matter may be referred to the full

Council to determine whether or not it should be referred back to the decision making body.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 New constitutional arrangements were agreed after consultation with Members.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 All scrutiny work will be carried out within current resource limits.

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 None to this report for information.

##### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 None to this report for information.

##### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None to this report for information.

##### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None to this report for information.

##### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 None to this report for information.

##### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 None to this report for information.

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

##### **Documents in Members' Rooms:**

##### **Background Documents:**

1. Brighton & Hove City Council Constitution (report to Council on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012) [http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000117/M00003925/AI00026052/\\$Item08120412Aappendix1shortformconstitution.doc.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000117/M00003925/AI00026052/$Item08120412Aappendix1shortformconstitution.doc.pdf))



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Work Programme</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16 July 2012</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director, Resources</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tom Hook</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-1110
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk">tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report sets out a draft scrutiny work programme for 2012/13 and mechanisms through which to develop it further.
- 1.2 Members are invited to consider a request from the Leader of the Council to undertake further pre-decision scrutiny relating to changes in council tax support and also to agree to take forward the 'Cultural Provision for Older People' piece of work through the Age Friendly City initiative.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That members:
- 2.1.1 Agree the draft work programme (Annex 1).
  - 2.1.2 Note the Budget and Policy Framework items that will need scrutiny prior to decision, and agree to add these to the work programme as they arise (Annex 2).
  - 2.1.3 Agree to consult all members, partner organisations and senior officers for suggestions for scrutiny.
  - 2.1.4 Agree to progress the 'Cultural Provision for Older People' Panel through the WHO Age Friendly City initiative (Annex 3).
  - 2.1.5 Note the request for a scrutiny panel into council tax benefit changes from Cllr Jason Kitcat (Annex 4 & 5) and decide whether to establish such a panel.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Within the new committee system the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mainly to commission pieces of scrutiny work. The role of scrutiny was set in some detail in agenda item 8.
- 3.2 It is suggested that the OSC receives a suite of documents at committee that together should enable members to focus scrutiny resources where they will make most impact. These include:
- City Performance Plan
  - Organisational Health Report
  - Annual complaints data
  - Corporate Plan reports
  - Equalities updates
- 3.3 The work programme for the committee is based upon utilising these reports as the skeleton around which further work is commissioned.

#### **Budget and Policy Framework**

- 3.4 Annex 2 sets out those reports that makeup the budget and policy framework for the council. These are decisions that are reserved for full council due to their importance. Subject to a decision at the Policy and Resources Committee on the 12th July Annex 2 highlights those reports that will have to be directed through scrutiny prior to a decision being taken at council. Members are asked to note these items as they will be added to the work programme at appropriate junctures.

#### **Partnership Approach**

- 3.5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees have for some time been inviting external partners to bring forward issues they would like to see scrutinised. This partnership approach has considerable benefits and has been recognised as good practice nationally. It is therefore recommended that partner organisations are written to inviting suggestions for scrutiny.

#### **Cultural Provision for Older People**

- 3.6 Annex 3 to this report provides members with background to a decision by CTEOSC to undertake a piece of work on cultural provision for older people. It was agreed to begin this piece of work following the completion of the retail sector review (agenda item 7).
- 3.7 Members may be aware that a deputation will be presented to full council later in the week asking the council to sign up to become an Age Friendly City. This is a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative that will result in a number of work streams, through which cultural provision for older people could be addressed.

- 3.8 Rather than have two separate pieces of work being undertaken on very similar topics it is suggested that options for progressing this piece of work are taken forward through the Age Friendly City initiative. It may well be that a scrutiny panel would be the most appropriate vehicle through which to progress it, however it would seem sensible to at least seek a joined up approach to the issue.

### **Council Tax Support**

- 3.9 Annex 5 of this agenda are the draft minutes from the workshop for OSC members on changes to council tax support. Members are asked to note these.
- 3.9 The workshop offered members that chance to question officers regarding changes to council tax support.
- 3.10 The Leader of the Council, Cllr Jason Kitcat, has since the workshop written to ask for further scrutiny work on the issue prior to the Policy and Resources Committee making a final decision on the scheme on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012 (Annex 4).
- 3.11 If members are minded to agree to this request the panel would need to undertake most of its work between the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012 when the consultation closes and the 28<sup>th</sup> September when reports for the Policy and Resources Committee are published. This leaves a fairly tight timescale and as such a single day-long event may well be the most appropriate manner in which to progress the issue. Members may wish to view this as the first part of a larger piece of work that could be undertaken on wider welfare and benefit changes.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

This report seeks member approval to consult with relevant partners and members on the future scrutiny work programme.

