

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CULTURE, TOURISM & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 23 NOVEMBER 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Randall (Chairman); Drake (Deputy Chairman), Harmer-Strange, Kennedy, Marsh, Older and Turton

Co-opted Members:

PART ONE

32. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

32a Substitutes

32.1 Councillor Mo Marsh for Councillor Pat Hawkes and Councillor Averil Older for Councillor Carol Theobald.

32b Declarations of Interest

32.2 Councillor Davis and Councillor Older both expressed an interest in Item 38 as a member of the Board of the Arts Commission.

32c Exclusion of press and public

32.3 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 a disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 1001(1) of the said Act.

32.4 **RESOLVED** – *that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the discussion of Item 43 under Category 3.*

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

33.1 It was noted there was an incorrect figure in paragraph 24.3. The figure 22,5000 to be amended to read 22,500.

RESOLVED – *that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October be approved and signed.*

34. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

34.1 The Chairman told the Committee that he had attended the White Nights festival, which had been very successful. He had also attended the photo bi-annual in the Piers Gough building in Black Lion Street and the annual Sports Awards. It was noted that Andy Glover, the Economic Development Officer, had won an award for his work with the Portslade Cricket Club.

34.2 There had also been the first tripartite meeting between the Chairman of the Committee, the Director of Culture and Enterprise, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Employment and Major Projects, and the Head of Scrutiny. The Chairman suggested that the Committee should pursue a more structured dialogue with the Local Strategic Partnership and that this should be incorporated into the future work programme.

34.2 Councillor Davies informed the Committee that she had attended some of the Osaka film showings which had been very impressive.

35. QUESTIONS AND LETTERS

35.1 There were none.

36. BRIGHTON MARATHON - VERBAL UPDATE

36.1 The Chairman welcomed Tim Hutchings and Tom Naylor of the Grounded Events Company to the meeting. They updated the Committee on the Brighton Marathon.

36.2 There had been tremendous progress and the 12,000 places for the Marathon had filled very quickly. 9,000 of these were own place runners and the remaining 3,000 were charity places going to around 140 charities. They were confident that the event was reasonable economically viable for this year.

36.3 A map of the route was circulated (for copy see minute book). From around 11am the Marathon was a coastal race, and by noon at the latest it would be out of the city. This had allowed them to move forward with the emergency services. Mr Hutchings went through the route, which now goes around the Shoreham Power Station. There was 16 miles of road with lots of 'out and back' which meant that the places reserved for the medics, refreshments, water stops etc would all get the runners twice. The race was currently 6 metres too long but it would be exactly 26.2 miles.

36.4 Discussions were underway with Channel 4 for a highlights package that would be broadcast around 2 weeks after the race. It would be a blend of the Marathon and the culture of the city.

36.5 Runners could only enter the Brighton Marathon on-line. Around 25% of runners not showing is average so they will work towards a maximum of 10,000 participants. The

Grounded Events Company recently sent out a questionnaire asking participants how many people they planned to bring with them and the average response was three. They were talking to all the hotels as around a third of participants were expected to stay in the city. They were also talking to Churchill Square about the possibility of changing the Sunday opening hours to 12pm until 5pm. There would inevitably be transport issues, but there would be a 'blue light' lane in place along the sea front for the emergency services. All homes in the area would receive a leaflet detailing what was happening.

36.6 The planning was still underway with the events and entertainment sites still work in progress. There were 25 marathons in the UK and they were confident that they would be the number 2 marathon, after London.

36.7 Councillors then asked questions. In response to a question, it was expected that the Brighton Marathon would attract a number of top runners. It was also explained that the timing had been related to the London Marathon but the demand for places had been great and places had filled up even before London had released its list of failed applicants. They had offered to refund money for applicants who had also got into the London Marathon, but out of 350 runners, only 68 had asked for a refund: the others were either running both marathons or had deferred their London place.

36.8 Following a question on the trains, it was confirmed that they had regular meetings with the train companies and confirmed that Preston Park would remain open. Discussions were underway over the possibility of a special London-Brighton Marathon train. They would also encourage park and ride and train and ride schemes, parking at Gatwick or Haywards Heath.

36.9 There were 5 members of staff, but around 1200 volunteers were expected on the day. There was a lot of goodwill and excitement in the city. In terms of working with local businesses, they were looking at offering local businesses the option of putting their logo on the Brighton Marathon website with a printable voucher that could be used as a 'Marathon special' – for example, buy-one-get-one- free offers.

36.10 They were in negotiations with a blue chip company that may sponsor the event. There were differing levels of sponsorship, for example, Frosts were providing a fleet of cars for the day. Other companies were supplying cereal bars or other items for the goody bags for runners at the end.

36.11 The Chairman thanked Mr Hutchings and Mr Naylor for their useful and informative update. He noted that the event would be good for both the city and the economy.

