

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee of  
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea**

**11 September 2014**

Councillor Liza McKinney (Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

\*Ann Bridges  
James Butcher  
Ken Bishop  
Brian Coomber  
Liz Haywood  
Emily Hilditch  
Rod Hotton

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Roy Barraclough  
\*Keith Bickers  
Edward Crouch  
Dr Heather Mercer  
Mark Nolan  
Keith Sunderland  
Victoria Taylor  
Vino Vinojan

\*Absent

Also present:

WBC Councillors: Mary Lermite, Charles James

ADC Councillors: Jim Funnell, David Simmons

*Officers: Director for Communities, Director for Customer Services, Head of Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Chief Financial Officer, Solicitor to the Council, Head of Communications, Regeneration Manager, Business Services Manager, Policy Officer (ML), Solicitor (JL), Democratic Services Officer (CCD)*

**JOSC/14-15/23 Declarations of Interest/Substitutions**

Councillor Diane Guest declared her substitution for Councillor Keith Bickers.

**JOSC/14-15/24 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Committee held on 31 July 2014 be approved as the correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**JOSC/14-15/25 Public Question Time**

There were no questions.

**JOSC/14-15/26 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items.

**JOSC/14-15/27 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision**

There were no items.

**JOSC/14-15/28 Interviews with the Cabinet Members for Customer Services  
(Cllrs Jim Funnell ADC, Mary Lermite WBC)**

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 6. As part of their work programme the Committee had agreed to Interview Cabinet members on their priorities for 2014-15.

The Cabinet Members informed members of major projects and areas of development within their portfolios

A Member asked if Worthing Theatres had developed a long term plan. The Worthing Cabinet Member informed Members that the initial three year business plan was coming to an end and that a further five year plan was being developed.

A Member asked how an improved financial position had been met by the Theatres. The Worthing Cabinet Member relayed that a staff restructure and improved ticket sales had contributed, citing 42 sold out shows as an example of the improved cultural offer being made. Members were informed that some issues concerning the catering side of the business had been resolved and catering was now in a profitable position.

A Member asked about contact centre call abandonment rates. The Director for Customer Services explained that there had been significant telephony problems which had contributed some of the call abandonment figures. Members were told further of the proposed repositioning of the service and various strategies being considered to make the service more resilient.

A Member asked about plans to change the community alarm system and stressed the importance of the system to those in sheltered housing. The Adur Cabinet Member explained that some of the hardware needed replacing and would become a 'stand-alone' system. The Committee was told that the new system would still include a button type alarm device and could be extended to private residences for a fee.

A Member asked about a particular block of Adur Homes' flats where a bathroom was shared between residents. The Adur Cabinet Member stated that the people in the flats didn't want to move and enjoyed the community that had developed there. If additional bathrooms were to be built it would mean reducing the number of flats in the building which had been resisted by the residents.

A Member asked if Adur Homes was considering building new homes. The Director for Communities informed Members that there was capacity to develop. Developing new homes was difficult due to a scarcity of land although creative options were being investigated including the use of obsolete garage compounds. Members were also told of the council's acquisition programme following sales of 'right to buy' properties, This was qualified by the fact that acquisition was always outstripped by 'right to buy'. A Member asked why the Council bought back properties and asked if it would be better to put the resources to building homes. The Strategic Director stated that

acquisitions added to the housing stock and confirmed that it needed to be complimented with new builds.

Councillor Edward Crouch declared an interest as a member of the Adur Homes Planning Board.

**Resolved:** that the cabinet member interviews be noted.

### **JOSC/14-15/29 Interview with the Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership**

Before the Committee was a report by the Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 7. The report before members detailed the work of the Safer Communities Partnership.

The Chairman of the Safer Communities department introduced the report to the Committee and set out the achievements of the partnership and the challenges it faced. A question had been sent prior to the meeting that had asked how many times, in Worthing, a section 30 order had been issued from June 2014 to August 2014. The Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership relayed that it had been used on five occasions; four times to street drinkers and once to a group of youths. It was further stated that in most cases it was sufficient for the Police to remind people of the existence of the section 30 order.

A Member asked if the 'think family' project could be seen as 'invest to save' if it were in danger of losing funding. The Safer Communities Chairman related that the scheme was in no danger of losing funding because funding was performance related and the Adur and Worthing Scheme was very successful.

