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Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - East Pallant House on Tuesday 19 June 2018 at 9.30 am

Members Present: Mrs C Apel (Chairman), Mrs N Graves (Vice-Chairman), Mr P Budge, Mrs P Dignum, Mr M Dunn, Mr G Hicks, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr K Martin, Caroline Neville, Dr K O'Kelly, Mrs P Plant, Mr H Potter and Mr A Shaxson

Members not present: Mr N Galloway and Mr J Ransley

In attendance by invitation:

Officers present: Mrs J Dodsworth (Director of Residents' Services), Mr L Foord (Divisional Manager for Promotion and Events), Miss L Higenbottam (Democratic Services), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mr D Hyland (Community and Partnerships Support Manager), Mr J Mildred (Divisional Manager for Corporate Services), Mrs S Peyman (Divisional Manager for Culture), Mr T Radcliffe (Human Resources Manager) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

213 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Kate O'Kelly to her first Overview and Scrutiny Committee following her appointment at Annual Council on 22 May 2018.

The Committee and all those present then observed a minutes silence for the late Steve Hansford. The Chairman expressed the great sadness felt by members and officers who had known Mr Hansford and wished to convey sincere condolences to his family.

The Chairman announced that Mrs Jones had recently retired. The Committee took the opportunity to express their thanks to Mrs Jones for her role in supporting the Committee.

Apologies had been received from Mr Galloway and Mr Ransley.

The Chairman explained that a minutes silence would also be held at 12 noon in remembrance of those who lost their lives and were affected by the Finsbury Park attack last year.

214 **Approval of Minutes**

The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 May 2018.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising:

Minute 209 (of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 relating to the Community Safety Review 2018):

With regard to car washing Miss Higenbottam read a response from Mrs Murphy, Divisional Manager which explained that the council chose not to renew the car washing contract in the autumn of last year and as yet no decision had been made as to whether or not to proceed with a car washing service.

Minute 211 (of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 relating to the Forward Plan):

With regard to the IT Strategy Mr Ward explained that Mr Forward had been appointed IT Manager. Mr Forward would be undertaking a review of the IT Strategy towards the end of the year.

Minute 211 (of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 relating to the Forward Plan):

With regard to potholes Mr Hyland read a response to the Committee's letter to West Sussex County Councillor Bob Lanzer. The response explained that the West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Highways team had prioritised areas where roads had deteriorated over the winter period. An additional £540,000 had been made available to address potholes (providing at least 2,000 pothole repairs over the course of the year).

215 Late Items

The Chairman explained that questions raised by Mr Lloyd-Williams and Mr Plowman would be addressed under item 11.

216 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

217 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

218 The Novium Museum

This item was presented by Mrs Peyman.

Mrs Peyman summarised the report with particular reference to sections 3, 5 and 6. She described the main aspects of the options appraisal process and explained that option 3 was preferred.

The Committee received answers to questions including the following:

- *Were any alternatives considered other than those outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report?* Consideration was also given to altering the Novium building or seeking an alternative use for the building.
- *With regard to the business plan has consideration been given to extending the café and changing displays on a more regular basis?* Officers are considering possible ways to improve the café offer. The new manager has also been working on a two year exhibition programme including a new games exhibition and a number of rolling local and national exhibitions.
- *Please provide details of the costs of each option.* The business plan detailing the costings will be available to members in October.
- *What level of tourism does the museum generate for the visitor economy compared to the gallery and theatre?* Current tourism figures are not available solely for the museum so a direct comparison with the gallery and the theatre is difficult however, it is estimated that the Tim Peake exhibition saw approximately 50,000 visitors to the city. **(Please also refer to the post meeting note.)**
- *Could the gallery and museum be merged?* A possible merger has been explored but was not taken forward.
- *What are the main areas of expense for the museum?* A large proportion of funding is spent on staffing, building costs, repairs, maintenance, exhibitions and marketing for the museum and Guildhall.
- *How does the museum generate income?* The museum generates income from workshops, talks, lectures, grant funding and donations with work underway to enable contactless donations. Local partners and businesses continue to be approached for sponsorship support. Roman Week was very successful with 2,000 visitors to Priory Park. A partnership is also in place with the theatre for the production of the David Walliams play 'The Midnight Gang'.

Members also suggested the following improvements:

- Additional dressing up clothes for children
- Provision of an evening or pop-up restaurant
- A greater use of the Roman connection such as provision of a glass floor/viewing platform
- Utilising Boxgrove artefacts for a future exhibition
- Installing a greater number of displays on the walls including mosaics

Mrs Peyman explained that a number of these suggestions had already been considered however she would pass on the idea of utilising the Boxgrove artefacts to the museum manager.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made on the procurement project for the management of the Novium Museum and Tourist Information Services be noted.
2. That the Committee be provided with a progress update at its meeting in November 2018.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

That the Cabinet approves the proposal set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the agenda report.

