

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Policy and Strategy Committee
23 September 2004**

Councillor Robert Dunn (Chairperson)
Councillor Neil Parkin (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillor Melanie Blunden
*Councillor Keith Dollemore
Councillor Debbie Kennard

Councillor Liza McKinney
Councillor Julie Searle

Absent*

Councillor Melanie Blunden left the meeting at 7:15pm following consideration of item 7: Single Regeneration Budget and Area Investment Framework and returned at 7:40pm prior to consideration of item 10: Party Political Broadcasting.

PSC/179/04 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

Councillor Carol Bradburn declared her substitution for Councillor Keith Dollemore.

Councillor Melanie Blunden declared an interest in item 8: Policy on Land Disposal as this matter would be going before the Planning and Regulatory Committee and a personal interest in item 9: Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group.

Councillor Carol Bradburn declared a personal interest in item 9: Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group.

Councillor Liza McKinney declared a interest in item 8: Policy on Land Disposal as a resident of Shoreham Beach and the owner of a beach front property. She stated that, as discussions would not specifically relate to sale of land at Shoreham Beach she would not be leaving the meeting for this item.

PSC/180/04 Questions and Statements by the Public

Members of the public were invited to ask questions or make statements about any matter for which the Council had a responsibility or which affected the district. There were none.

PSC/181/04 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 15 July 2004 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PSC/182/04 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

None.

PSC/183/04 References from Executive Committees

Nil.

PSC/184/04 References from Scrutiny Committees

Nil.

PSC/185/04 Single Regeneration Budget / Area Investment Framework

Before the Committee was a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The Head of Planning and Policy introduced the report noting the success of working with Adur Economic Partnership. The 10 year programme had been marked by publication of a document 'Joining Together to Work Together'.

The Economic Development Manager noted that Adur participates in two Area Investment Frameworks (AIF's) as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report. He added that the plans for the continuation of this work were set out in the appendix to the report.

Members welcomed the report and the plans for progression on the work to date. They offered thanks to officers for their work and achievements, particularly in relation to the regeneration of the town centres. The Committee commended officers on the success of the SRB programme and asked that this be noted in the recommendations.

Members proposed that Councillor Neil Parkin continue as the representative on the Brighton & Hove and Adur AIF Partnership Board and that Councillor Graham Kerner be nominated as the representative on the Coastal West Sussex AIF Partnership Board with Councillor Janet Mockridge as the substitute. This was agreed.

Resolved

- (i) that the officers be thanked and AEP be congratulated on its 10 years of successful partnership working;
- (ii) that the successes of the Adur Industry First SRB Programme and the level of regeneration investment in the district be acknowledged and the Programme agreed;
- (iii) that the two Area Investment Framework (AIF) partnerships continue to be supported;
- (iv) that Councillor Neil Parkin be nominated to represent Adur District Council on the Brighton & Hove and Adur AIF Partnership Board;
- (v) that Councillor Graham Kerner be nominated to represent Adur District Council on the Coastal West Sussex AIF Partnership Board and Councillor Janet Mockridge be nominated as the substitute.

PSC/186/04 Adjournment

Resolved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:15pm for five minutes to allow the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to give legal advice to a member of the Committee.

PSC/187/04 Policy on Land Disposal

Before the Committee was a report of the Corporate Director, Environment, Community & Housing, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The Corporate Director, Environment, Community & Housing Services introduced the report. He noted that the disposal of land at Shoreham Beach had previously been considered by the Housing and Central Services Committee who had resolved that a general policy on disposal of land be discussed.

Members suggested that there was a need to review the Council's policy on declaring Nature Reserves as this had been the underlying issue in relation to Shoreham Beach. It was felt that this should be considered and debated at Council.

The Committee agreed that the previous system for dealing with the disposal of land was unsatisfactory and proposed that a working group be set up to consider each case - the membership of this working group being the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the executive committee with the responsibility for assets with two ward Councillors for the relevant area. It was felt that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson would be able to provide continuity in consideration of the disposal of land across the district and that the ward Councillors could complement this by bringing local knowledge to the working group specific to each application.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that ward Councillors on the proposed working group would encounter problems in relation to the declaration of prejudicial interests. The Committee felt that it was important to have this local knowledge when considering land disposals and asked that officers produce a suitable set of terms of reference for the working group to allow for inclusion of ward Councillors.

