

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

Gordon Room, Town Hall, Worthing

Tuesday 24 November 2015

Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes (Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Councillor Rod Hotton
*Councillor Carol Albury
*Councillor Ann Bridges
*Councillor James Butcher
Councillor Paul Graysmark
*Councillor Emily Hilditch
Councillor Fred Lewis
*Councillor Barry Mear

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Paul Yallop
Councillor Joan Bradley
Councillor Michael Cloake
Councillor Alex Harman
Councillor Lionel Harman
Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Bob Smytherman

*Absent

JGC/15-16/023 Declarations of Interest

All Councillors declared an interest in Item 8.

JGC/15-16/024 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

JGC/15-16/025 Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on the 29 September 2015, were agreed as a correct record.

JGC/15-16/026 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

JGC/15-16/027 Annual Audit Letters

Before the Committee was a report by Tom Wilkins, External Auditor (Ernst & Young), copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 5.

The Committee was informed that the annual audit letters communicated the key issues arising from the auditors work to both Members and external stakeholders, including members of the public.

Section 4 of the letter identified that a significant challenge to be faced by local authorities in the near future (effective from 1 April 2016), was the implementation of the requirements for Highways Network Assets. Members noted that it could result in a material change of accounting policy for the Councils and necessitate changes to asset management systems and valuation procedures. Latest estimates were that it could add £1,100 billion, nationally, to the net worth of authorities.

Section 5 considered the auditors fees. The Committee was advised that additional fees for the code work had been agreed with officers but were still subject to approval by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA). It was noted that the additional fees proposed were:-

- Adur District Council - £3,573
- Worthing Borough Council - £5,586
- Joint Committee - £4,500

A Member requested an update on the staffing situation in the finance team and details of the overspend to the Worthing Theatres Budget. Officers advised that staff members had returned to work following illness and that consultation regarding the restructure of the finance team was due to be published in January 2016. The Committee noted that the Theatres Budget was £1.2m with an identified overspend of £132k.

The Committee suggested that officers consider how the Councils could better publicise audit reports.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the Annual Audit Letters.

JGC/15-16/028 Internal Audit Progress Report

Before the Committee was a report 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.

Officers provided the Committee with:-

- an outline of the performance of the Internal Audit Section for the period 1st April to 31st October 2015 against the agreed 2015/16 Annual Internal Audit Plan;
- a summary of the key issues raised in the 8 final audit reports issued since the last Joint Governance Committee meeting, details of which were provided in Appendix 2 of the report;
- an the latest position of the follow-up work on agreed audit recommendations made in final audit reports.

The Committee noted that there had been significant management activity in regards to outstanding audit recommendations, a summary of which had been included in Appendix 5. Discussions regarding the implementation of a database to manage outstanding recommendations were ongoing.

A Member requested an update on outstanding Building Maintenance recommendations. Officers advised that the audit on Corporate Buildings had identified that no Service Level Agreement (SLA) was in place. The Councils Leadership Team had recently considered the matter and agreed that a conditions survey should be undertaken. On completion of the survey, an Action Plan would be devised and then monitored on a monthly basis.

The Committee noted that a Review of Adur Homes Repair Services report was due to be considered by the Joint Strategic Committee on 3 December 2015.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee

- noted the performance of the Internal Audit Section for 1st April to 31st October 2015 against the 2015/16 audit plan;
- noted the summary of the key issues raised in final audit reports issued since the last report to the Joint Governance Committee and the current status on the follow-up on Internal Audit recommendations made as a result of audits completed during 2013/14 and 2014/15.

JGC/15-16/029 Disaster Recovery

Before the Committee was a report by the Head of Census ICT, 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 identified that Census ICT was actively looking at 2 options to be delivered this financial year (2015/16) from revenue budgets to further improve the existing Disaster Recovery position; these were:-

- the use of internet (Cloud) based data storage and processor providers (for example Microsoft's Azure platform), that allows full secure authentication, complies with Information Governance data processing legislation, efficient use of resources for access when required and most importantly remote availability independent of the Council's infrastructure;
- the use of the reciprocal backup data arrangement whereby a limited subset (systems prioritised) of Adur and Worthing data, (which is already replicated off-site in Horsham), would be restored, processed by a small hot server farm and made available from Horsham.

The Committee received updates in relation to:-

1. Disaster Recovery Process Documentation
2. Implemented Risk Mitigation Measures
3. Outstanding Risks
4. Potential Additional Risk Mitigation Measures

Members were pleased to see the report and supported the approach adopted, acknowledging that it was a matter of cost and then testing what you have. Officers advised that the Councils were awaiting a report from consultants regarding moving applications off-site. This would ensure, through service level agreements, that servers could be brought back more quickly and would provide greater resilience moving forwards. It was noted that some applications would be moved to cloud based data storage such as the Microsoft Azure platform, some would be moved to Google and that Telephony would be hosted elsewhere. This would enable the Councils to spread risk and prevent all applications going offline at the same time.

It was proposed and seconded that a follow up report be brought to the Committee in 6 months.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee

- noted the contents of the report; and
- requested that an update report be brought back to the Committee in 6 months.

JGC/15-16/030 Joint Independent Remuneration Panel Report on the Scheme of Members Allowances for Adur District Council and for Worthing Borough Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) reports contained proposed changes to the Members allowances for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council, for the municipal years 2016/17.

