

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Policy and Strategy Committee
29 January 2008**

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

*Councillor Gavin Ayling
Councillor Keith Dollemore
Councillor Robert Dunn

Councillor Liza McKinney
*Councillor Angie Mills

Absent*

PSC/546/07-08 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

There were no declarations of interest or substitute members.

PSC/547/07-08 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 Foreguard of 10 Freshfields Drive, Lancing and of the Federation of Small Businesses asked a number of questions relating to the Council's budget for 2008/09.

PSC/548/07-08 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 4 December 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PSC/549/07-08 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

The Director of Services presented a report entitled 'Fit for the Future' which he asked the Chairman to agree as an urgent item of business by reasons of special circumstances, as a response from the Council on the Primary Care Trust's decision criteria was required by 30 January 2008. This was agreed by the Chairman.

Resolved that under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, by reason of special circumstances, the following additional item will be considered at the meeting: 'Fit for the Future - Developing the Final Decision Making Criteria'.

PSC/550/07-08 Fit for the Future - Developing the Final Decision Making Criteria

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members as an urgent item and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes.

The Director of Services introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider a response to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) on their draft decision making criteria for the future of health care provision in the District, as set out in the report, which must be submitted by 30 January 2008. He noted that the Council's consultant had emailed some suggested comments for the response. Copies of the email were distributed to those present.

The Committee considered each of the categories of the criteria in the draft response and the comments from the Consultant and then suggested amendments.

Members expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of local health services, particularly to those in deprived communities, and asked that this be emphasised in the response. Members asked if the response to the PCT could be worded to clarify that the Council continues to disagree with the PCT's original proposal to reshape the provision of local health services.

Members commented that the PCT criteria under 'Financial Sustainability' contradicted the PCT's original position, which was that the review was not being undertaken to save money.

The Committee expressed concerns that the criteria did not currently take into account the high number of new homes planned for the area and the resulting increase in population and demand on health services. Members also expressed concerns regarding the implications of the proposed changes on the PCT's workforce, commenting that, for example, local employees may not be able to commute to an alternative place of work in Chichester or Brighton.

Members asked the officers to incorporate the concerns raised in to the Council's response and include the comments suggested by the Council's Consultant, as set out in the email.

Resolved that the draft response to the Primary Care Trust's draft decision making criteria for the future of health care provision in the District, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed, as amended at the meeting in line with the discussions and as per the comments suggested by the Council's Consultant.

PSC/551/07-08 West Sussex Local Area Agreement

Before the Committee was a report by the Community Wellbeing 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 5.

The Community Wellbeing Manager introduced the report which updated members on the Council's priorities for inclusion in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), as submitted to West Sussex County Council following the Member training session earlier in the month, and asked for the Committee's endorsement.

The Committee thanked the officer for a comprehensive piece of work and a valuable training session. Members agree the submission, as set out in the report.

Resolved that the Council's submission to West Sussex County Council on the priorities for inclusion by Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council in the second generation West Sussex Local Area Agreement, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted and agreed.

PSC/552/07-08 State of the District Forum - Budget Consultation 2008/2009

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 6.

The Director of Resources introduced the report which outlined the comments received from the public consultation on the Council's budget and asked members if they wished to take any action in light of those comments. He noted that the Council was yet to receive any formal response from the Department of Transport regarding the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

The Committee noted the responses and agreed that no further action was required.

Resolved

- (i) that the comments received from the public Budget Consultation and the summary of the results from the State of the District Forum, as set out in the report, be noted;
- (ii) that no further action is required in light of these comments;
- (iii) that the comments be taken into account by Members in making recommendations on the budget for 2008/09 to the Council meeting on 18 February 2008.

PSC/553/07-08 Revenue Budget 2008/09

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 7.

The Interim Head of Financial Services introduced the report which asked the Members to recommend the Council's Revenue Budget for 2008/09 to Council. He noted that the Council's Revenue Support Grant had been confirmed at the draft levels and that there had been no indication of any change in the position regarding funding for Concessionary Travel, and therefore advised members to proceed on the basis of the financial position set out in the report.

