

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

**Gordon Room, Worthing Town Hall**

**22 January 2015**

Councillor Roy Barraclough (Chairman)

Councillor Vito Vitojan (Vice Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

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

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Keith Bickers  
Edward Crouch  
Charles James  
Dr Heather Mercer  
Mark Nolan  
Keith Sunderland

\*Absent

Also present:

WBC Councillors: Val Turner, Hazel Thorpe, Vito Vitojan, Kevin Jenkins, Diane Guest

ADC Councillors: Keith Dollemore, Carson Albury, David Simmons

**JOSC/14-15/49    Declarations of Interest/Substitutions**

Councillor Heather Mercer declared an interest as a member of the West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Committee.

**JOSC/14-15/50    Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Committee held on 13 November 2014 be approved as the correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**JOSC/14-15/51    Public Question Time**

Mr Barry Hillman stated that an allotment was defined as 250 sq m plot of land, this being equivalent to 10 rods. It was related that this area was deemed necessary to produce two vegetables per day throughout the year for a family of four he purported that such a plot size was no longer available in Adur.

**JOSC/14-15/52    Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items.

**JOSC/14-15/53    Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision**

There were no items.

### **JOSC/14-15/54 Interview with the Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne**

The Committee had invited the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mrs Katy Bourne, to the meeting to give a presentation and answer Committee questions.

The PCC gave a presentation to the Committee which focused on

- The role of the PCC;
- The Police and Crime Plan 'Safer in Sussex';
- The work and achievements of the PCC in the preceding two years including public confidence and value for money;
- Effective partnerships on a local and national level.

A Member asked how much money had been saved replacing the previous authority with the PCC. The PCC informed Members that it was difficult to make a direct comparison as the PCC and the previous authority differed in terms of roles and responsibility. However the PCC was paid £85k per year and the former authority of 17 members was paid £117k annually. The PCC related that the office of the PCC cost residents in Sussex 66p per year compared with the £1.27 paid by residents in Surrey. Members were told that the PCC was conscious of the good salary paid to the post and as a result did not claim expenses.

A Member stated that there was a perception that community policing had reduced and that residents within his ward had expressed concerns about the reduced visibility of Police. The PCC stated that crime was changing and that it had never been possible to have a Policeman on every street, however, residents could be confident that a policeman would be there in times of need. The PCC illustrated that 'cybercrime' could not be tackled by police officers on the street and was an example of a competing demand placed upon police resources. Members were told about the work undertaken in the community by the police including the work of neighbourhood watch and local crime panels.

A Member asked if the PCC felt that street lighting being turned off earlier would lead to an increase in crime. The PCC related that there were no studies to show that this was the case in fact it was more likely that this reduced instances of crime because burglars wouldn't see what they were doing without drawing attention to themselves. Chief Inspector Jo Banks explained that crime figures had gone down between 1am and 5am during the first three months of the change.

A Member asked about privatisation of parts of the Police Service. The PCC related instances in the past where parts of the Police Service had been tendered under costly Private Finance Initiatives. Members were told that frontline policing would not be privatised whilst the PCC was in charge

A Member asked if it was true that non-emergency parts of the police service, such as the call centres, will only be staffed to receive calls (so called non emergencies)

between 7am and 11pm. The PCC stated that it was a complete rumour. Staff were highly trained and constantly strove to improve 'triage' procedures.

A Member expressed concern about an apparent lack of police efficiency. It was related that police were no longer seen on the street and rarely attended when some crimes were reported. The Councillor explained that some of her residents had become so dismayed that they did not report crimes. The PCC stated that people should report crimes and this could be done by calling 999,101 or reporting online (currently 14% of reported crimes had been reported online). Due to budget cuts it was not possible to provide complete police visibility. Members were told about the financial challenges faced by Sussex Police and partnership work with other authorities to help deliver services in the face of cuts.

The PCC was questioned by several Members on traveller incursions over the previous summer citing specific incidents including an occasion where a man had urinated in front of a policeman and had not been arrested. The PCC stated that she could not comment on individual cases and stated that the Police had acted robustly in using their section 61 powers. The Council was lauded for contributing to a transit site and explained that this would give the Police the opportunity to use its powers under section 62.

A Member asked if there could be a case for merging with another police authority to make savings. The PCC explained that residents in different authorities paid different amounts in their Council Tax, for this reason the issue of merger was too complex. However efficiencies had been driven out by collaborating with other police authorities.

### **JOSC/14-15/55      Interview of the Executive Members responsible for Environment**

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 7. As part of their work programme, the Committee had agreed to interview Adur & Worthing Councils Executive members on their portfolio responsibilities and priorities for 2014-15.