Post meeting note

With reference to the question relating to the visitor economy Mrs Peyman provided the following information below:

(Details contained on page 17 of the TSE Research document ‘The Visitor Economy of Chichester – Building the evidence base, September 2016’)

Economic impact of city attractions

3.3.1 There are 54 visitor attractions across the District, and 17 of these are based in the City/PO19 area. The main city centre based attractions are Chichester Cathedral, Festival Theatre, Pallant House, and The Novium.

3.3.2 A study of the economic impact of these attractions on the economy show that together these attractions generate £15.7 million annually for businesses across the City, District and the wider region.

Table 13: Economic impact of city attractions

<i>Expenditure</i>	Chichester Cathedral	Festival Theatre	Pallant House	The Novium	Total
City	£5,213,920	£7,700,328	£1,258,170	£471,619	£14,644,037
Wider district and region	£454,414	£519,073	£87,480	£50,676	£1,111,643
Total	£5,668,334	£8,219,401	£1,345,650	£522,296	£15,755,681
<i>FTE jobs</i>					
City	78.5	87.7	21.1	7.1	194.4
Wider district and region	7.4	8.4	1.4	0.8	18.0
Total	85.8	96.2	22.5	7.9	212.4

A full copy of the report can be found on the council’s website at the following link:

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/businessresearch>

219 **Sickness Levels within Chichester District Council**

This item was presented by Mr Mildred. Mr Radcliffe was also present.

Mr Mildred summarised the report with particular reference to sections 3, 4 and 5. He also circulated 2016/17 benchmarking figures from the LGA Workforce Survey. He explained that there were many reasons why the level of sickness absence appeared high. Notably, following the transfer of Westgate staff the figures had increased as the Westgate staff had always averaged lower sickness absence. It can also be difficult to compare results with other local authorities as the council has an in-house Depot where others have outsourced. Due to the nature of the manual

work at the Depot its staff often have higher levels of sickness absence. Mr Radcliffe added that the figures for smaller teams are often skewed if there is one long term sickness case.

Mr Mildred emphasised that the approach to sickness absence moving forwards would be more personalised. He explained that currently sickness is recorded on the online HR system and in some cases it was possible that there had been a lack of face to face discussion with the manager on return to work. In addition (where appropriate) resilience will now be tested at job interview stage.

The Absence Management Policy is to be rewritten and the new policy will set out clearly the expectations for both employees and managers. New triggers for welfare meetings and formal cautions are to be set and will help improve consistency of application. Methods of notification of sickness and back to work interviews will also be prescribed in the policy, again improving consistency of application. The corporate Stress Risk Assessment procedure is also being updated and will focus on personalised wellbeing plans to ensure that the council is doing all it can support employees and reduce stress related absence.

Mr Mildred emphasised that the council is already proactively managing sickness and the formal management processes have resulted in several dismissals each year in recent years.

The Committee received answers to questions including the following:

- *Why has there been a rise in the average number of sickness absence days over the last six years compared to the Office of National Statistics downward trend?* The figures for the Office of National Statistics include those who are self-employed who are more likely to continue to work through illness compared to an employee who may be signed off by a doctor and therefore unable to return to the workplace as quickly. The council has experienced a significant growth in the amount of long term sickness in that six year period.
- *Could stress related sickness be compared with the private sector as well as other local authorities?* Where appropriate private sector best practice is considered although stress has risen nationally not just in local authorities.
- *Did the Shared Services project have an effect on stress related absence?* The teams affected by the Shared Services project have not seen high stress related absence rates.
- *Could the increase in stress be due to a greater nationwide mental health issue?* In most cases of stress the underlying root cause is from issues or events outside of the work place. The council offers counselling services through the Employee Assistance Programme which is a confidential service available to all staff.
- *Face to face return to work interviews are key. Will managers be specifically trained in this process?* Face to face interviews should already be taking place however they are not necessarily formally carried out in all cases of sickness absence. Under the new Absence Management Policy the interviews are compulsory and will be formally recorded. These interviews should help pick up significant issues or underlying concerns relating to the sickness. As part of ongoing development managers will be trained on how to carry out the process.

- *Why are sickness absence levels so different at the Depot?* The nature of the work at the depot affects the levels of sickness and this is consistent with in house depot services nationally. The depot's sick pay is less generous than that of the rest of the council, this is permitted due to them being on a pay scheme that is outside of National Joint Council and its associated requirements on sick pay. Whilst the level of absence remains concerning, monthly meetings continue to be held with the Depot management and HR to review all long term sickness cases.
- *Is the council too lenient on absence?* The council has an Absence Management Policy. Staff who suffer ill health are supported through the process however, it is sometimes necessary for the council to terminate employment if it becomes apparent that a member of staff will be unable to return to work. The council is limited in potential changes to the sick pay scheme as a member of the National Joint Council (NJC) Framework as being part of the scheme requires minimum levels of sick pay to be adhered to.
- *Is the flexible working policy effective?* Overall the flexible working policy has been effective and it is valued by staff. Flexible working allows staff to work from home and work outside core business hours if it suits the business needs. Some teams have less flexibility due to the nature of their job roles. It is important that staff are not working when they are sick/not fit for work however each case is considered separately and where appropriate phased returns or working from home will be agreed (e.g. broken ankle).
- *Could the sickness absence rates be separated for current staff and staff who have now left the council?* The current figures provide a meaningful comparison but some clarification comments could be provided.
- *Why have revisions been made to the key absence management documents? Are there concerns that suggest a full review is required?* A full review has been carried out which is why there are suggested changes to key documents. Officers will continue to consult with the Joint Employee Consultative Panel to ensure staff involvement in the revisions.