The Corporate Director, Strategy added that consideration of the Urban Capacity Study, which would need to be referred to by the proposed working group, is the responsibility of the Policy and Strategy Committee. He advised that this would not be met if the membership of the working group was from either Housing and Central Services Committee or Community and Leisure Services Committee.

The Committee felt that this requirement could be met as the Chairperson of Housing and Central Services Committee was currently also a member of the Policy and Strategy Committee.

The proposals relating to consideration of the Council's policy on the declaration of Nature Reserves and a Land Disposal Working Group were agreed.

Resolved that it be recommended to Council:

- (i) that the Council's policy on the declaration of Nature Reserves be reviewed in relation to Shoreham Beach;
- (ii) that a Land Disposal Working Group be set up to consider individual instances of the sale or purchase of land.

PSC/188/04 Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 9.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and asked the Committee to agree the membership and the terms of reference for the Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group.

The Committee proposed that the members of the working group be Councillors Julie Searle, Keith Dollemore and Peter Berry. They asked that the terms of reference be amended to state that the membership be three members appointed by Policy and Strategy Committee. It was noted that although the development was within the centre of Shoreham the facility would benefit all the district and therefore the members of the working group need not be Shoreham Councillors.

Resolved

- (i) that the terms of reference of the Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group be agreed;
- (ii) that Councillors Julie Searle, Keith Dollemore and Peter Berry be appointed as members of the Ropetackle Arts and Educational Facility Working Group.

PSC/189/04 Party Political Broadcasting – Public Consultation

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduce the report which asked for the Council's comments on the public consultation document on party political broadcasting.

The Committee felt that the issue had little effect on local politics and that party political broadcasting did not significantly increase voter turnout. However, Members agreed that they felt strongly against paid political advertising for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

Resolved that the views of the Council on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's public consultation document on party political broadcasting be noted as:

- (i) that the Council is against paid political advertising;
- (ii) that party political broadcasting has little impact locally.

PSC/190/04 Improving the Planning Service in Adur

Before the Committee was a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 11.

The Head of Planning and Policy introduced the report noting that this item was considered by the Planning and Regulatory Committee earlier in the week and the recommendations supported. He informed the Committee that this was a period of change for planning and that this presented an opportunity for improving the planning service. He explained that the action plan attached to the report set out a timescale for improvements, some of which have already commenced.

The Head of Planning and Policy advised that the Council had been awarded a Planning Delivery Grant of £61,000. This was less than the grant awarded for the previous year. He explained that this was a performance based grant and that the section had received an unusually high number of applications. He added that the proposal to spend use the grant to fund temporary posts in the planning section would improve performance and hopefully increase the grant awarded in the coming year.

Members felt that planning officers had worked well and made improvements in negotiating better designed developments but that further improvements could be made. It was also felt that recent changes to delegated powers were working well. Members asked for more input into and consultation on Section 106 agreements.

The Committee clarified that although the temporary posts within the planning section would be funded this year from the Planning Service Delivery Grant, officers should be aware that that posts would not be permanently funded from the Council budget.

Resolved

- (i) that the proposals for improving the planning service as set out in the report be approved with the addition of:
 - (a) improvements in the quality of the design of developments for consideration;
 - (b) greater involvement of Members in relation to Section 106 agreements.
- (ii) that the use of the Planning delivery Grant of £61,000 on improving the performance of the service and working on producing the Adur Development Plan be agreed
- (iii) that officers note that permanent funding of Planning Delivery Grants posts within the Planning Section will not be supported by the Council budget.

PSC/191/04 South East Plan and Sussex Coastal Regional Strategy

Before the Committee was a report of Corporate Director, Strategy, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 12.