A Member asked the Worthing Executive Member about instances where ashes internment sites were being closed resulting in an instance where a husband's wish to be dispersed in the same place as his spouse had been refused. The Executive Member and Director for Communities agreed to look into the issue.

A Member asked the Adur Executive why wet paper and cardboard created contaminated recyclable material. The Adur Executive Member informed the Committee that broken glass stuck to the glass and paper and prevented the materials from being separated. Members were also told that wet paper caused decay and eventual combustion and a fire had resulted from this.

A Member asked the Executive Cabinet Member about problems with number plate recognition equipment at Worthing Car Parks. The Executive Member informed members that there had been some developmental problems when cameras got wet but the problems were being identified and solved.

A Member asked when the refurbishment of seafront toilets would be taking place. The Worthing Executive Member stated that £90,000 had been invested in the project which would include the addition of baby changing units (in male and female units) at all three sites. The toilets would all be undertaken in the next financial year.

A Member asked about the condition of a set recycling litter bins on the Goring greensward. The Executive Member explained that the litter bins in question had been badly contaminated and there were no plans to change them.

**Resolved:** that the Executive Member interview be noted.

### **JOSC/14-15/56 Allotments Strategy**

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 8. Officers had been requested to produce a draft Allotment Strategy for consideration for approval, which once approved would be used to shape the future management of and opportunities for improvement for both Councils' allotment sites.

The Committee was told that once the comment have been received from the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee and incorporated into the Strategy, it was intended that consultation would take place with key stakeholders including allotment plot holder representative groups and other partner organisations. The Committee would be notified of any significant changes to the Strategy arising from the ongoing consultation.

The Head of Environment introduced the report to the Committee. In response to an earlier statement by a member of the public members were told that there were two sites in Adur that offered plots of 5 and 5.5 and above. The majority of plots were smaller but this reflected the demand for plots across Adur and Worthing with waiting lists of 135 and 635 respectively.

A Member asked why the 'May Close' allotments were inaccessible. The Committee was told that the site was owned by Worthing Homes, efforts had been made to make contact and receive more information on the status of the site.

The committee discussed the use of raised beds and were told that they were not suitable for all types of disabled user.

When discussing allotment vacancies, the Committee discovered that the Councils did well in making sure that vacant plots were turned over reasonably quickly but once a plot had been vacated there was a need to make sure the plot was in a good enough condition to pass on.

A Member noted that there were fee discounts for pensioners but there were none for

people on low incomes. The Director for Communities recognised the social value of allotments and the positive Health outcomes that could be attributed to working on an allotment and it was suggested that it might be something for the Executive Member for the Environment to consider.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the Committee notes the draft Allotment Strategy for Adur & Worthing Councils.
- ii) That the strategy be brought back to the Committee should there be any significant changes to the policy as a result of further consultation.

**JOSC/14-15/57 Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2014/15**

Before the Committee was a report by the , 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 9. The report before Members outlined progress on the work contained in the 2014/15 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

The Policy Officer (ML) introduced the report to the Committee and explained to members that a revenue budget report had not been presented to the Committee due to the lateness of the settlement received from central government. Members acknowledged this and asked that communication be sent to the Executive explaining why Scrutiny had not been able to scrutinise the budget.

Members discussed ongoing health issues across Adur and Worthing and concerns were raised about a number of issues. Worthing's representative on West Sussex County Councils Health and Adult Social Care Committee explained that it could be frustrating to get Adur and Worthing issues raised and followed up at West Sussex. It was acknowledged that Adur and Worthing did not have the statutory powers of the Health and Adult Social Care Committee but agreed to set up a working group to look at health issues within Adur and Worthing which would report in the next quarter.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) That a Health Working Group be set up comprising of Councillors Liz Haywood, Heather Mercer, Rod Hotton, Keith Sunderland and Liza McKinney

**JOSC/14-15/58 Members Items**

There were none

**JOSC/14-15/59 Notice of Motion – Worthing Borough Council**

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 a signed copy of these minutes as item 11. Members had been asked to consider the Notice of

Motion attached as Appendix 2 referred to the Committee by Worthing Borough Council meeting on 16 December 2014. The motion referred to the award of a Musculoskeletal Services MSK contract at Worthing Hospital.

The proposer of the motion Councillor Hazel Thorpe presented the motion to the Committee.

The Committee offered sympathy with the sentiment of the motion but it was felt that there were issues with the semantics of the statement and an absence of evidence before the Committee in order that sufficient amendments could be made.

**Resolved:** that the motion be defeated.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 10.00pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

**Chairman**