37. VISITBRIGHTON CONTACT CENTRE REVIEW

37.1 The Visitor Services Manager, Suzanne Mantell introduced the report. She explained that since 2000, the VisitBrighton Contact Centre had operated a premium rate line. Prior to this, only about 51,000 of 500,000 attempted calls were being answered. Following the introduction of the premium rate line, all calls were answered. The number of calls and income had dropped by around a third year-on-year. There were six options. Option 1 was to keep the premium rate line but it was suggested that this was unsustainable. Option 2 was to keep the line but change the costs but this would further reduce income. Option 3 was to increase the cost of the calls

but this may lead to a drop in call volume. Option 4 was to use an 0871 number. Option 5 was the favoured option – to relocate to the Royal Pavilion and work with that team. This option would enable the Visitor Centre to charge a local rate and use the system in place for the Pavilion. They could have different numbers for different aspects of the service. Option 6 was to cease call handling but this would send out a negative message.

37.2 A question was asked about what contingency plans were in place to deal with the danger that the number of calls might grow and there would not be sufficient people to answer the calls. In reply, Ms Mantell explained that they would work with the Pavilion staff and the new system allowed the manager to see the volume of calls and act accordingly. It was hoped that more inquiries could be converted into bookings as more people would use a local number.

37.3 In response to a question, it was confirmed that there were currently 3 or 4 counter staff at the Visitor Centre but the telephone calls were answered at Brighton Town Hall. 1 or 2 people would be relocated to the Pavilion Contact Centre. It was confirmed that no posts would be lost under Option 5.

37.4 Further information was requested on why VisitLondon had ceased to offer a call handling service. It was explained that this stopped around 8 years ago as it was felt that they were not influencing businesses in the city. VisitLondon were now solely a marketing organisation.

37.5 The report stated that when the premium line service was introduced, it was supported by the Brighton & Hove Hotels Association. Elaborating on that, it was explained that the Association were pleased that calls were no longer missed. They contributed to the work of the Visitor Centre through the partnership scheme. Also the Visitor Centre took a 10% deposit when a hotel room was booked, the other 90% was paid later to the hotel.

37.6 During the discussion of the report, of those members who expressed a preference, Option 5 was supported.

37.7 **RESOLVED** – (a) that the Review and its recommendations are noted; and (b) that the comments of the Committee are forwarded to the Cabinet Member Meeting on 8 December.

38. UK CITY OF CULTURE PROPOSAL

38.1 The Chairman gave apologies on behalf of the Head of Culture & Economy, Paula Murray, who was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health. The Chairman outlined the current situation in UK City of Culture bid and explained why the decision had been taken that the initiative was not right for the city. One of the main reasons was that Brighton & Hove does not have the same 'step change' to make as other places that were bidding which meant there would not be a massive difference between the activity now and that going on under the City of Culture initiative. The Council and its partners were also unwilling to sign up to a much larger speculative budget in the current economic climate, and the timing was possibly not right for the city. There had been the feeling that trying to tailor events to someone else's agenda was a restriction rather than an enabling device.

28.2 The feedback from the initial outline proposal submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was that the emphasis would be on new and additional events and that may result in destabilising the existing cultural calendar in the city. There had been discussions about the idea of supporting other bidding cities and this may be a way forward.

28.3 It was noted that there had been a feeling during discussions that the pace was not one that was natural for the city. It was also about money: it had cost Liverpool City Council around £70m when it was the City of Culture.

28.4 It was remarked that most people had been supportive of the initial idea but that the costs were now too high. It was agreed that it was right to express an interest, but the decision not to proceed was the right one.

39. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 09/10 MID YEAR PROGRESS

39.1 The Corporate Performance Officer for the Culture and Enterprise Directorate, Lisa Shaw introduced the report. The data had yet to go to Cabinet on 3 December and the comments of the Committee could be forwarded to Cabinet, if required. The report detailed 10 delivery plans for the priorities within the Local Area Agreement, of which 3 are red, 1 amber, 4 green and 2 grey. The red indicators were the number of people on out of work benefits (22,970 four quarter average to May 09) and GVA per capita (detailed information was presented about these indicators to the Committee in October 09). Another area off target is the number of 16-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET). When looking at the NEET figure in August 08 and again in August 09, there had been almost a 25% increase in numbers. The amber figure concerned adult participation in sport which has seen a slight drop in performance between surveys. Targets on track included engagement in the arts, children in organised visits to museums, engagement in Libraries and the business registration rate.

39.2 The Head of Libraries & Information Services, Sally McMahon, introduced the remainder of the report which focused on three areas of performance for that service. Indicator NI9 measures members of the adult population who had used a library service and Brighton & Hove were scoring well (52.3%), being in the top quartile of performance nationally. The cost per visit statistics showed Brighton & Hove had a lower than average cost per visit to libraries compared with our 15 nearest statistical neighbours. The satisfaction figures were going well, despite a drop from 80.3% to 73.3% which may be accounted for by the use of different surveys. The effect of the Jubilee Library development may also have accounted for a steep rise in previous years which was now wearing off.