The Committee felt it would be appropriate to receive a progress update in six month's time.

RESOLVED

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the current position regarding sickness absence within Chichester District Council and the proposed actions as set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.5 of the agenda report.
2. That the Committee be provided with a progress update at its meeting in January 2019.

The Committee took a short break.

220 Consultation Review Task and Finish Group - Terms of Reference and Scoping Outline Plan

This item was presented by Mr Foord.

Mr Foord summarised the terms of reference. He explained that as part of the work on the communications strategy it had become timely to revisit how consultations are delivered and how they could be improved. In order to complete the review a member task and finish group would be required. To date Mr Galloway and Caroline Neville had volunteered.

The Chairman asked the Committee for volunteers. Mrs Plant and Mr Moss put themselves forward. The Chairman indicated she wished to act as an observer at the meetings.

Mr Foord agreed to contact members with possible dates.

RESOLVED

1. That the Terms of Reference for the Consultation Review Task and Finish Group be agreed.
2. That Nigel Galloway, Adrian Moss, Caroline Neville and Penny Plant be approved as members of this Task and Finish Group.

221 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 2017-2018 Annual Report and 2018-2019 Work Programme

This item was presented by Mr Hyland.

Mr Hyland explained that Mrs Jones had compiled the report which would go on to the Full Council for noting.

The Committee received answers to questions including the following:

- *Is there an update on the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) management agreement?* The purpose of the discussion at the Committee had been to document the work but a further update will be provided in November.
- *Should the Corporate Plan Review include a Task and Finish Group as per previous years?* This will be considered by officers who will update members.
- *Will there be a further update on the Housing Strategy?* The final report from the Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group will be provided in September with the final strategy considered in March.
- *Will the Education Review include a focus on academies?* Academies have been included in previous reviews. A number of factors will be considered including the recently highlighted importance of readiness for work.

RESOLVED

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 2017-2018 Annual Report be agreed.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2018-2019 Work Programme be agreed.

222 **Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan but did not wish to discuss any items further.

223 **Late Items**

Mr Lloyd-Williams had emailed members and officers requesting reassurance regarding the status of the city centre following the announcement that the department store House of Fraser would be closing.

Mrs Hotchkiss responded by explaining that with regard to business rates the council had not been made aware of any businesses that had suffered as a direct result of their rates as any large increases had been mitigated. To date no applications for hardship relief had been received. Mrs Hotchkiss outlined the trend for online shopping which had started to change the type of offer consumers require from the high street with greater emphasis placed on services such as cafes and salons. She explained that the council is keen as part of the Chichester Vision project to encourage businesses to consider the city centre as a destination providing in-store experiences and activities and a greater variety of leisure, learning and exercise options.

Mrs Hotchkiss reminded members that a business rates briefing would take place prior to the Full Council meeting in July.

With reference to the need for in-store experiences members commented on the need for specialist shops and a conference centre or large venue to encourage cultural events. With regard to the House of Fraser building it was suggested that it could be converted to accommodation to provide housing at an affordable rate for those trying to get on the property ladder.

In response to a question regarding developing out of season tourism on the Manhood Peninsula Mrs Hotchkiss explained that the council had been looking at ways to support the project.

Members thanked Mrs Hotchkiss for responding to Mr Lloyd-Williams concerns.

The Chairman then read a question from Mr Plowman regarding a section of the planning service. Mr Ward advised that the matter should be referred to Mr Frost outside of the public meeting.

224 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee took a vote to go into Part II which was agreed.

RESOLVED

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of agenda item 13 (Award of a Services Concessions Contract) agrees to make a resolution that the public including the press should be excluded from the meetings on the following grounds of exemption in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 namely

Paragraphs 1 (information relating to any individual) and 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) and because, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

225 **Award of a Services Concessions Contract**

This item was presented by Mrs Dodsworth.

Mrs Dodsworth summarised the report with particular reference to sections 3, 5, 6 and 9.

The Committee received answers to a number of part II questions.

Following discussion the Committee were in favour of the recommendation.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the outcome of the review outlined in paragraph 5 of the report.

The meeting ended at 12.58 pm

CHAIRMAN

Date: