

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

**Gordon Room, Town Hall, Worthing**

**Tuesday 27 March 2018**

Councillor Lionel Harman (Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

Councillor George Barton  
Councillor Kevin Boram  
Councillor Carol Albury  
Councillor Ann Bridges  
Councillor Jim Funnell  
Councillor Paul Graysmark  
Councillor Barry Mear  
Councillor Geoff Patmore

**Worthing Borough Council:**

\*Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes  
Councillor Paul Baker  
\*Councillor Callum Buxton  
Councillor Jane Sim  
Councillor Bryan Turner  
\*Councillor Steve Wills  
\*Councillor Mark Withers

\*Absent

**JGC/050/17-18      Substitute Members**

There were no substitutions.

**JGC/051/17-18      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**JGC/052/17-18      Minutes**

The minutes of the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on the 30 January 2018, were agreed as a correct record.

**JGC/053/17-18      Public Question Time**

There were no questions from the public.

**JGC/054/17-18      Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items raised.

**JGC/055/17-18      Audit Progress Reports for both Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council**

Before the Committee was a report from the External Auditor, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as item 6.

Hannah Lill, Ernst & Young, attended the meeting and presented the reports which summarised the work that had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Joint Governance Committee in January 2018. The Committee was provided with an update of the auditors plans for the 2017/18 audit to ensure they aligned with expectations.

The audit was being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements.

The Committee was informed that the Housing Benefit Certification work for Worthing Borough Council went beyond the deadline, however, it had now been completed. It was noted that the qualification letter had been drafted and would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

A Member asked what the consequences were for the late filing of accountants or if the audit was delayed. Officers advised that the Councils would either go on a list of authorities who had failed to certify their accounts by the 31 May, or, if the audit didn't get completed in a timely manner, the Councils would be added to a list with the PSAA.

**Resolved,**

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the Audit Progress Reports for both Councils.

**JGC/056/17-18      Certification of claims and returns annual report 2016/17 for Adur District Council**

Before the Committee was a report by the External Auditor, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

Hannah Lill, Ernst & Young, attended the meeting and presented a report which updated the Committee on the auditors certification and other assurance work and summarised the results of work on Adur District Council's 2016-17 claims.

Members were advised that the total of the extrapolations and errors in the qualification letter had the effect of increasing current year LA error and

administrative delay overpayments by £6,374. This was below both the upper and lower threshold and therefore there would not be any additional clawback from the government. This marked a significant drop in clawback from the government for Adur District Council.

The Committee were also informed that there would be no additional fee above that set by the PSAA.

### **Resolved,**

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the '*certification of claims and returns annual report 2016/17 for Adur District Council*'.

### **JGC/057/17-18 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 also attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The report updated Members on the current performance of the Internal Audit Section including the current status on the implementation of agreed audit recommendations, progress on the implementation of actions arising from the ADC Taxie Licensing fact finding audit and fraud work conducted by the Councils' Corporate Investigations Team.

Since the report to Committee in November 2017, thirteen reports had been finalised; ten of those provided a Satisfactory Assurance, two provided a Limited Assurance and one provided No Assurance. It was also noted that twenty three Priority 1 recommendations had been raised within the three reports.

A Member highlighted that there were a number of outstanding recommendations from the 2016/17 audits of Culture (Theatres Catering) and Place & Investment (Management of the Council's Commercial Property Portfolio) and that no updates on progress had been provided. The Acting Head of Internal Audit agreed to provide an update at the next meeting of the Joint Governance Committee.

Another Member questioned the relevance of outstanding recommendations from audit work undertaken in 2015/16. The Committee was advised that if the recommendation(s) had been superseded, they would be removed by Internal Audit. However, follow up audit work may have identified that the issue was still outstanding. The Acting Head of Internal Audit agreed to provide an update at the next meeting of the Joint Governance Committee.

The Director for Communities provided an update for Members on the progress made in relation to the Taxi Audit Action Plan since the previous report to the Committee in November 2017. The Committee noted that relationships with the trade

in both Adur and Worthing were positive and that the Taxi Handbook would be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Resolved,**

That the Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the report.

**JGC/058/17-18      2018/19 Internal Audit Plan**

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 9.

The report requested that Members consider and approve the 2018/19 Internal Audit Plan.

Members highlighted recent problems experienced when calling the contact centre. They had been kept on hold for up to 25 minutes after being advised that they were the first person in the queue. It was proposed and seconded that Internal Audit include an additional item on the Audit Plan for 2018/19 to consider 'the way the public communicates with the Councils'.

A Member queried whether the proposed audit plan would include 'Investment in Property' to consider controls in regard to risk or property management. The Acting Head of Internal Audit confirmed that it would be considered under the Asset Management audit outlined in the plan. Officers advised that construction of the new office block in Adur had also been included as a specific area of work.

**Resolved,**

That the Joint Governance Committee approved the amended 2018/19 Audit Plan, to include an item regarding 'the way the public communicates with the Councils'.

**JGC/059/17-18      Risk and Opportunity Management**

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 provided an update on the management of the Councils' risks and opportunities and included detailed information on the 'High/Red' Service Risks for each Directorate.

## **Resolved,**

The Joint Governance Committee

- noted the progress in managing risks and opportunities;
- agreed to receive a further progress report in September 2018.

### **JGC/060/17-18      Local Government Ombudsman Complaints**

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 report provided further analysis on the most recent Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints that had been processed by the Councils.

Members welcomed the inclusion of an appendix to the report providing details of compliments received by Adur and Worthing Councils.

## **Resolved,**

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive a further analysis of Local Government Ombudsman complaints in September 2018.

### **JGC/061/17-18      Amendments to the Constitution**

Before the Committee was a report by the Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 12.

The report updated the Joint Governance Committee with recent amendments made to the Councils' Constitutions by the Monitoring Officer, and asked Members to note those amendments.

The report also sought Members' approval, and recommendation to each Council, of revised terms of reference for the Joint Governance Committee and the revised Council Procedure Rules relating to Motions on Notice.

Members sought clarification regarding the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference of the Joint Governance Committee outlined in paragraph 3.1.1. of the report. In particular, the co-opting of Parish Councillors onto the Joint Governance Committee for the consideration of Parish matters such as determining allegations that a Member of a Parish Council, within the District of Adur, had failed to comply with the relevant Parish Council Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer advised that it was a statutory provision that Adur District Council undertook Code of Conduct investigations on behalf of Parish Councils within the District and that such complaints would be heard by a Sub-Committee of the Joint Governance Committee. Co-opted Parish Councillors would have an advisory role rather than voting capacity and the proposed changes would reflect provisions elsewhere in the constitution, in particular, the Standards Procedure Rules.

A Member queried the proposed wording of 14.3.3 (as set out in Appendix A) regarding the maximum number of accepted motions to be presented at a Council meeting by the largest political groups. The Monitoring Officer acknowledged that some flexibility would be required if the Council had 4 main political groups and agreed to amend the wording to reflect this.

### **Resolved,**

The Joint Governance Committee

- noted the Monitoring Officer's use of her delegated powers to make minor and consequential amendments to the Constitution;
- recommended to each Council the adoption of the amended terms of reference for the Joint Governance Committee, with effect from 1st May 2018;
- recommended to each Council the adoption of the amended Council Procedure Rule 14, relating to Motions on Notice, with effect from 1st May 2018.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7.28pm, having commenced at 6.30pm.

**Chairman**