## **5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

All scrutiny work will be carried out within existing budgets. When developing the scrutiny work programme members need to be mindful of the resource implications of each piece of work.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **5.3 Equalities Implications**

The council's Equality & Inclusion Policy will be considered by overview & scrutiny prior to submission to Full Council for approval. This report recommends regular equalities monitoring.

#### 5.4 Sustainability Implications

The proposed process requires the council's Sustainability Policy to be considered by overview and scrutiny, prior to submission to Full Council for approval.

#### 5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

OSC is designated as the council's crime and disorder scrutiny committee.

The proposed process requires the council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy to be considered by overview & scrutiny and the Policy & Resources Committee prior to submission to Full Council for approval.

#### 5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

The involvement by overview & scrutiny in the council's budget formulation process and in a number of key plans and strategies reduces the risk of subsequent disagreement and challenge.

#### 5.7 Public Health Implications

None arising directly from this report.

#### 5.8 Corporate / citywide Implications

OSC should be seeking a balanced work-programme that addresses important issues for the city.

### **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 Members are being presented with a number of options as to how they wish to utilise scrutiny resources.

### **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 OSC needs to agree a work programme, recommendations within the report represent good practice developing such a programme.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Annex 1	Draft work programme
Annex 2	Budget & Policy Framework items
Annex 3	CTEOSC report and minutes re Cultural Provision for Older People
Annex 4	Scrutiny request from Cllr Kitcat
Annex 5	Council Tax support workshop

## Annex 1 – Draft OSC Work Programme

Issue	Responsible Officer	Overview & Scrutiny Activity
26 <sup>th</sup> July 2012		
Equalities Update	Commissioner: Communities & Equality	Noting update. Decision of any areas of interest
Support for the Retail Sector	Head of Scrutiny, BHCC	Agreeing report to go forward to P&R
New constitutional arrangements	Head of Scrutiny, BHCC	Noting
OSC workplan	Head of Scrutiny, BHCC	For agreement
Workshop on Council Tax Reform	Head of Scrutiny, BHCC	Noting
10 <sup>th</sup> September 2012		
Feedback from trawl for ideas	Head of Scrutiny, BHCC	
Presentation by Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	Chair of LSP	
City Performance Plan and Organisational Health Report	Head of Analysis and Performance, BHCC	
Budget Scrutiny Panel	Head of Scrutiny	To establish a scrutiny panel on the budget
Corporate Plan Items		
5 <sup>th</sup> November 2012		
Annual Report of Complaints & Compliments	Standards and Complaints Manager, BHCC	



## Annex 2: Budget and Policy Framework

	<b>Policy/Strategy</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<b>Committee</b>
1.	Budget	Yes	P&R
2	Application to SoS for large scale transfer of housing land	Yes	P&R
3.	Annual Investment Strategy	No	P&R
4.	Statement of Pay Policy	No	P&R
5.	Libraries Plan	No	Econ Dev & Culture
6.	Sustainable Community Strategy	Yes	P&R
7.	Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy	Yes	P&R
8.	Local Transport Plan	Yes	Transport & P&R
9.	Development Plan	Yes	Econ Dev & Culture
10.	Youth Justice Plan	Yes	Children & YP
12.	Statement of Licensing Policy	No	Licensing
13.	Statement of Gambling Policy	No	Licensing
14.	Official feed and food controls service plan	No	Environment & Sustainability
15.	City Employment & Skills Plan	Yes	Econ Dev & Culture
16.	Sustainability Strategy	Yes	Environment & Sustainability and P&R
17.	Corporate Plan	Yes	P&R
18.	Health & Safety Annual service Plan	No	Environment & Sustainability
19.	Equality and Inclusion Policy	Yes	P&R
20.	City Performance Plan	Yes	P&R
22.	Strategy for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers	Yes	Environment & Sustainability
23	Housing Strategy	Yes	Housing
24.	Housing Allocations Policy	Yes	Housing
25	School admissions arrangements	Yes	Children & YP





# CULTURE, TOURISM AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Ad Hoc Panel on Access to Cultural Services for Older People</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> September 2011</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director: Communities</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name: Paula Murray</b>	<b>Tel: 29-2534</b>	
	<b>E-mail: paula.murray@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

