

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Policy and Strategy Committee
30 January 2007**

Councillor Neil Parkin (Chairperson)
Councillor Julie Searle (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillor Keith Dollemore
Councillor Robert Dunn
Councillor Debbie Kennard

Councillor Liza McKinney
Councillor Angie Mills

Absent*

PSC/503/06-07 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

There were no declarations of interest or substitute members.

PSC/504/06-07 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.

Mr Roger Foregard of the Federation of Small Businesses spoke in support of the proposal set out in agenda item 7 that the Council sign up to the Small Business Friendly Concordat. He also asked about the Council's policy on the collection of small business waste. The Director of Services agreed to respond to his question in writing.

PSC/505/06-07 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 5 December 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PSC/506/06-07 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

None.

PSC/507/06-07 The Future of the Ropetackle Centre

The Chairman noted that the Ropetackle Centre Trust have now signed the lease for the management of the Ropetackle Centre and as such the report anticipated on this item is no longer required.

PSC/508/06-07 Data Quality Strategy 2007-2009

Before the Committee was a report by 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 6.

The Executive Office Manager introduced the report which set out a Data Quality Strategy aimed at improving the quality of data capture undertaken by the Council. The strategy had been produced in response to feedback from the Audit Commission.

Members queried the wording at rows 2 and 4 of the table on page 10 of the strategy. It was felt that a requirement "To make data quality explicit as the Audit Commission would like" was not specific enough and that this should be changed to a refer to a limited, fixed standard. It was proposed that the wording be amended to "To make data quality explicit" and this was agreed.

The Committee commented that the number of strategies and policies that the Council was required to develop was too high. Members asked whether it would be possible to work jointly with other partners to develop statutory strategies in order to reduce the level of resources dedicated to this area of work. The Executive Office Manager replied that partnership working of this kind was already in place and that this particular strategy had been produced in partnership with neighbouring authorities.

Members asked whether the strategy would facilitate more efficient retrieval of past papers and documents. The Executive Office Manager clarified that the strategy focused on the collection of numeric data rather than the storage of existing data. The Chief Executive added that the upcoming Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) will improve the storage and retrieval of files and documents.

The Committee agreed that the strategy be adopted, as amended.

Resolved that the Data Quality Strategy 2007-2009 be approved and adopted, as amended.

PSC/509/06-07 National Procurement Strategy – Small Business Friendly Concordat

Before the Committee was a report by the Executive Office Manager, 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 Executive Office Manager introduced the report which proposed the endorsement of a voluntary code to demonstrate the Council's commitment to working with small businesses.

The Committee were pleased with the proposal and felt that the agreement should help to encourage and protect small businesses and benefit the local economy. The recommendation set out in the report was agreed.

Resolved that the signing of the Concordat by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to demonstrate this Council's commitment to the process be agreed.

PSC/510/06-07 Review of Council Risk Register – December 2006

Before the Committee was a report by 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 8.

The Executive Office Manager introduced the report which set out the Council's Risk Register as updated in December 2006.

The Committee considered each of the risks detailed in the table and their allocated risk ratings. Members acknowledged the high rating allocated to risk 2, entitled 'Senior Officer Capacity'.

Members discussed the rating allocated to risk 7, entitled 'Amount of land available to meet housing needs'. It was agreed that the likelihood of the Council not meeting the affordable housing targets was probable but that the impact should be given greater weighting. As such it was proposed that the risk rating for this item be increased from 5 to 10A and from green to amber. This was agreed.

The Committee agreed that the risk register be endorsed, as amended, and asked for the complete register to be brought to Members for consideration on a quarterly basis.

Resolved

- (i) that the work undertaken to date in the review of the Risk Register be noted;
- (ii) that the entry in the Risk Register titled 'Amount of land available to meet housing needs' be upgraded to risk rating 10A / Amber;
- (iii) that the Risk Register, as amended, be endorsed.

**PSC/511/06-07 Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities"
and the draft Local Government Involvement in Health Bill -
Implications for Adur District Council**

Before the Committee was a report by 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 9.

The Chief Executive introduced the report which asked Members to formally consider the proposals of the Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" and the draft Local Government Involvement in Health Bill. He noted that the table attached the report identified those key issues from the proposals for Members to consider.

