

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 23 MARCH 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

PART ONE

52. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

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52a Declarations of Substitutes

Councillor Averil Older was acting as substitute for Councillor Geoffrey Wells; Councillor Amy Kennedy was acting as substitute for Councillor Sven Rufus

52b Declarations of Interests

There were none.

52c Declaration of Party Whip

There were none.

52d 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.

53. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

53.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

53.2 RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

54. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

54.1 The Chairman said that the draft London Road Central Masterplan SPD was now scheduled to go to Environment Cabinet Member Meeting for permission to consult on 7 May 2009. Should it be approved the 6-week statutory consultation period would be likely to begin in the week starting 27 May. Therefore it was suggested that there be a joint scrutiny workshop with Culture Tourism and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CTEOSC) at around the mid/end April to consider the proposals, as planned previously.

54.2 The Chairman said that the Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan was also on the agenda for information of CTEOSC on 2 April 2009.

55. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

55.1 There were none.

56. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS/ NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

56.1 This item was heard after Item 57.

56.2 Councillor Amy Kennedy spoke on behalf of Councillor Paul Steedman, who was delayed in attending the Committee. Councillor Steedman requested that the Committee consider carrying out scrutiny on roadworks in the city.

56.3 The Committee agreed that the request could be considered and that it would be best to do so when considering agenda item 65, the ECSOSC Work Plan.

56.4 RESOLVED –that the request for scrutiny on roadworks be considered with the Work Plan agenda item.

57. DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR DEE SIMSON CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, INCLUSION AND INTERNAL RELATIONS

57.1 This item was heard before Item 56.

57.2 Councillor Simson spoke about her role as Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion and Internal Relations, which was a relatively new addition to her portfolio.

57.3 Councillor Simson gave details about a number of developments that had taken place. These included:

- a government initiative to stop violence against women and girls, which held a consultation exercise in the city.
- The first meeting for Local Action Team Chairmen, which had included debates and workshops; consideration was being given to having a shared Terms of Reference for all groups.
- There was a requirement for the local authority to establish a Crime and Disorder scrutiny committee; this may well have an impact on the ECSOSC.
- Overall, crime figures had reduced by 9% in the city, but there was an increase in acquisitive crime and research was being carried out into the reasons and solutions to this

57.4 Councillor Simson was asked whether she would allow the Scrutiny Panel on Older People and Community Safety to complete its work and make recommendations via a full meeting of the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Panel before acting on those recommendations or aspects of the Panel's work. She confirmed that she would.

57.5 Members commented that it was a positive idea to bring all of the Local Action Teams together, as they would all be in different stages of development, and the more established groups would be able to share good practice with the newer teams.

57.6 The Chairman thanked Councillor Simson for her presentation on behalf of the panel.

58. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT QUARTER 3

58.1 The Performance Analyst introduced the report; as much information as possible had been included in the report but not all information was available. For example, data for NI 47 was only available from the Department of Transport on an annual basis.

58.2 Members asked for the list of 26 identified sites mentioned in the action plan to target NI 47; it was agreed that this would be circulated.

58.3 With regard to NI 192/193 – percentage of household waste sent for reuse/ recycling/ composting and percentage of municipal waste landfilled – members queried where the remaining 20% of waste went to. It was explained that this was used to create energy from waste. Energy from Waste is not tracked as a national indicator and is not included within the report as there is no statutory obligation to report on it

58.4 The Chairman thanked the officer for a helpful report and agreed that it would develop into an informative evidence base for the committee to use.

58.5 RESOLVED – (1) that the Committee notes progress against key indicators and (2) that the list of 26 sites in the action plan for NI47 be circulated to Committee Members.

59. PARKING CONTROL

59.1 The Head of Network Management introduced the report and responded to the Committee's questions.

59.2 In response to a query about whether the timetable for parking zones in Appendix D was being adhered to, members heard that it had slipped by approximately three months, due to the procurement process for the consultants.

59.3 In response to comments about consultation and reviews, members heard that each parking scheme was individually consulted on, and not all schemes would necessarily go ahead, depending on the consultation outcome. Schemes were no longer formally reviewed once they had been in place for approximately a year because of the need to direct resources to new areas. However, at least once a year a Traffic Order was advertised which proposes any minor changes requested by members, residents or businesses and investigated by the Parking Strategy Team.

59.4 In response to comments indicating that residents did not like having controlled parking zones, members heard that, in general, schemes were not imposed on residents but that they were considered in areas where residents had asked for them. Controlled parking zones were felt to be the best available option for dealing with the city's parking pressures.

The only situation in which a controlled parking zone might be perceived to be 'imposed' was when roads needed to be included to ensure a practicable and viable scheme. For example, if one road in the middle of a proposed scheme area was not in favour of the scheme but was surrounded by roads that were in favour, in these circumstances it would be impractical for one road to be singled out as not being in the scheme.