The Corporate Director, Strategy introduced the report and asked the Committee to agree an additional meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee on 21 October 2004 to consider a draft report on the Sussex Coast Sub Regional Strategy.

Members noted the tight timescale set for the production of the South East Plan. The Committee agreed the date of the additional meeting and asked that it commence at 6:00pm.

Resolved

- (i) that progress on the production of the South East Plan and Sussex Coast Sub Regional Strategy be noted;
- (ii) that concerns be expressed to SEERA and the ODPM about the extremely tight and unreasonable timescales for the production of the South East Plan;
- (iii) that an additional meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee be scheduled for Thursday 21 October 2004 for consideration of the draft Sussex Coastal Sub Regional Strategy.

PSC/192/04 Corporate and Financial Overview

Before the Committee was a report of Director, Corporate Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 13.

The Director, Corporate Services introduced the item which asked the Committee to agree the Council's medium term financial and corporate aims and objectives. She drew the Committee's attention to value statements set out in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8.

It was noted that paragraph 5.1 should be amended to read ‘...growth of approximately £550K in 2005/06’.

The Committee discussed paragraph 11.1 of the report. Members asked that the net projected overspend on the revenue budget of £53K be met by the end of the financial year through savings found from elsewhere in the budget.

Resolved

- (i) that the following value statements be agreed as those by which the Council will set its policies for the forthcoming three to four years:
 - To put the customer at the heart of our business
 - To act always with fairness, integrity and courtesy
 - To consult with and listen to the people of Adur and to enable opportunities for involvement in the Council’s decision making processes
 - To strive to deliver our services as efficiently, effectively and economically as possible
 - To work in partnership where it is in the best interests of the Council and the people of Adur
 - To ensure equal access to information and Council services
 - To value our staff and seek to develop their potential
- (ii) that the following priority statements be continued as those which will help in the formulation of a medium term corporate and financial strategy for the Council from 2005/06:
 - Protect and enhance core services to the community
 - Create a clean, green and safe environment
 - Keep Council Tax increases to the minimal level practicable
 - Contribute to the implementation of the Community strategy and other partnership initiatives where possible
- (iii) that Services be asked to plan on the basis of a roll forward of the 2004/05 base budget adjusted for inflation only at this stage;
- (iv) that Departments be recommended to prepare statements on the impact of the guidelines upon their service strategies, to be brought to Committees in the November / December 2004 cycle of meetings;
- (v) that the net projected overspend on the revenue budget of £53K be absorbed by the end of the financial year through savings from elsewhere in the budget.

PSC/193/04 Service and Financial Monitoring – Projected Outturn as at 31 July 2004

Before the Committee was a report of Director, Corporate Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 14.

The Director, Corporate Services introduced the report noting that the resolve from the previous item regarding the net projected overspend on the revenue budget also related to this item.

The Committee discussed the areas of overspend set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report. members expressed concerns regarding spending on the proposed improvement works for car parks and asked that any spending on this be delayed until the income from the car parks had been assured. The Director, Corporate Services clarified that the Committee would receive a further financial monitoring report on the half year position. The Committee asked officers to include a list of previously agreed priority items in the half year report.

Resolved

- (i) that the net projected overspend on the revenue budget of £53K be met by the end of the financial year through savings elsewhere in the budget;
- (ii) that there are no areas of performance requiring further reporting;
- (iii) that the virements set out in paragraph 4.4 and Annexes C2 and C3 of the report be agreed;

PSC/194/04 Draft Financial Procedures

Before the Committee was a report of Director, Corporate Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 15.

The Director, Corporate Services introduced the report. She advised that the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules no longer reflect current working practices and required revision. The report proposed that a working group be set up to amend these governance arrangements.

The Committee agreed the proposal and nominated Councillors Neil Parkin, Julie Searle and Liza McKinney as the members of the Governance Arrangements Working Group.

Resolved

- (i) that Councillors Neil Parkin, Julie Searle and Liza McKinney be nominated to work with officers on revising the Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules as the Governance Arrangements Working Group;
- (ii) that the terms of reference of the Governance Arrangements Working Group be agreed.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:40pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

Chairman