39.3 The percentage take up of available ICT time in libraries was a red indicator. Up to the end of September 2009, 45% of available time and computer space was taken up, against a target of 50%. Lower performance was attributed to inconsistencies in data collection, for example not recording the use by Homework Clubs. Statistics for usage showed that 68% of users had no home internet connection; this was 48% in 2006. Over 90% of users were satisfied with staff support. Ms McMahon explained that the intention was to change this performance measure to one that measured user satisfaction with the facilities. Current performance would give a 77% satisfaction level.

39.4 A question was asked about the restriction of usage to one hour slots, and whether time could be extended to, for example, two hours. The time slot was available at time of booking but it was possible to stay for longer in the community libraries if there was no following

booking. There were also some computers that, for 15 minutes, offered drop-in access. However, Ms McMahon agreed that the issue of longer time slots could be considered. Following further comments on the issue and whether it was signposted in the Jubilee Library to signpost the community libraries, it was agreed that further could be done to advertise the community libraries and the additional staff support available there. Computers were due to be replaced and further marketing would be undertaken when the new computers were in place. In terms of the figure showing a fall in home internet usage, a report that looked at the data from a range of surveys was going to be produced in the New Year.

39.5 Following a question on who were Brighton & Hove's comparator authorities, Ms Shaw agreed to provide that information. Ms McMahon noted that CIPFA decided who the comparator group were, and no one local authority had the same group. A question was asked on what the performance grant available was: the Performance Officer commented that this was around £1.5m across the whole of the LAA and it would be worked out in 2011, depending upon meeting targets set.

39.6 Concerning indicator NI152, a more detailed matrix of what benefits were being claimed was requested: Ms Shaw agreed to look into the available figures and supply this information to the Committee.

39.7 The Chairman thanked Ms Shaw and Ms McMahon and commented that the city was still doing well on new business registrations. It was agreed that the next performance report should focus on this data.

38.8 **RESOLVED** – *that the next area of focus for the performance report would be business registrations in the city.*

40. BUSINESS RETENTION AND INWARD INVESTMENT STRATEGY

40.1 The Economic Development Officer, Andy Glover, introduced the Business Retention and Inward Investment Strategy (BRII) update report. The Action Plan for the first year was broken down into seven key areas and Mr Glover updated the Committee on what had happened in each area for the last six months. The Welcome Pack was in the final stage of production and would be a folder with individual inserts. A database for information on investor information has been purchased by FDI Markets and the appropriate officer would be trained. The commercial property database had been reviewed and improved and would be launched on the Council's website at the end of November. This also included revised monitoring and reporting procedures. Inward investment inquiries were now being handled more proactively and an Inward Investment Board had been formed. SEEDA had promised to develop a proposition paper for Brighton & Hove to send to overseas representatives. SEEDA were also reviewing their sector support programme: five of SEEDA's key sectors were also Brighton & Hove's key sectors. A new Research Officer had been appointed. A number of events had been held with the Economic Partnership and the University of Sussex to promote the BRII.

40.2 Following a question, Mr Glover outlined the key sectors as including environmental industries, digital media, creative industries, financial sector, and food and drink manufacturing. The issue of cabling and data was raised and how to encourage landlords to update premises? Queensbury House was an example of a building that had been upgraded. On the Welcome

Pack, a question was asked about how it would be available and timescale. Mr Glover informed the Committee that there would be 16 inserts and it had been a long process with different authors involved. Following a question on why buildings such as the Piers Gough building were empty, Mr Glover noted that the rental prices were high compared to West Sussex and Crawley. For example, a building in Lancing was £10 per square metre less than the Queensbury Building in Brighton.

40.3 The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful to have a report on commercial accommodation and it was agreed that it would be interesting to invite a commercial agent to attend that meeting.

40.4 Mr Glover offered to send a link to Councillors to the Welcome Pack when it was available. Queries were very wide ranging and people wanted office space for 7 or for 150 people.

40.5 **RESOLVED** – *(a) that the Committee continued to receive updates on the BRII strategy and (b) that a report on commercial accommodation was brought to a future Committee meeting.*

41. WORK PROGRAMME

41.1 The Chairman informed the Committee that the next scrutiny panel on children and culture would start in 2010. It was agreed to include archaeological sites to the report due in July 2010 on the historical artefacts in the city. It was confirmed that Councillor Davis would liaise with the Arts Commission and the Brighton Institute of Music.

41.2 The Director of Culture & Enterprise updated the Committee on the response to the Scrutiny Report on Environmental Industries. The response was almost complete and an additional Cabinet Member Meeting would be scheduled in January 2010 to consider the report and the Executive response.

42. ITEMS TO REFER TO CABINET MEMBER, CABINET, OR COUNCIL

42.1 **RESOLVED** – *that the Item 37 on VisitBrighton Contact Centre be referred to the Cabinet Member Meeting in December with the Committees' comments.*

43. PART TWO MINUTES FROM 7 OCTOBER 2009

43. **RESOLVED** – *that the minutes of the Part Two session of the meeting on 7 October 2009 be approved and signed.*

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of