



Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, on Thursday, 23 March 2017** at 10:00am

Present:

Councillors P Gardiner (Chair), S Catlin, J Carter, N Enever, J Harrison-Hicks, S Osborne and J Peterson (Minutes 47 to 52).

Officers Present:

J Blackwell, Regeneration Project Manager (Minutes 47 to 53)
P Evans, Director of Tourism and Enterprise (Minutes 47 to 53)
J Harper, Head of Business Strategy and Performance
B Lewis, Head of Properties and Facilities (Minutes 47 to 50)
I Morris, Head of Planning and Revenues (Minutes 47 to 51)
J Norman, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Seven members of the public

Minutes

47 Committee Membership

Resolved:

- 47.1** To note the appointment of Councillor Bill Bovington on the Scrutiny Committee membership for the remainder of the current municipal year.

48 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Action

49 Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors V Ient and R O'Keeffe MBE. Councillor Catlin declared that he was acting as substitute for Councillor O'Keeffe MBE for the duration of the meeting.

50 Turkish Baths

The Committee considered Report No 64/17 which requested that it examine the proposals which related to the former Turkish Baths building in advance of the Cabinet's reconsideration thereof.

In addition to the proposals set out in the Report, representatives from community organisations had been invited to provide evidence to the Committee which related to proposed alternative uses of the site formerly known as the Turkish Baths which would benefit residents throughout the District, and members were asked to consider this evidence as part of their deliberations.

The Committee considered presentations made by Making Lewes and Moving Theatre.

After discussion, giving consideration to the presentations, the Committee agreed the following resolution:

Resolved:

- 50.1** That Cabinet be asked to reconsider the options set out in paragraph 3.4 of Report No 100/16 as appended to Report No 64/17, and in particular to consider, following full and proper consideration by officers, whether option B may provide the best consideration in light of social value, attraction of potential inward investment and other wider social and economic benefits.

CO/HPF

51 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Committee considered Report No 65/17 which detailed the background of the implementation of the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and its subsequent maintenance.

The Committee referred to paragraph 14 on page 25 of the Report when it discussed the reasons why applications to the Council's Hardship Fund were failing. It suggested possible ways to promote the Fund, such as advertising at Food Banks, as a way to reach residents throughout the District who may not be aware of the Fund's existence.

The Committee noted its concern about the perceived imbalance for the District's self-employed residents, and queried whether the Council could reappraise the conditions regarding council tax reduction for the self-employed, such as the minimum wage income being reconsidered. The Head of Planning and Revenues explained that if the Council was to reassess the current conditions by following the conditions for 2014/2015, it would create a gap in the Council's income.

Resolved:

51.1 That Report No 65/17 be noted.

52 Strategic Tourism Vision and Action Plan

The Committee considered Report No 66/17 which set out the Council's Strategic Tourist Vision & Action Plan 2015 – 2018.

The Regeneration Project Manager reminded the Committee that it had agreed at its meeting on 12 January 2017 to request a scrutiny report regarding the Council's role in relation to Tourism. When the scope of this work was agreed, the Committee asked that particular consideration be given to:

- Lewes District Council (LDC)'s relationship with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA);
- The promotion of sustainable transport in tourism;
- The promotion of popular visitor attractions on the borders of the District; and
- Future plans working with Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) and benefits of collaboration.

The Regeneration Project Manager discussed the Council's Strategic Tourist Vision & Action Plan 2015 – 2018, highlighting the new opportunities that the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP) provided for working with other authorities across the District. She further highlighted, for example, that the Council had established positive relationships with the Sustainable Tourism Officer and team at the SDNPA, and that over the last two years LDC had worked in partnership with the SDNPA on a number of successful small scale projects.

The Regeneration Project Manager referred to page 29 of the Report when she explained that a full report on the Future Tourism in Lewes had been scheduled for a future meeting of the Cabinet in September 2017, which would identify in more detail the future operations and opportunities of sharing services with EBC's Tourism and Enterprise department.

The Committee queried how the Council could support sustainable tourism. The Director of Tourism and Enterprise highlighted several examples which included that the Council had been working with post-graduate students from the University of Brighton to raise awareness of sustainable tourism by writing itineraries featuring smaller towns within the District.

The Committee thanked officers for their responses. The Committee was advised that a full report on Tourism would be presented later in the year, which, it was anticipated, would occur at the meeting of the Cabinet that was scheduled to be held on 27 September 2017, and that the Committee would be able to review Tourism again when that report was available.

Resolved:

- 52.1** That the Committee request that a letter be written to Southern Rail asking that the Southease Railway Station should be protected and that trains should stop there more frequently and into the evening, so that a better service was available to those using the Youth Hostel at Southease.

RPG/
DTE**53 Forward Plan of Decisions – 1 March 2017 to 30 June 2017**

The Committee received the Forward Plan of the Council, as set out under pages 39 to 44 of the Agenda.

Resolved:

- 53.1** That the Forward Plan of the Council for the period from 1 March 2017 to 30 June 2017, be noted.

54 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee congratulated the Head of Business Strategy and Performance on her new role and thanked her for her support, as this meeting was her last advising the Committee on scrutiny matters.

Resolved:

- 54.1** That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on Friday, 27 April 2017 in the Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, commencing at 10:00am, be cancelled due to insufficient business on this occasion; and
- 54.2** That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on Thursday, 15 June 2017 in the Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, commencing at 10:00am, be noted.

All to
note

The meeting ended at 12:10pm.

P Gardiner
Chair