

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Policy and Strategy Committee
22 November 2005**

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

Councillor Melanie Blunden
Councillor Keith Dollemore
Councillor Liza McKinney

Councillor Julie Searle
Councillor Christine Turner

Absent*

Councillor Christine Turner arrived at the meeting at 7:01pm during consideration of Item 2. Councillor Jim Funnell was also present and left the meeting at 7:50pm prior to consideration of Item 8.

PSC/518/05-06 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

There were no declarations of interest or substitute members.

PSC/519/05-06 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 no questions or statements from the public.

PSC/520/05-06 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairman noted a typographical error in the minutes of 22 September 2005, such that resolution (i) of Item 13: Rate Relief should read '....from 1 April 2006' rather than '2005'. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 22 September 2005, as amended, be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PSC/521/05-06 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

None.

PSC/522/05-06 Review of Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act

Before the Committee was a report of the Development and Scrutiny Committee 1, 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 5.

Councillor Jim Funnell, as Chairman of Development and Scrutiny Committee 1, introduced the report which summarised the outcomes of the review of the implications of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act including street trading provisions.

The Committee queried how the Act would affect street traders such as 'Big Issue' sellers or those with previously issued licences such as a Hawker's Licence. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services replied that it would depend on the type of licence and that he would have to research the Act further in order to respond.

Members discussed how the new provisions could be used to address problems relating to cars being sold on verges or pavements. It was hoped that informing those parties of the changes in legislation would be sufficient warning to deal with the problem in the first instance.

Members thanked the Development and Scrutiny Committee for their work on this item. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that recommendation (ii) of the report should be recommended to Council for consideration. This was agreed as were recommendations (i) and (iii), as set out in the report.

Resolved

- (i) that the current level of resources is capable of issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. This should be undertaken by responsible officers in their specialised section of work. Staffing levels should be reviewed annually;
- (ii) that it be recommended to Council that there should be controlled street trading in the town centres, the public highways should be prohibited to trading. Special provisions should be made to allow markets to operate in the town centres;
- (iii) that public notices should be erected to alert residents to the introduction of the Act and the advent of Fixed Penalty Notices. The Act should be published in the local press.

PSC/523/05-06 Housing Strategy

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Housing Need and Environmental Health, 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 6.

The Head of Housing Need and Environmental Health introduced the report which asked the Committee to agree the final draft Housing Strategy for submission to the Government Office for the South East. He noted that an incorrect version of the glossary of terms had been included in the strategy and apologised for this error.

The Committee discussed references in the strategy which referred to the use of land for housing purposes. It was felt that the document implied that this would be the sole use for land which became available. The Committee felt that other uses, such as commercial or community developments, should also be considered. As such it was proposed that the wording of paragraph 1.7 on page 9 of the strategy should be amended to read 'The Council is looking to use its land assets to support its delivery of housing *and other services* and this will be further...'. It was also proposed that the wording of page 17 of the strategy be amended to read '...and development of new affordable housing; this also covers *any* use of the Council's land assets for these purposes'. These amendments were agreed by the Committee.

Members discussed reference on page 24 of the strategy to the potential sale of land at below market value. It was felt that below market value sales should be avoided if possible.

The Director of Services explained that this referred to instances of the sale of land to Housing Associations, for example, whereby the Council is given 100% allocations at the new property, thereby recovering the full value of the land through other means.

The Committee agreed that the strategy be approved, as amended and that final amendments be delegated to officers. It was also agreed that there was no requirement for the Policy and Strategy Committee to see the full version of the strategy.

Resolved

- (i) that the contents of the Strategy summary, as amended, be agreed;
- (ii) that officers be authorised to continue to finalise the details of the summary and the full strategy document in negotiation with GOSE officials, in order that it can be submitted for assessment as 'fit for purpose' as soon as possible;
- (iii) that Policy and Strategy Committee do not wish to see the full version of the strategy.

PSC/524/05-06 Reshaping Adur

Before the Committee was a report of the Chief Executive, 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 Chief Executive distributed a supplementary paper to those present, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 7A.

The Chief Executive introduced the report which reviewed Phase 1 of the recent restructure and reported on Phase 2. He also introduced the supplementary paper which updated the main report in light of the recommendation that the Adur Chief Executive be appointed the interim Chief Executive at Worthing Borough Council on a half time basis for six months.

Members expressed concern that staffing arrangements may be over stretched as a result of Phase 2 of the restructure. These concerns were acknowledged by the Chief Executive and the Director of Services.

The Committee congratulated the Chief Executive on this appointment. Members agreed the recommendations set out in the report and in the supplementary papers. It was agreed that the arrangements set out in the supplementary papers be passed to the next meeting of Housing and Central Services Committee for consideration.

Resolved

- (i) that the proposed structure for the organisation, as set out in paragraph 16 of the report, be endorsed;
- (ii) that the terms of departure for staff affected by Phase 2 of the restructure be confirmed as those contained in the Council's current Employment Stability Policy and precedents previously set, as agreed in November 2004;
- (iii) that the current review of the Employment Stability Policy which (it is proposed) will supersede the longstanding, current arrangements with effect from 1 April 2006, with the exception of those staff changes referred to under Phase 2, be noted.
- (iv) that the process for appointments and remuneration for those staff whose responsibilities change be authorised;

- (v) that the estimated net savings from Phase 2 be built into the Council's medium term budget plans for the next two years and beyond;

Resolved that it be recommended to Housing and Central Services Committee:

- (vi) that the appointment of the Adur Chief Executive to the post of interim Chief Executive of Worthing Borough Council on a half time basis be welcomed;
- (vii) that the proposed modification of the restructure proposals and the use of income to fund them at no additional cost to ADC be endorsed.