The Committee agreed that the earmarked funds be approved for the purposes set out in Annex H, if required.

Members discussed the Council's financial position and expressed concerns regarding the increasing pressures and requirements being placed on the Council and the reductions in central government funding.

The Committee discussed whether any provisions should be made for a change in the financial position, should the Council receive notification of an improved funding offer in relation to Concessionary Travel prior to the decision on Council Tax at the Council meeting on 18 February 2008.

The Chief Executive advised that with many financial uncertainties ahead, such as the possibility of appeals by the local bus companies, if the financial position should improve, any additional funding should be reserved.

Members were pleased to note that the proposed Council Tax increase was much reduced from the level anticipated earlier in the year and thanked officers and Members of the Budget Review Working Group for their work on this item. The Committee agreed the contents of the report and proposed an increase in Council Tax of 4.5%, subject to further information and discussions at full Council on 18 February 2008.

Resolved that it be recommended to Council:

- (i) that the General Fund net revenue budget be agreed;
- (ii) that the prudential indicators set out in Annex I of the report be agreed.

PSC/554/07-08 Setting Council Tax 2008/09

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 8.

The Interim Head of Financial Services introduced the report which set out the District Council tax requirement and the Special Expenses charge for 2008/09. He noted a typographical error in the recommendations in paragraph 2.0 and asked for the figures to be amended to read £15.84 and £247.23, as per the main body of the report. He noted that the Council Tax overall requirements will be finalised once the precepts by West Sussex County Council and Sussex Police Authority have been set and asked the Committee to note the contents of the report and make recommendations to full Council.

Members asked for confirmation that residents would be provided with an explanation note with their Council Tax bills, outlining the reasons for the Special Expenses part of the charge. This was confirmed by the officers.

The Committee discussed the information in the report, noting that the cost to the Council of the Concessionary Travel scheme accounted for over the majority of the proposed Council Tax increase for the District. Members agreed the recommendations in the report, as amended.

Resolved that it be recommended to Council:

- (i) that the Special Expenses for the general district Council Tax for 2008/09 of £15.84 per Band D equivalent for all areas except Lancing be agreed;
- (ii) that a District wide Council Tax requirement for 2008/09 of £247.23 per Band D equivalent be agreed;

PSC/555/07-08 Streamlining Local Development Frameworks

Before the Committee was a report by the Planning Policy 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 9.

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report and explained to the Committee the proposed changes to the Local Development Frameworks process. She asked Members to consider the draft response set out in paragraph 4.0 of the report.

Members were pleased to see the proposal to streamline Local Development Framework production, which had previously been 'process heavy', and agreed the draft response and the recommendation in the report.

Resolved that the Council's response to the Department for Communities and Local Government on the consultation draft 'Streamlining Local Development Frameworks', as set out in paragraph 4.0 of the report, be agreed.

PSC/556/07-08 Former Coast Guard Station, Albion Street, Southwick

Before the Committee was a report by the Planning Policy 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 10.

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider a proposal to designate an area of Albion Street in Southwick as a Conservation Area and asked for approval to undertake further investigation and public consultation on the proposal.

The Committee agreed that the buildings were attractive and had some historical value but queried whether designation as a Conservation Area would be appropriate, given that many modern features were already in place, such as satellite dishes and uPVC windows.

Members agreed that the recommendation in the report be amended to emphasise that approval was being given only to further consultation and investigation on this matter, and not to the proposal itself.

On a vote the recommendation, as amended, was agreed. Councillor Liza McKinney asked for it to be noted that she voted against the amended recommendation.

Resolved that the proposal to undertake further officer investigations and public consultation on the potential designation of the former coast guard station, Albion Street, Southwick as a conservation area, be approved.

PSC/557/07-08 CenSus Joint Committee Minutes

The Committee noted the minutes of the CenSus Joint Committee held on 14 December 2007, a copy 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.

Resolved that the Minutes of the CenSus Joint Committee held on 14 December 2007 be noted.

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

Chairman