## 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 Scrutiny Committees have the ability to respond to proposals to set up Ad Hoc Panels to look into issues as raised either by Committee Members themselves, council officers or members of the public. The Panel will investigate the issue and report back findings and recommendations. A letter was received to the June Committee from Councillor Leigh Farrow requesting that the Committee undertake such an exercise in relation to the accessibility of culture to older people in the city. This report provides some scoping information to enable Committee Members to consider this request and respond.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee make a decision as to whether or not to establish an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to look into access to cultural provision for older people in Brighton and Hove.
- 2.2 That if the Committee decide to proceed with this Ad Hoc Panel, the authority to co-opt a member of the Older People's Council is delegated to the Chair.

## 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 3.1 State of the city statistics

In the recently compiled State of the City report, the headlines in terms of the city's population of older people are as follows:

**Although there is a comparatively small proportion of older people aged 65 or more in the city, we have a relatively high proportion of people aged 85 years or more.** It's estimated 14 per cent of our population (35,900 residents) are aged 65 years or more, three per cent (6,500 residents) are aged 85 or more, and 2,400 are

aged 90 or more. 25 per cent of Rottingdean Coastal ward's population are aged 65 years or more.

**20 per cent of our local areas (33 out of 164) are in the worst 20 per cent of England for income deprivation affecting older people according to the 2010 Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index.** This index measures the percentage of adults aged 60 years or over living in pension guarantee households. 22 per cent (9,300) of our residents aged 60 or more experience income deprivation.

**Our older people report high levels of satisfaction with their homes and local areas.** 86 per cent of older people are satisfied with their home & area, slightly higher than the national average of 84 per cent.

**Older people are more likely to report feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood after dark;** 45 per cent of those aged 75 or more, compared to 23 per cent of all residents.

**It's estimated that we have around 3,000 older people living with dementia,** representing over eight per cent of the population aged 65 or more.

**It's estimated that around 5,000 of our older people are suffering with depression,** that's 14 per cent of the population over 65 years.

**In terms of supporting independence, a high proportion of our older people who are discharged from hospital go back to their own home or into rehabilitation or intermediate care.** In fact 87 per cent of our older people who are discharged from hospital are rehabilitated to live independently three months after discharge.

### 3.2 **Arts and cultural programmes for older people**

In general, the range of cultural programming across the city is very varied and full and much of it accessible. During the Brighton Festival weeks, there was upwards of 100 free events this year and many of them programmed at differing times in the day as well as in the evening for example. Many elements were across the city in different neighbourhoods also.

On a year round basis, there are opportunities that are available at different times of the day, in our libraries and museums for example.

More specifically, some of our organisations are developing work specifically for older people, Fabrica has recently been funded by Arts Council to develop a strand of work with older people, White Night this year will have a particular focus on older people and South East Dance is developing an older people's dance company in the city.

### 3.3 In general terms, access to culture is good in the city, not just for older people, and the take up of opportunities across the board is high. However, the statistics in the State of the City report could guide a useful exercise in a

targeted look at the role that culture could play in response to the trends outlined above in terms of our demographic of older people.

For example, if there is a prevalence of depression identified it might be worth exploring the role cultural organisations could play in providing inclusive volunteering opportunities, or what work is taking place in the city in dealing with dementia, or how much programming is there that takes place during the day, or work with older people to increase confidence and participation.

- 3.3 The newly elected Older People's Council has recently expressed an interest in being involved in a scrutiny panel looking at this issue and have offered their support and involvement.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 There has been consultation in the preparation of this report with senior service area officers, scrutiny officers and the Chair of Scrutiny.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### 5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this scoping report, however, there may be as a result of any Ad Hoc Panel recommendations that may follow if the panel is established.

*Finance Officer consulted: Michelle Herrington*      *Date: 5 September 2011*

##### 5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications as a direct result of this scoping report, however, there may be as a result of any Ad Hoc Panel recommendations that may follow if the panel is established.

*Lawyer consulted: Bob Bruce, Principal Solicitor*      *Date: 5 September 2011*

##### 5.3 Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report itself. The agenda proposed for the Ad Hoc Panel has equalities implications in terms of opportunities for older people. If the Panel goes ahead and there are specific recommendations, there could be positive equalities impacts as a result in terms of older people as a target group

##### 5.4 Sustainability Implications

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report, however, there would be sustainability implications in the development and implementation of any recommendations coming from an Ad Hoc Panel process in terms of financial sustainability.