PSC/525/05-06 Statement of Community Involvement

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Planning and Community, 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 Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which asked the Committee to approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement for general consultation. She added that minor amendments to the Statement were required including the addition of a glossary and a list of consultee groups as appendices.

The Committee congratulated officers on the document and commented that the consultation was comprehensive. Members agreed the recommendation in the report and agreed that any necessary minor amendments be delegated to the Head of Planning and Community.

Resolved

- (i) that the draft Statement of Community Involvement be approved for general consultation;
- (ii) that any minor amendments to the document be delegated to the Head of Planning and Community.

PSC/526/05-06 South East Plan

Before the Committee was a report of the Director of 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 9.

The Director of Strategy introduced the report which set out the proposals for future housing provision in West Sussex and Adur District. He noted that the proposed housing growth allocation for Adur District for the period from 2006-2026 was 2,100 dwellings plus an additional 500 dwellings at Shoreham Harbour.

The Director of Strategy reported that discussions with Brighton and Hove City council had taken place and that recommendation (ii) of the report should be amended accordingly. The Committee discussed the wording of recommendation (ii) and agreed that it be amended to read 'Agree that an additional allocation of 500 dwellings is only capable of being delivered holistically via the strategic regeneration of Shoreham Harbour including all associated infrastructure'.

The Committee queried whether recommendation (iii) should be renumbered as recommendation (i) for clarity. This was agreed.

Resolved

- (i) that any South East Plan housing growth allocations can only be acceptable, sustainable and deliverable in conjunction with associated infrastructure, including making good the current infrastructure backlog;
- (ii) that Adur's proposed housing growth allocation of 2,100 dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026 be agreed as acceptable and consistent with current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) growth figures, as reflected in the current West Sussex Structure Plan;
- (iii) that an additional allocation of 500 dwellings is only capable of being delivered holistically via the strategic regeneration of Shoreham Harbour including all associated infrastructure;
- (iv) that the principles set out in the Sussex Coast Sub-Regional Strategy, previously reported to this Committee be reaffirmed, such that the South East Plan should give equal emphasis to sustainable economic regeneration by ensuring provision of a range of viable employment sites linked to good infrastructure, improved workforce skills and productivity.

PSC/527/05-06 Statement of Accounts 2004/05

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial 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 Committee welcomed Mr Chris Westwood of the Audit Commission. The Head of Financial Services introduced the report which updated the Statement of Accounts considered by the Committee in July 2005.

Members asked that a process for reporting audit issues to members be considered. The Head of Financial Services replied that this was currently under discussion.

The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved

- (i) that the revised Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2005 be approved;
- (ii) that the Audit Commission report SAS 610 be noted;
- (iii) that responses to the accounting technical issues detailed in paragraph 4.0 be reported back to the budget meeting on 2 February 2006.

PSC/528/05-06 Financial Overview 2005 - Update

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial 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 11.

The Head of Financial Services introduced the report which updated members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Service and Financial Monitoring reports considered by the Committee earlier in the year. He noted that the table at paragraph 8.1 of the report included an income of £100,000 for car parking and that this should be amended to £50,000 in line with the decision of Community and Leisure Services Committee on this item.

The Committee noted this amendment and agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved

- (i) that officers and Members continue to review the base budget in order to achieve further financial savings;
- (ii) that the Council continue to lobby for a more equitable distribution of the grant to fund Free Bus travel;
- (iii) that options be prepared for the budget meeting on 2 February 2006 taking into account the above.

PSC/529/05-06 Service and Financial Monitoring

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial 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 12.

the Head of Financial Services introduced the report which updated the Committee on the projected financial position of the Council.

Members expressed concerns regarding the cost implications in relation to work arising from Anti Social Behaviour Orders. The Committee asked if notes from the recent Members ASBO seminar could be placed in the Members Room for reference.

The Committee noted the information set out in the report and agreed that there were no areas requiring further reporting or remedial action.

Resolved

- (i) that there are no performance areas requiring remedial action;
- (ii) that there are no performance areas requiring further reporting.

PSC/530/05-06 Treasury Management – Debt Rescheduling

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial 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 Head of Financial Services introduced the report which asked members to approve debt rescheduling carried out during 2004/05.

The Committee agreed the recommendation as set out in the report.

Resolved that the debt rescheduling, as set out in the report, be approved.

PSC/531/05-06 Annual Investment Strategy

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial 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 Head of Financial Services introduced the report which asked the Committee to approve the Annual Investment Strategy.

Members suggested that, as this responsibility had now been passed from Housing and Central Services Committee to Policy and Strategy Committee, that members would benefit from meeting with the fund managers, Alliance Capital. It was agreed that a presentation be arranged.

The Committee agreed the recommendation as set out in the report.

Resolved that it be recommended to Council that the Annual Investment Strategy be approved.

PSC/532/05-06 Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Before the Committee was a report of the Chief Executive, 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 Chief Executive introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider the Audit Commission's consultation document on Comprehensive Performance Assessment for 2006 and beyond. He noted that this document was not attached to the report and apologised for this error. He asked the Committee to make an 'in principle' decision on the response to the Audit Commission and advised that the document would be circulated the next day.

Members felt that the 'lighter touch' approach was the preferred option and agreed the recommendation as set out in the report.

Resolved that the Council respond to the Audit Commission and express a preference for one of the 'light touch' approaches to Comprehensive Performance Assessment for district councils.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9:20pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

Chairman