

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Joint Governance Committee of
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

Gordon Room, Town Hall, Worthing

Tuesday 20 January 2015

Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes (Chairman)

Adur District Council:

*Councillor Rod Hotton
*Councillor Carson Albury
Councillor James Butcher
Councillor Ann Bridges
Councillor David Donaldson
*Councillor Emily Hilditch
Councillor Paul Graysmark
Councillor Barry Mear

Worthing Borough Council:

*Councillor Noel Atkins
Councillor Mark Nolan
Councillor Sean McDonald
Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Luke Proudfoot
Councillor Hazel Thorpe
Councillor Bob Smytherman

*Absent

JGC/14-15/008 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Noel Atkins, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Elizabeth Sparkes, chaired the meeting.

Councillor Bob Smytherman declared a personal interest in matters relating to the Worthing Town Centre Initiative.

JGC/14-15/009 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

JGC/14-15/010 Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on the 25th November 2014 and the Joint Governance Sub Committee meeting held on the 25th November 2014, were both agreed as accurate records.

JGC/14-15/011 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

JGC/14-15/012 Proposed Revision of Joint Contract Standing Orders

Before the Committee was a report, presented by the Procurement and Contracts Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies of which are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 5.

The report proposed a number of amendments to the joint Contract Standing Orders which had been the subject of consultation with both Executive Members for Resources, both Chairmen of the Joint Governance Committee and the Council's Leadership Team.

Members sought clarification on how 'Social Value' was calculated. Officers confirmed that a social value policy would be produced in conjunction with the commissioning policy and a report would be provided to Members at a later date.

The Committee noted that it was proposed to remove standing lists from the process in order to avoid challenge as they were seen as anti-competitive and the information contained within became dated very quickly.

Officers confirmed that 'consultation with the Mayor', as identified in paragraph 8.3.2, had been included within Contract Standing Orders for a long time. The Mayor would not be the first point of contact, but could be called upon in special circumstances or emergencies.

Members questioned what processes were in place to manage Contract Performance, covered in paragraphs 8.19.1 to 8.19.3. It was noted that contract management training would be provided to all officers involved with quotations or tender processes, a contract register would be maintained and there would be a contract management portal.

A Member questioned how local businesses could compete for contracts with the Councils and whether they had been consulted about the revisions to Contract Standing Orders. Officers advised that the procurement portal listed all upcoming contracts providing transparency in regards to the Council's business. It was also noted that all contracts exceeding £10k in value would be advertised on a government portal.

Members raised concerns at the number of typographical, spelling and grammatical mistakes within the revised Contract Standing Orders document. Officers advised that there was a degree of urgency regarding the adoption of the revised framework and that the deficiencies identified would be addressed before publishing the final document.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee recommended that Adur and Worthing Councils approve the revised Joint Contract Standing Orders, subject to the amendments identified by the Committee. The final amended version, to be approved by the Councils' Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with, the Committee Chairmen.

JGC/14-15/013 Internal Audit Progress Report

Before the Committee was a report, presented by the Acting Head of Internal Audit, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 6.

The report outlined the performance of the Internal Audit Section for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014 against the agreed 2014/15 Annual Internal Audit Plan and provided a summary of the audit work completed.

A summary of the key issues raised in the 7 final audit reports, issued since the last report to Committee, was provided in Appendix 2. The status of the follow-up to the agreed audit recommendations was provided in Appendices 3 and 4.

The assurance levels of the 7 finalised reports were:-

- 1 full assurance;
- 5 satisfactory assurances; and
- 1 limited assurance

The Committee noted that the management structure was settled enough to progress this work with internal auditors working with Directors to move forward outstanding recommendations.

A Member questioned why 'no response' comments had been recorded alongside some of the outstanding recommendations and wanted to know who should have replied and why they had not? The Committee was advised that officers who were responsible for implementing recommendations were regularly contacted and asked to provide updates on progress.

A Member questioned the number of recommendations being carried forward from one year to the next. It was noted that non-implemented recommendations were identified and investigated as part of future audit work.

Members were dissatisfied by the number of 'no responses' received by Internal Audit, following requests for information, regarding recommendations which had not been implemented. It was proposed that the relevant Director, or, member of staff, be requested to explain in writing, why such requests had not been responded to and that these be included in the next Internal Audit Progress Report.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee

- i) noted the performance of the Internal Audit Section for 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2014 against the 2014/15 audit plan;
- ii) noted the summary of the key issues raised in final audit reports issued since the last report to this Committee and the current status on the follow-up on Internal Audit recommendations made as a result of audits completed during 2012/13 and 2013/14;

- iii) requested that the relevant Director, or, member of staff, provide a written response, to be included in the next Internal Audit Progress Report, explaining the reasons for 'no responses' being provided to reminders from Internal Audit, in relation to outstanding recommendations.

JGC/14-15/014 Joint Independent Remuneration Panel Report on the Scheme of Members Allowances for Adur District Council

Before the Committee was a report, presented by the Democratic Services Officer and Chairman of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP), copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The report from the Joint Independent Remunerations Panel (JIRP) on Members allowances for Adur District Council ("The Council"), for the municipal years 2014/15 and 2015/16, recommended that the Council (via the Joint Governance Committee) consider two options for increasing allowances.

Members received updated budget figures at the meeting and were informed these improved the position with reduced overspends resulting from option 1 and increased underspends resulting from option 2.

The Committee noted that the Joint Governance Committee Vice-Chairman for Worthing Borough Council did not currently, receive a special responsibility allowance and suggested this be considered as part of the next review of Worthing Members Allowances.

Mr Hillman, Chairman of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, outlined some of the key points in the report informing the Committee that the Panel had recommended a 5% increase for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, as detailed in option 1.

Members questioned how the Panel had arrived at the 5% figure. The Committee was advised that the allowances paid to Adur Councillors were some of the lowest in the South East of England. The Panel had also identified a need for allowances paid to Adur and Worthing Councillors to be more closely aligned, in order to better reflect the joint working between the two Councils.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee:-

- noted the report and recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel; and
- recommended that Adur District Council adopt Option 2, as set out in the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel report.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7.42pm, it having commenced at 6:30pm.

Chairman