##### 5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Older people's fear of crime is one of the factors that would influence any subsequent Ad Hoc Panel findings however.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

Any risk or opportunity management implications would be explored in full in the Executive response to the Panel recommendations should it be established and report.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications

The scope of the Ad Hoc Panel outlined above would cover both citywide provision and specific neighbourhood activity.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**None**

**EXTRACT FROM CULTURE, TOURISM & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE 29 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Brown (Chair); C Theobald, Deane, Farrow, Hawtree and Hyde

**PART ONE**

**20 AD HOC PANEL ON ACCESS TO CULTURAL SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

20.1 Paula Murray, Commissioner for Culture, introduced this scoping report which had been produced in response to Councillor Farrow's request to scrutinise this issue. While the availability and accessibility of cultural activities was good in relation to older people, this panel could focus on areas for improvement. The Committee highlighted that according to Age UK, older people were those over 55, and asked for the panel to: consider all forms of culture, make better use of less popular venues and attract residents from outer parts of the city.

**RESOLVED:** the Committee agreed to establish this Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel and co-opt a Member from the Older People's Council.



## **Annex 4 – Request for Scrutiny – Council Tax Support Scheme**

The Leader of the Council Councillor Jason Kitcat has asked OSC to consider the council's proposed scheme in relation to council tax support / benefit changes before they require formal approval in October. The Leader has suggested the panel could benefit from the appointment of an independent Chair.

Officers have briefly scoped what such a panel could look like:

### **Timetable**

The outcome from any Scrutiny Panel would need to report to Policy & Resources scheduled for 11 October.

- Panel established 16<sup>th</sup> July
- Background information and briefings – August
- Consultation closes – 7<sup>th</sup> September
- Publication of P&R papers – 28<sup>th</sup> September
- P&R – 11<sup>th</sup> October

### **Possible Areas of investigation/questioning**

- What the scheme looks like – model being proposed to P&R
- Results of second stage of consultation – the formal consultation on the draft scheme
- Impact and significance of changes on different low income groups – both in work and not in work - including people with protected characteristics, vulnerable groups (Equality Impact Assessment)
- Impact on child poverty & homelessness
- Possible benefits of change e.g. positive incentives, economies of scale, improved processes
- Combined impact of different welfare changes/links to other issues of financial inclusion

### **Anticipated Outcomes of a Scrutiny Review**

Recommendations for improvements to proposed support scheme:

- Mitigating against adverse impacts
- Ensure all impacts understood
- Prioritising advice to those most in need of help

### **Potential Witnesses**

- Current CTB claimants
- Advice agencies
- CVSF
- Credit Union
- Housing Associations





## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workshop - Council Tax Support**

**28 June 2012 at 2pm in KH R431**

**Present;** Cllrs Warren Morgan (Chair), Vanessa Brown, Ruth Buckley, Leigh Farrow and Ken Norman

**Also Present:** Emma Daniel, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF); Catherine Vaughan (CV), Director of Finance; Graham Bourne (GB), John Francis (JF) Tracey Wallace(TW).

**Apologies:** Councillors Graham Cox, Matt Follett, Christopher Hawtree, Mo Marsh

Councillor Warren Morgan Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Officers gave information on Designing a Localised Council Tax (CT) Support Scheme and replied to comments and questions on the main issues.

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Finance Director Catherine Vaughan gave a presentation on Council Tax Support (attached). The level of grant will reduce by over £2.5 million in 2013-2014 compared with 2012-2013. *(This reduction includes the government's planned 10% saving as well as a nationally anticipated reduction in the number of claimants, whereas locally there is a rising trend in claimants. The financial risks are transferring to the Council from government as part of the transfer of responsibility. Changes in the cost of the scheme due to changes in the number of claimants or the level of council tax will become the council's risk. The government grant is expected to be fixed at the time of transfer.)* The long term impact was difficult to estimate though there was some clarity about the position for 2013 – 2014. More accurate information would be available by December; a scheme had to be in place by then.

1.2 Pensioners would be fully protected under the new support scheme, and would receive an equivalent discount as in the existing benefit system, so pensioners would be no better off and no worse off. In answer to a question the workshop heard that Pension Credit was not anticipated to change.

