

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 2 (b)

Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING, EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMY & REGENERATION CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm 29 MARCH 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Randall (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Morgan (Opposition Spokesperson) and C Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson)

Other Members present: Councillors MacCafferty

PART ONE

85. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

85(a) Declarations of Interests

85a.1 There were none.

85(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

85b.1 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

85b.2 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded.

86. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 86.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2012 were approved as a correct record.

87. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 87.1 The Leader explained that he was acting as substitute for Councillor Amy Kennedy who was unfortunately unwell. As this was the last meeting of the Planning, Employment, Economy and Regeneration Cabinet Member meeting the Leader thanked the work of Councillors Kennedy, Morgan and Carol Theobald and all the Officers who had been involved.
- 87.2 The Section 106 Agreement for the redevelopment of the Royal Sussex County Hospital had been finalised on 28 March 2012; the South East Regional Health Authority would be meeting shortly, and it was expected the Authority would recommend to the Minister for Health that the funding for the scheme be agreed. The redevelopment would provide an important boost to the economy of the city.
- 87.3 The South East Dance Group had confirmed it would commit approximately £134k through capital funding from the Arts Council as part of the cost of the dance space included in the plans of the Circus Street Market scheme. The plans for the scheme were currently being worked on, and it was noted that this would be an important development site for the city.

88. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- 88.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

89. PETITIONS

- 89.1 There were none.

90. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 90.1 There were none.

91. DEPUTATIONS

- 91.1 There were none.

92. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 92.1 There were none.

93. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 93.1 There were none.

94. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

94.1 There were none.

95. EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

95.1 The Leader considered a verbal update from the Economic Development Manager, Cheryl Finella, concerning employment in Brighton & Hove.

95.2 The Economic Development Manager explained that, in line with the national trend, employment had risen since 2008; however, the rise was proportionally less than both the regional and national average. Similarly the figures for both male and female unemployment were below these averages. There was evidence that the work undertaken by the team was having a real impact on reducing figures, and it was vital that the Council continue to monitor and take active steps to address unemployment in the city.

95.3 Councillor Morgan noted that it had been forecast that the UK economy would enter recession in the next quarter, and he went on to highlight the negative personal impacts of unemployment on individuals; the Leader agreed with Councillor Morgan's comments.

95.4 Councillor Carol Theobald said that the figures were still high – even though they were proportionally less than the regional and national averages – and stated that the Government were taking measures to mitigate the situation. The Leader noted that the effect of unemployment was greater on women.

95.5 The Economic Development Manager clarified that 'unemployed' was a loose term covering those not currently in the labour market.

95.6 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

96. UPDATE ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

96.1 The Leader considered a report from the Strategic Director of Place concerning Youth Unemployment in Brighton & Hove. It was noted there was work on-going with local companies to offer work experience for youths who had no experience of work in their families, and the Corporate Parenting Body had also suggested schemes to provide work experience for youths who would be coming out of care.

96.2 The Economic Development Manager explained that the large student population in the city increased the number of 18-24 years olds not in employment, but there were increases in employment figures during Christmas and the summer period. Work was being undertaken by the Apprenticeship Training Agency in collaboration with the City Collage to allow small businesses to engage in training and work experience, and it was hoped they could offer services to approximately 125 youths in the first year. The Youth Contract would launch in April 2012; the achievements of the Youth Employability Service (YES) were highlighted and potential funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had been identified.

96.3 Councillor Morgan stated that a loss of talent and potential in the work force at any age was negative. He went to state that, although construction training was an excellent

means to reduce the number of NEETs, it should be recognised that the manual aspects of the work were not suitable for everyone, and opportunities in creative industries could be further explored. In response the Economic Development Manager highlighted that the construction industry was one option among many, and work was on-going to see how businesses in all sectors could engage.

- 96.4 Councillor Carol Theobald highlighted some of the schemes that the Government was funding to address youth unemployment. Councillor Morgan noted his concerns that many such schemes were regionally targeting, and the Southeast could potentially benefit less from this where the situation was proportionally better than other parts of the country.
- 96.5 In summary the Leader noted the importance of training people in the construction industry and the number of large building schemes coming forward in the city; expressed his concern over the potential lose of talent in the work force, and highlighted some of the positive work being undertaken by the City College.
- 96.6 **RESOLVED** - That the Leader acting as the Cabinet Member for Planning, Employment, Economy and Regeneration note the contents of the report and the work being undertaken to mitigate the impact of rising levels of unemployment on young people.

97. UPDATE ON THE LEPS

- 97.1 The Leader considered a report from the Strategic Director of Place concerning an update on the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- 97.2 The Economic Development Manager introduced the item and outlined the background to the partnership and its main aims and targets. The two main strands of activity focused on internationalism and entrepreneurship; to help build diversity and resilience in the local market. Levels of entrepreneurship in the city were some of the highest in the country, and a recent meeting had proposed growth be focused around the M23/A23 corridor where it was believed it would have the highest yield. In relation to income it was explained that there was a small amount for running and research costs, and funding was allocated for 'shovel ready' projects where planning permission was already in place but progress had stalled.
- 97.3 The Leader highlighted that the Council had bid for funding for the i360 project, and, if agreed, the funding would be in the form of a loan to the developers. The LEP Investment Sub-Committee had met to consider the current bids and the i360 had been put forward against others for potential funding. The Leader also highlighted potential future bids including ultra-fast broadband and a joint bid with Adur District Council and West Sussex County Council for flood defences at Shoreham Port.
- 97.4 Councillor Morgan asked questions in relation to the funding, and highlighted that there should as much transparency in the process as possible. In response Officers explained that some of the start-up funds were effectively 'one-off', and there was £16 million of core funding. The LEP had not yet finalised the funding arrangements, and it was felt that smaller community bids could be funded through grants; there was a responsibility to ensure that any loans were allocated reasonably.

97.5 Councillor Carol Theobald noted that the i360 was a good scheme for the seafront, and it was clarified that if successful the prospective loan period would be approximately 11 years. The Leader also highlighted that the scheme would provide approximately 180 jobs in its construction and running.

97.6 **RESOLVED** - That the Leader acting as the Cabinet Member for Planning, Employment, Economy and Regeneration notes the contents of the report.

98. ADDITION OF LONDON ROAD COOP TO THE LOCAL LIST

98.1 The Leader considered a report from the Strategic Director of Place concerning the addition of the former London Road CoOp building to the Local List.

98.2 The Senior Planner (Conservation), Tim Jefferies, introduced the report, and explained that the request, to add the building to the local list, had been received from the Planning Committee on 14 December 2012 when an application for demolition of the building and erection of student accommodation had been refused. The current Local List predated the formation of the Council and was out of date; a comprehensive review was due to begin later in the year. It was not the normal process to add buildings on an ad hoc basis; however it was felt that the importance of the building locally and the request from the Planning Committee made an exceptional case. Inclusion on the list did not give the building any additional statutory protection, but it did ensure that greater weight and exploration would be given to consideration of retaining the building, and it was noted that retention already formed part of the London Road master plan.

98.3 The Leader noted that there was a strong case to retain the building as it was a popular, and reflected the departmental store architecture of its 1930s context; furthermore, the reason for refusal at the Planning Committee had related, in part, to the design of the proposals.

98.4 Councillor Carol Theobald said that she welcomed the report, and hoped future applications would, at least, be able to protect the façade of the building. Councillor Morgan went onto note that this was an important 'hub' for the London Road area, and he hoped that any proposed development could make flexible use of the space. The Head of Planning and Public Protection confirmed that the addition of the building to the Local List was the appropriate tool to enable flexibility in future development proposals.

98.5 **RESOLVED** - That the Leader acting as the Cabinet Member for Planning, Employment, Economy and Regeneration approve that the former London Road CoOp building at 84-103 London Road, Brighton be added to the council's list of Buildings of Local Interest and that its local interest be defined in accordance with the Statement of Significance at Appendix 1.

99. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

99.1 The Leader considered a presentation from two of the Project Managers (Major Projects), Max Woodford and Richard Davies, in relation to major projects in the city.

99.2 The Project Managers gave an update on four major projects in the city. The Open Market project on London Road had begun works in January 2012; the scheme would

provide 44 permanent markets stalls, 12 workshops and 87 affordable housing units, and was scheduled to open in August 2013. The Keep, Woolards Fields, a joint project with East Sussex County Council to provide a new historical records office, was set to achieve BREEAM standard excellent, and was due to open in June 2012. The new AMEX House was currently in the final stages of internal fitting, and was due to be occupied in late summer 2012; with the old AMEX House scheduled for demolition in 2016. Finally the Circus Street Market scheme was ready to move onto consultation as part of the planning stage; the Arts Council had awarded funding to the South East Dance Group, and an application was expected in late 2012 with potential completion in 2015.

- 99.3 The Leader highlighted the cross-party support for the Circus Street Market scheme, but felt that failure to agree a temporary market use was a lost opportunity. There was increased public confidence in taking the scheme forward, but public consultation needed to be at the centre of any proposals.
- 99.4 Councillor Morgan welcomed the presentation, and suggested that work could be undertaken to look at the secondary employment created by AMEX to consider how other businesses and individuals, who were not directly employed, relied on the site staying in the city.
- 99.5 Councillor Morgan also went on to note that the Brighton Centre needed further discussion; in response the Leader agreed that further work was necessary, although some improvements had already been made, and suggested that cross-party project boards could be set up in the next municipal year. Councillor Carol Theobald also noted the improvements made to the Brighton Centre, and said that there were further structural works to be completed.
- 99.6 Councillor Carol Theobald also asked questions in relation to the West Pier and the i360 project; in response it was explained that it was important to deliver the i360 project before considering other projects that may not necessarily compliment the i360. Once this was completed there would be an opportunity to discuss the necessity of a second pier, given that much of the heritage aspects of the West Pier had unfortunately been lost.
- 99.7 **RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Cabinet Member

Dated this

day of