The Head of Network Management agreed that controlled parking zones could alter driver behaviour – for example, some people may choose to use alternative transport to an area in a parking scheme – and this means that it can be impossible to predict with accuracy what, if any, displacement may occur. However, schemes can and cause displacement from within a zone to outside it. It was important to make zones a manageable size and to introduce them incrementally.

59.5 Members asked about the possibility of marking individual car spaces. They were told that this had been tried previously but that problems occurred if one car was incorrectly parked, as this meant that all of the other vehicles parked there would also be outside of the markings, and they could all potentially be fined.

59.6 Members asked for an update on the 'light touch' schemes that had been introduced. The Head of Network Management explained that they had been introduced to prevent commuter parking but it was found that it led to greater vehicle displacement. In addition, the parking conditions had a negative impact on local businesses who relied on customers being able to park.

Rather than continue with light touch schemes, Environment Committee decided to no longer offer "light" touch and instead to proceed with full controlled parking zone conditions. This includes pay and display bays in areas and means that vehicles are more likely to move on a frequent basis but also that visitors to the area have options for parking.

59.7 Members asked about the introduction of cycle bays in controlled parking zones. They heard that bicycle bays had been trialled in Bedford Place and Tichbourne St, and that they had been very successful in moving bicycles from railings and lamp-posts. . Future schemes

will have cycle bays included in the detailed design consultation, in areas where they are felt to be needed.

59.8 In response to a query about how road width affected the introduction of parking schemes, members heard that this was a factor that had to be taken into account. There were minimum road widths that had to be considered, and this had been an issue; some schemes had remedied this by having a single side of the road allowed for parking.

Pavement parking was not endorsed even where the pavements were wide enough. This was because of access problems for pedestrians, particularly those with disabilities, as well as the wear and tear on the pavement; pavements were not constructed for cars to park on, and they would deteriorate more quickly. It was also the case that many areas in the city had basements and cellars underneath the pavement and it could cause problems to endorse parking over these.

59.9 In relation to the draft policy, a member asked for the guidance with regard to blue badge holders (at point 12) to be reworded as it was slightly unclear; this was agreed.

59.10 The Chairman thanked the Head of Network Management for her time and her presentation.

59.11 RESOLVED – (1) that the report be noted and (2) that the guidance with regard to blue badge holders be reworded for clarity.

60. OFFICIAL FEED AND FOOD CONTROLS SERVICE PLAN 2009 - 2010

60.1 The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing introduced the report and addressed members' queries and comments.

60.2 The Chairman commented that he felt that it was a very important report, particularly given the nature of our local service economy; confidence in food safety standards was paramount.

60.3 A member asked about the regulations that covered food production. The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing explained that these were generally covered by a number of other inspectorates; however, Brighton and Hove City Council proactively worked with and advised local partnerships including the Local Food Partnership.

60.4 Members complimented the team on their 92% rating in businesses that were broadly compliant with food hygiene standards, and asked about the 8% of food businesses that were not complying with the food hygiene standards. The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing explained that there had been a significant increase in food hygiene standards since the introduction of the Scores on the Doors scheme, and the department would focus its efforts on non-compliant businesses, carrying out spot checks, unannounced visits etc. Some of the businesses would close themselves, others might be closed, whilst others might be prosecuted.

60.5 RESOLVED – that the Committee commend and support the Scores on the Doors work, and that resources should continue to be provided to support the service and the materials that it produces.

61. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2009 - 2010

61.1 The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing introduced the report and addressed members' queries and comments on the report.

61.2 Members asked for clarification of who dealt with the health and safety for manufacturing; they heard that this tended to be dealt with by the Health and Safety Executive, although the demarcation was blurred.

61.3 Members heard about an innovative piece of joint work that was taking place between the local authority, neighbouring authorities and the Health and Safety Executive, taking part in cross-enforcement work.

61.4 Members asked for clarification about which industries were considered 'high risk' locally. They heard that these included catering, with a high proportion of trips and slips; financial industries, with high incidents of work related stress; and workers in the night-time economy, who experienced a greater fear of violence.

61.5 The Chairman commended the report and thanked the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing for his presentations.

61.6 RESOLVED – that the recommendations be agreed.

62. SHOREHAM HARBOUR JOINT AREA ACTION PLAN

62.1 The report was introduced by the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Manager, the Head of Strategic Projects and the Planning Director for the Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP).

62.2 The Planning Director for the Shoreham Harbour JAAP explained that it was a complex project, focussing on regeneration and planning. The scheme was funded by the South East England Development Agency, but the Planning Director was answerable to the three local authorities that were involved, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and Adur District Council (ADC).