A Member asked if the work of street pastors in Worthing had an estimated worth to the Council. The Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership related that it was difficult to put a worth on the presence of the street pastors and commended their work in diffusing potentially difficult situations.

Councillor Keith Sunderland declared an Interest as a street pastor in Worthing

The Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership answered a number of questions on the future of funding certain posts and schemes. Members were made aware of wider financial issues and the budgetary pressures being felt by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It was related the PCC had high regard for the work of the partnership but it was not unlikely that the need to make savings would be handed down to the partnership. Work was carried out efficiently and in effective and cohesive partnership with other bodies.

A member lamented the poor etiquette of some cyclists in Adur and Worthing and there was general consensus that some cyclists were a risk to the health and safety of residents. There was an ensuing discussion about road safety in general and a perceived absence of effective policing on the roads. The Partnership Chairman highlighted the reduction in resources experienced by the police and the refocusing of

certain activities to more critical areas.

**Resolved:** that the Committee note the interview with the Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership

### **JOSC/14-15/30 Allotments Strategy Progress Update**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. The report provided an update on the progress made in formulating an Allotment Strategy for both Councils. It also provided information on the work that Officers have begun relating to the implementation of the proposed actions proposed to be within the strategy.

Members were given a synoptic view of ongoing work on allotments across Adur and Worthing such as the appointment of allotment overseers and moves towards self-management of allotments. It was explained that there had been a number of extraordinary priority issues that had delayed the production of the allotment strategy but assurances were given that the policy would be presented to the November meeting of the Committee

**Resolved:** that the Committee approves the proposals within the report.

### **JOSC/14-15/32 1st Capital, Revenue Budget and Performance Monitoring 2014/15**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Digital and Resources, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 9.

The report updated the Committee with the latest expenditure and income projections for each Council in the financial year 2014/15, compared to the Revenue Budget approved by both Councils. The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report to the Committee.

The Committee discussed a reported underspend on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and concerns were expressed that the underspend could have been used to further improve the condition of the Adur homes properties. The Chief Financial Officer explained that some of the underspend could be accounted by good treasury management. Members were told that underspend would remain within the HRA in the proceeding financial year and Members would decide upon use of the money which could be placed into reserves.

The Committee discussed delays to the Adur Homes Capital Programme and noted improvements to the procurement and contract negotiations would help to make sure the programme progressed.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted.

### **JOSC/14-15/33 Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny review of Economic Recovery**

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 10. The report set out the progress with implementing the recommendations from a review into economic recovery in Adur and Worthing.

The Economic Regeneration manager was present at the meeting to answer questions from the Committee

The Committee discussed misconceptions about the Teville gate project and there was consensus that a clear message was needed to dispel rumours about the status of the site and the limited power of the Council to address the issues being raised.

The Committee raised questions about the level of support open to small business and were told of the work of the economic regeneration officers in providing business support and the work of the regeneration team in developing the Lancing Vision document.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted

### **JOSC/14-15/34 Letting and Management of Contracts**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 11. The report before the Committee explained the current procedures in place for letting contracts and gave an overview of some improvements made since in the preceding 12-18 months.

Members discussed the report and were encouraged and reassured by the work of officers in improving the letting and management of contracts.

The Solicitor answered questions regarding the signing of documents and professional checks and balances in place concerning the signing of contracts. Members were told that in the past legal had been poorly instructed but procedures had been tightened up and the issue had been addressed through the creation of a comprehensive e-form.

Members were told of mandatory procurement training for managers and how it engaged and stimulated debate, it was agreed that Councillors would benefit from attending the training to get an idea of the comprehensive way responsible officers were being educated. The Business Services Manager informed Members that the Council was investigating further training on Contract Management.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) That Committee Members accept the invitation to attend a procurement training session on the Councils Standing Orders relating to contracts

**JOSC/14-15/35 Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme – 2014/15**

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 12. The report outlined progress on the work contained in the 2014/15 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

Members discussed the continuation of the economic recovery review and it was agreed that there may be a need to reconstitute the group should Scotland decide to become independent in the upcoming referendum.

Members discussed the age of school transfer review and were pleased to see that there was movement in that area, however it was felt that the issue should remain on the work programme in case any problems occurred.

Members noted that the theatres review would be submitted to the committee at its January meeting.

**Resolved:** that the work programme be noted.

**JOSC/14-15/34 Member's Items**

There were none.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:45pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

**Chairman**