1.3 The average reduction of £145 per year in CT benefit/support for those of working age (either in work or not in work) combined with other changes to household budgets; eg welfare reform, food and fuel bills would have an impact on the finances of vulnerable groups.

1.4 The timescales for introducing the scheme (eg consulting and developing software) were challenging. The earlier proposals were agreed, the more lead-in

time would be possible for testing the scheme, ensuring information is accurate, informing residents, and helping avoid legal challenge. It was likely that some people would be paying council tax for the first time, so collection arrangements and information needed to be clear and easily communicated.

1.5 The government had indicated that local authorities could choose to use Council resources to maintain existing council tax support. However this would mean cuts elsewhere at a time when there were funding reductions in other areas too. Some local authorities were likely to pass on to CTB claimants the full reductions, some may be able to afford to find the full or partial funding from elsewhere.

1.6 It was important that Councillors consider the impact of the 'in-principle' budget choices at an early stage. There would be some degree of flexibility once a scheme had been agreed; however it would not be possible to change the approach.

1.7 Before publishing a draft scheme the Council was obliged to consult with the major precepting authorities – East Sussex Fire and Rescue and Sussex Police. The report was scheduled for Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) on 12 July but the latter had unfortunately not provided a reply.

1.8 The CVSF was undertaking consultations on behalf of the Council. Many advice agencies and the Children and Young People Network were already commenting (see attached) but as yet there had been less representation from other communities of interest; this work is being followed up in the second phase full consultation process. Before a final scheme is submitted to P&R in October, there would be a longer, second period of consultation. At that stage, the implications of the proposals for those affected would be easier to envisage and communicate.

1.9 Separately proposals regarding new powers on Council Tax discounts and exemptions would be considered by July P&R. These would give only modest financial benefits that would not offset changes in Council Tax support.

1.10 Pooling resources with neighbouring local authorities had been ruled out in the current time frame due to different demographics and the complexity of agreeing a single scheme in county areas comprising districts and boroughs. It was hoped to achieve greater consistency in the longer term but meanwhile national advice agencies would need to consider how to give localised advice when each billing area will have different arrangements.

1.11 Extra help and support would be needed by households especially those paying Council Tax for the first time. Providing early advice was a 'win-win' situation; not only in the Authority's interest in terms of collecting council tax, but also in households' interest, to help avoid a spiral of financial difficulty. The earlier a scheme was finalised, the earlier information and advice could be given.

## **2. Designing a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme**

2.1 In reply to a question, CV said implementing the scheme should be fully funded nationally. But technical issues could be more difficult than the government assumes and the Local Government Association was lobbying on behalf of councils.

2.2 GB said the software provider, Northgate, was working constructively and the Council was part of an existing a user group. A flexible set of parameters was being developed that would allow 'pick and mix' options for different authorities. A final test iteration was being planned for October. The software companies would receive a proportion of the national funds allocated to the changes. Later 'add-ons' may be required at hopefully minimal cost to the Council. (Processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit had formerly been done using an integrated Council system, he said.)

2.3 Transitional funding from the Council budget had been identified for consultation and software plus an additional element to provide advice and support to mitigate the impact on those affected. People in need would be helped eg accessing the most appropriate local and national discretionary funds, to get the priorities right and help avoid increases in homelessness and children in care.

2.4 Asked about troubled families in the City, CV told the workshop there was a known link between vulnerability and difficulties in paying Council Tax. JF said that the Council already knew many of the families likely to be adversely affected by the changes.

2.5 Chair of OSC Councillor Morgan emphasised the importance of the right advice for households according to their own priority needs, to avoid duplication and people being referred around to different services.

2.6 CV pointed out that this was a good opportunity to provide joined up advice to the most vulnerable households, though the Social Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments were at a lower level than council tax support.

2.7 GB noted that the most effective way to communicate with many households on these issues was 'face-to-face' or by phone to help prioritise individual needs. Pre-emptive work would be needed to ensure those paying CT for the first time would not fall into arrears. Some families may not use direct debits and costs of CT arrears can often escalate rapidly in a 'lose-lose' situation.

2.8 Regarding government moves towards Universal Credit CV said those payments would have a greater impact on households, typically being the largest part of a recipient's income. Depending on individual circumstances Universal Credit might average around £150 per month compared with £15 CT support. National proposals for these were not yet known and local authorities would have little control over their introduction or administration. It did seem likely that any economies of scale re: council tax support would be lost when Universal credit is introduced, CV stated.