The Committee discussed the proposal in the draft Bill to move Council elections to a four yearly cycle. Members felt that the disadvantage of this proposal would be the possibility that the Council could lose a greater proportion of its experienced Councillors in one election cycle. Members also noted that a four yearly cycle and a longer term could facilitate better strategic planning. It was also felt that a longer election cycle may increase voter turnout.

With regard to the proposed new leadership models, Members felt that with increased partnership working it may be appropriate in the future for Adur to be linked to its partners through complimentary executive arrangements.

The Committee discussed the proposed powers to create new parishes. Members did not see any advantages to increasing three tier working by introducing a further parishes. It was felt that Local Government structure was becoming too bureaucratic and that changes should be aimed at streamlining through creating fewer, more effective decision making bodies.

Members agreed that the proposals in the draft Bill and the implications for future partnership working continue to be considered.

Resolved that the Council continue to consider the proposals of the White Paper and the Bill and how they may impact on current and future partnership working.

PSC/512/06-07 Revenue Budget 2007/08

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Resources, 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 Director of Resources introduced the report which asked the Committee to agree the priorities and budgets for 2007/08 and the resulting level of Council Tax.

The Director of Resources noted that since the preliminary revenue budgets were considered by Members in November the increase in the base interest rate had resulted in additional interest on investments amounting to £11K. He also asked Members to note that the forecast net reduction in income of £75K in relation to Land Charges Fees has since been reduced to £35K. He asked the Committee to consider whether they wished to use this additional income to fund growth items, as outlined in tables 3 and 4 in the report.

The Committee asked that the growth items in table 3 of the report numbered 10, 11 and 12, relating to Health and Safety and business continuity requirements, be limited to a combined budget of £10K and agreed.

Members agreed that the coastal defence and land drainage scheme, as set out as item 2 in table 4, be funded from the revenue budget, in conjunction with Worthing Borough Council.

Members queried the inclusion of item 5 of table 3 for continuation of post CE396(T), Environmental Health Technical and asked why managers were not funding this post from within existing budgets, as requested. The Director of Services clarified that funding for this post, which is necessary for the ongoing study on contaminated land, forms part of the Revenue Support Grant but needs formal agreement by Members. This was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee discussed the revenue item relating to post CS.17(T). Members were reluctant to agree funding for additional permanent posts. However, it was felt that administrative support for Divisional Heads was essential at this time whilst senior officer availability was limited. As such it was agreed that funding for the continuation of this post be found from other sources.

Members did not support the inclusion of the growth item set out as number 8 in table 3 for £7K to fund consumables for local printers. It was felt that the investment made previously in Multi Functional Devices (MFDs) should have reduced the need for local printers.

The changes agreed above can be summarised as follows:

Budget Item	Additional Income	Increased Expenditure	Impact on Budget Requirement
	£	£	£
Budget Requirement as set out in the report			5,489,910
Additional Interest on Investments	11,000		(-)11,000
Land Charges - reduction in anticipated loss of income	35,000		(-)35,000
			5,443,910
Health & Safety, Business Continuity - growth bids totalling £14K – include capped provision of £10k		10,000	10,000
Coast Defence / Land Drainage – Worthing Support		10,000	10,000
Continuation of funding on temporary post CE396(T), Environmental Health Technician (Contaminated Land).		22,000	22,000
Other – e.g. Pay & Grading		5,160	5,160
			5,491,070
Make permanent post CS17(T), Admin. Assistant. Post currently funded by income from WBC for Joint Chief Executive. Committee agreed that Officers use salary savings on CenSus ICT to fund post to 31/3/08 pending review of Partnership Strategy with Worthing BC.	15,000	15,000	0
			5,491,070

Members were pleased to note that the resulting Council tax increase was much reduced from the level anticipated earlier in the year. The Committee agreed the contents of the report and the changes to the base budget as outlined above and proposed an increase in Council Tax of 4.9%, subject to further discussions at full Council.

Resolved that it be recommended to Council:

- (i) that the General Fund net revenue budget, be agreed, as amended;
- (ii) that the average Band D council tax figure be agreed as set out in the report.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:35pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

Chairman