The JAAP was scheduled to be adopted in December 2011 and is one of the Local Development documents for BHCC and ADC Core strategies. BHCC, WSCC and ADC are simultaneously scrutinising the process; members heard that the other two scrutiny committees were broadly supportive of the JAAP. Both other two local authorities had raised their concerns about transport and infrastructure.

62.3 The Head of Strategic Projects explained that there was a significant emphasis on tackling deprivation and helping provide jobs for the local economy; it was intended to be a regeneration scheme, with potentially a 30 year development site for the region.

62.4 Members asked whether all three local authorities were committed to the regeneration scheme. They heard that they had all supported the 'Growth Point ' submission, which was a central Government scheme to provide funding for areas to support large scale sustainable growth, including new housing and that all three local authorities supported the regeneration of Shoreham Harbour.

62.5 Members queried whether there would be 8000 new jobs provided; they were told that this was the ultimate long term aim and that the area that would be affected was the greater Shoreham Harbour area, stretching up to North Portslade.

In response to queries about the effect on existing businesses, members were told that some users would be relocated to release land but that the employment would be retained to secure the port's future. It was intended that there would be a new road bridge across the harbour so that port traffic could have access to the existing road network.

There was a query about whether the development would include retail outlet; some members were not keen on a significant retail sector as the existing Marina shopping village seemed to be having problems filling its units. The committee heard that regeneration was key, but there was likely to be an element of retail to help the people living in the Harbour, and there may be some visitor retail.

62.6 In response to concerns about traffic and whether a new link road would be provided, members heard that at present, this seemed unlikely. Transport consultants were developing a transport strategy, which needed to be both radical and realistic. The team were considering a variety of economic factors, to establish whether they would generate more traffic in the long term. There was an opportunity for funding to be provided to address some of the transport issues; central Government had already provided approximately £3 million from the Growth Points budget, with a further £5 million since being provided for transport infrastructure.

Members asked whether it was the case that Adur would benefit from the redevelopment and Brighton & Hove would suffer from the traffic overflow. The Planning Director for the JAAP took a different view; the scheme would be of significant benefit both to the wider Brighton & Hove area and for the communities of South Portslade.

Members discussed the viability of using trains to travel around the Shoreham Harbour area; they were told that this would be an important strand of the integrated transport strategy as there were four train stations along the length of the project.

62.7 Members asked whether all members could be added to the monthly emailed update list; the Head of Strategic Projects apologised that this had not happened and confirmed that this would be rectified from now on.

62.8 Members queried the inclusion of the Tall Buildings study in the report and whether this was appropriate; it was felt that this would be an issue that could be discussed in the proposed special scrutiny workshop on the JAAP.

62.9 RESOLVED – to arrange an additional meeting of ECSOSC to consider the JAAP; suggested dates would be circulated by the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer.

63. ALLOTMENTS

63.1 The Projects Officer from City Services introduced the report and responded to members' questions. The Project Officer explained that work had been carried out in conjunction with the Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation. Tribute was also paid to the work of Councillor David Smart, who had been heavily involved in the allotment work.

The Project Officer said that some allotment waiting lists had recently been opened after an extended period when they were all closed, and work had been carried out to significantly reduce waiting lists. There was an intention to increase allotment provision in the city, but at present, details of potential sites had to be kept as confidential information.

63.2 Members asked for clarification of the sanctions that could be used against allotment holders who were not using allotments appropriately. They heard that there had previously been inconsistencies in how cultivation notices and notices to quit had been served; that this was now being addressed. If there were concerns that an allotment holder was not using an allotment appropriately, it was possible to offer a half size plot if this would be more manageable.

63.3 There was a discussion about the length of some of the waiting lists for allotments. At present, applicants had to apply to a particular allotment, and their name would be added to the waiting list, although there may be others in the area with shorter waiting lists.

Members heard that City Services were intending to group allotment sites into geographical areas so that an applicant could be considered for all allotments in that area. City Services were in the process of contacting all applicants to ask if they would like to be added to the group waiting lists. This would not affect an applicant's waiting time.

63.4 RESOLVED – that the members commend the report and the work of the Project Officer, other officers and the members who have worked on the project.

64. ESCOSC AND SCRUTINY SEMINAR

64.1 The Chairman suggested that the ECSOSC attend a workshop on Shoreham Harbour and that the proposed transport seminar be put on hold due to other work commitments. After discussion, it was agreed that transport would be the next workshop to be held after the Shoreham Harbour workshop.

64.2 RESOLVED – that there be a scrutiny workshop on Shoreham Harbour and that, following this, the next workshop/ seminar to be held on transport in the city.

65. ECSOSC WORK PLAN

65.1 The Committee considered the draft work plan and the suggested additional item from Councillor Paul Steedman (see agenda Item 56).

65.2 RESOLVED – that the draft work plan be agreed, and that Councillor Paul Steedman’s request be included.

66. ITEMS TO TAKE FORWARD TO CMM, CABINET OR COUNCIL

66.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