2.9 There were a number of unknowns such as how an CT support appeal process would work and whether local authorities would be responsible for these.

2.10 Turning to the broad approach, CV said that to minimise disruption, it was being suggested that for Year 1, the new scheme would be similar to the existing one, so that only minimal changes are made to entitlement rules and criteria. In this way, the existing CT Benefit information can be more simply rolled over to the new CT Support scheme. This would be less confusing for recipients; mistakes would be less likely and it would be possible to focus more on advising those who had not paid Council Tax before.

2.11 Council Tax support would need to be reviewed annually.

2.12 It was clarified that at Appendix A, description of Option 2; those on 'passporting benefits' would be not be subject to means testing by Councils, but by the Department of Work and Pensions.

2.13 With regards to a query on disincentivising work ie people being better off on benefit rather than at work, the workshop heard that CT support formed only a small part of any possible incentive or disincentive. The potential impact of Universal Credit would be far greater.

2.14 For a younger person accessing employment, it was relatively simple to introduce a device to enable more earned income to be kept. However 'tweaking' the system in this way to protect any particular group, needed to be demonstrably proportionate. Otherwise groups that would 'lose out' as a result may have grounds for legal challenge.

2.15 Asked about officer training, CV explained that recruitment and training in financial inclusion and financial planning, would be scheduled in time to start providing advice in December.

2.16 The Chair welcomed the involvement of the Credit Union. The involvement of many different agencies could be confusing, he felt.

### **3 Results of consultation**

3.1 Emma Daniel, CVSF Policy and Research Manager set out the consultation work that had been commissioned by the Council. This was a short timescale. A draft CVSF feedback report was tabled at the workshop and a full version would be reported to July P&R.

3.2 42 voting members mostly from Advice Services and Children and Young People's Networks had provided input to this part of the consultation. Other communities of interest would be involved more closely at a later stage.

3.3 Officers had given clear information; CVSF feedback showed that the changes had been well explained. It was also well recognised by CVSF that this was a national and not a local decision.

3.4 Child poverty was a key concern, as were younger people (under 35 years old) at the lower end of the benefit scale, and the impact that making additional top up rent payments could have, such as putting food on the table.

3.5 Overall CVSF felt there was no good option, and no scope to incentivise anything. But least worst options could be chosen. There was generally a preference for a mixture of means testing because an income-based approach was seen to be fairest - and maximum payments because of concern for younger working people on low benefits. CVSF had discussed the implications of 'fairness' and felt for instance that a single parent without support for their children should not be treated the same as a single parent in receipt of child maintenance payments.

3.6 ED noted that the 'fairest' choice was not necessarily the 'simplest' or least costly to implement. The Universal Credit announcement would be key.

3.7 CV pointed out it was most important to consider what was the best outcome for different interest groups. Many good ideas were being brought forward and the debate was helping understand the advantages and disadvantages for different households. This would help identify benefits of different elements of proposals.

3.8 Some constructive ideas such as aiming to encourage young people into work, had associated financial risks at this time eg unclear levels of eligibility or potential legal challenge. In her view, implications of the more major changes from the introduction of Universal Credit needed to be known, before making too many early changes to the existing CB Scheme.

3.9 The workshop asked questions about child poverty in families with parents in low income jobs, referring to some 25% of children in the City living in households in receipt of CT Benefit. They asked that Members receive more information on existing caseloads, during the data-gathering process.

3.10 CV highlighted that local authorities would have regard to the changes being made at a national level. However they were not in a position to control or mitigate against them all.

#### **4. EIA**

4.1 TW referred to the draft EIA that was tabled at the workshop; this was being kept updated as information was being brought together. Training for Members was being explored via Democratic Services, she said.

#### **5. Scrutiny Comment**

5.1 The Chair said the Council did have responsibility to deal with the impact of national funding changes, even though it had no control over them, for example in children's services or homelessness. The City had areas of multiple deprivation and some families would feel the impact of a range of changes to and reductions in benefit payments. It was important to provide timely advice for vulnerable households whether in Council properties, housing associations or private rented sector, to help avoid the human and financial costs of crises, the consequences of which the council would ultimately have to deal with.

5.2 Summarising the workshop, the Chair thanked the officers and endorsed CVSF's work on developing a CT Support scheme. He asked that Councillors be kept updated as information became available so that residents' questions could be answered.

5.3 Draft notes of the workshop would go to all OSC Members and be included as an Appendix to the 12 July P&R report.