The Chairman of the Panel, Mr Barry Hillman, attended the meeting and advised Members that the Panel's research identified that allowances paid by Adur District Council were the third lowest in the region and significantly lower than those paid by Worthing Borough Council.

The Panel sought to bring the Special Responsibility Allowance multipliers together as the roles of Councillors from both Councils were very similar. In addition, the Panel sought to reduce the differential in the Basic Allowance between both Councils.

Members of Adur District Council proposed and seconded a change to the travelling and subsistence allowances to add the wording *'that the local agreement to pay out of Sussex mileage rates will not apply to Councillors'*.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance Committee:-

- recommended to Adur District Council that it adopt Option 1:-
 - that Members allowances are indexed to the Officer's NJC National Pay Bargaining agreement plus an increase of £100 to the basic allowance for 2016/17;
 - that the unit based multiplier model be revised to mirror that used to set the allowances of Worthing Borough Council. The suggested multiples to be used for calculating each Special Responsibility Allowance were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
 - that there should be no limit to the number of special responsibilities paid to an individual Member should they be carrying out multiple special responsibilities;

Childcare Allowance / Carers Allowance / Travel and Subsistence Allowance

- that Childcare Allowance (contribution towards the costs of employing a carer for children) should be paid at £10.25 per hour, the panel investigated this cost and found that £10.25 was sufficient to cover the costs of childcare and should be maintained at this rate;
 - that the rate for carers allowance should be differentiated from the child care allowance and set at up to £15 per hour;
 - that travelling & subsistence should be paid at the appropriate rates set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, from time to time, and based on claims submitted by Members, but that the local agreement to pay out of Sussex mileage rates will not apply to Councillors.
- recommended to Worthing Borough Council that it adopt Option 1:-
 - that the basic allowance be referenced to the outcome of the Officers' NJC Pay bargaining agreement for a period of four years until March 2020/2021;
 - that Members be allowed the option to accept more than one Special Responsibility Allowance should they be undertaking more than one special responsibility;
 - that a Special Responsibility Allowance multiplier of (x 0.25) be introduced for the Vice Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee;
 - that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee be raised to (x 0.75);
 - that a Special Responsibility Allowance multiplier of (x 0.5) be introduced for the Mayor of Worthing;

Childcare Allowance / Carers Allowance / Travel and Subsistence Allowance

- that Childcare Allowance (contribution towards the costs of employing a carer for children) should be paid at £10.25 per hour, the panel investigated this cost and found that £10.25 was sufficient to cover the costs of childcare and should be maintained at this rate;
- that the rate for carers allowance should be differentiated from the child care allowance and set at up to £15 per hour;

- that travelling & subsistence should be paid at the appropriate rates set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, from time to time, and based on claims submitted by Members.

JGC/15-16/031 Risk Management Annual Report

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 9.

The report outlined the progress of risk management during 2014/15 and the use of Trello Boards for this purpose. The Committee noted that there were currently 12 Corporate Risks and 122 Service Area Risks outlined in the associated Trello Boards.

Members sought clarification that both Members of the Joint Governance Committee and the Executive could access the Trello Boards and requested that reports be brought to Committee on a quarterly basis in future. Officers confirmed Members of both the Executive and JGC could access the Trello Boards and that reports would be provided quarterly in future.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee:-

- noted the continued progress in improving risk management arrangements in 2014/15 and the current status of the Risks; and
- requested that Corporate and Service Risk Management update Reports be presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis in future.

JGC/15-16/032 Code of Corporate Governance

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

The report identified that it was good practice for each Local Authority to have a Code of Corporate Governance, to ensure that an effective internal system encompassing policies, procedures and staff was maintained.

In addition, it recommended the adoption of a Code of Corporate Governance for both Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.

Members were happy with the content of the Code of Corporate Governance but identified some grammatical inconsistencies within the document that needed correcting before it went to the Councils.

It was proposed and seconded that the Code of Corporate Governance be delegated for approval to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Joint Governance Committee (JGC) Chairmen.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee delegated approval of the Code of Corporate Governance, to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the JGC Chairman, and the recommendation to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council for its inclusion in both Council's constitutions.

**JGC/15-16/033 Recording of Committee and Council meetings; Part B
Exempt Information**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 11.

The Committee were advised that Worthing Borough Council, on the 20 October 2015, approved the recommendation of the Joint Governance Committee, to digitally record its Council and Committee meetings, including the recording of Part B exempt information discussions - those held in private, when the press and public were excluded, as defined under the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Adur District Council, on the 22 October 2015, approved the recommendation of the Joint Governance Committee, to record its Council and Committee meetings but specifically voted not to record any Part B exempt information discussions.

The Joint Governance Committee was requested to consider the implications of recording the exempt parts of meetings of Joint Committee meetings, (Joint Strategic Committee, Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Joint Staff Committee, Joint Senior Staff Committee, Joint Senior Staff Appeals Committee) where Worthing Borough Council had agreed to the digital recording of such discussions but Adur District Council had not.

The Committee considered the merits and risks associated with the recording of Part B exempt information discussions and sought clarification as to when the recording of all meetings would commence. Officers confirmed that all meetings would be recorded from January 2016.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee resolved to bring a motion to the next meeting of Worthing Borough Council, to amend the previous decision to resolve to digitally record its Council and Committee meetings, including Joint meetings with Adur District Council, to exclude all parts of all meetings where the press and public are excluded under the Local Government Act due to exempt information being discussed.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7.54pm, it having commenced at 6:30pm.

Chairman