

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

Gordon Room, Worthing Town Hall

12 March 2015

Councillor Roy Barraclough (Chairman)
Councillor Vito Vitojan (Vice Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Ann Bridges
*James Butcher
Ken Bishop
Stephen Chipp
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: Mary Lermite, Val Turner, Michael Donin
ADC Councillors: David Simmons

JOSC/14-15/60 Declarations of Interest/Substitutions

Councillor Joan Bradley declared her substitution for Councillor Dr Heather Mercer

JOSC/14-15/61 Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 22 January 2015 be approved as the correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

JOSC/14-15/62 Public Question Time

There were no questions or statements by members of the public.

JOSC/14-15/63 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

JOSC/14-15/64 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There were no items.

JOSC/14-15/65 Interviews with the Executive Members for Wellbeing (David Simmons ADC, Val Turner 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 its work programme, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee had determined to interview the Executive Members of Adur & Worthing Councils on their portfolio responsibilities and priorities for 2014-15.

Questions had been put to the Adur Executive Member in advance of the meeting and a summary of his responses are listed below:

1. How big is the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team and why is it not combined with the environmental team? What makes the cases different that they deal with? Is the budget big enough to cope with the work load and has the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) indicated this year's grant level?
 - a) The Executive Member detailed the staffing levels of the team and explained that the nature of the work undertaken meant that the team needed to work closely with the Police. It was explained that sometimes there was a role for Environmental Health in addressing some aspects of anti-social behaviour but there were separate legal avenues for those issues. The Executive Member explained that the PCC had indicated continued funding for the next year but the 'water was muddy' beyond that point. Members were told that Adur and Worthing were the only Councils in west Sussex where funding for these posts were not mainstreamed.
2. Why has the dedicated alcohol worker left the councils employment? Have we learnt everything needed re addiction/dependency?
 - b) The Executive Member explained that the Alcohol worker had been a Pilot and that the Pilot had come to an end. The alcohol worker had been successful in cases where he had been involved. It was noted that there could have been a greater take up of the service.
3. Since the single officer structure we score pretty poorly for food hygiene. Why? How many establishments have been closed instantly?
 - c) The Executive Member explained that prior to the teams of the Councils joining Adur ranked well nationally but Worthing less so. After the teams joined the Councils' ranking nationally had fell between the two, however the team was now being managed by the former Adur manager and it was believed that the national ranking would improve. Members were informed that there was one premises that had closed itself voluntarily to carry out a deep clean, however it was relayed that if the premises had not closed itself the Council would have forced it to do so.
4. Why has sugar not been included in the 'Eat out, eat well' campaign?
 - d) Members were told that sugar would be assessed during visits to potential award winners.
5. What is the Councils responsibilities/liability for serious emergency such as flood? Do we have to re-house etc? How detailed are the plans and training exercises with local police and other agencies?
 - e) Members were told that the Council carries out exercises with other authorities bi-annually. Members were also told about the work of the Planning Officer and

the extensive staff training programme that had been put in place to support emergency planning.

6. According to the PCC interviewed by this committee we should be very proud of her and Sussex police - do you share this view? Do we focus on the right priorities and are they funded appropriately?
- f) The Adur Executive Member explained his role in scrutinising the PCC as a member of the Police and Crime Panel, members were told of the tough questioning that the PCC was subject to from the Panel. Members were told that the PCC was quick to respond to questions from Panel Members.

A Member asked what the Adur Executive Member felt about the recent announcement of the impending reduction of Police numbers and how this would impact community safety. The Executive Member stated that the reported loss of 500 Police officers could mean less face to face contact at a community level. It was suggested that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) may be asked to pick up some work around prevention and intervention.

The Worthing Executive Member was told about an instance in the past where budgets had been pooled between different agencies including the West Sussex and the NHS and the successes that this had achieved. The Executive Member discussed the positive impact of pooling budgets but commented that it was not an easy process as each agency would have its own agenda.

Resolved: that the Executive Member reports be noted.

JOSC/14-15/66 Change of order to Agenda

The Chairman announced that Agenda item 9: Adur and Worthing Fuel Poverty Action Plan – Annual Update Report would be taken as the next item.

JOSC/14-15/67 Adur and Worthing Fuel Poverty Action Plan – Annual Update Report

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 9. The report set out the progress with the implementation of the recommendations from the joint Overview and Scrutiny review of Fuel Poverty which was undertaken by the joint Adur and Worthing Overview and Scrutiny Working Group in 2010. Regular reports had been provided to the Committee since 2010.

Since the completion of the report progress had been ongoing and the Director for Communities was overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan with the assistance of the Adur and Worthing Fuel Poverty Working Group which included the West Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator.

Members discussed the installation of gas at the Test estate in Sompting and were informed that surveying work had been undertaken to ascertain the suitability of properties to be connected. There was also recognition that behaviours needed to be adjusted to the new heating and requirements for ventilation and condensation

prevention.

Resolved: That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress in implementing the recommendations from the Fuel Poverty Overview and Scrutiny review and recommend the fuel poverty action plan to the Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing for their approval.

JOSC/14-15/68 Digital Councils Programme - Update

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 the signed copy of these minutes as item 7.

The report before Members detailed the progression of the Digital Councils programme and informed that Members would be updated further in June 2015.

Members were informed about the 'going google' project and the training opportunities that were being offered as part of the project.

Resolved:

- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) That a further update report be presented in June 2015.

JOSC/14-15/69 Proposal for a Shared Legal Service – Update

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 the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. The report informed Members that as part of the response to the current and future changes and challenges faced by Local Government, Adur and Worthing Councils were examining options for delivering legal services differently, by joining with others to create a service that offered legal service provision to other Local Authorities and public service organisations.

The Solicitor to the Councils updated the Committee. Members were told of a business plan drawn up to create a 'Teckal' company in conjunction with IESE and Aylesbury Vale District Council. The business case had shown that the 'Teckal' option was not appropriate. Legal services were in the process of undertaking a review of its service which would include looking at instances where other departments could be made more 'self-sufficient where appropriate. Members were also advised of areas where the legal services team were generating income by providing services to other authorities.

The Committee supported the option not to progress with the 'Teckal' company and highlighted the value in provision of an in-house service. Several Members recounted incidents where they had benefitted from immediate help and advice from the legal team. Members asked that any the future service review have Committee involvement and nominated Cllrs Mark Nolan and Keith Bickers for that task.

Resolved:

- i) That the contents of the report, appendices and updated information be noted;
- ii) That the committee puts on record it's view that it values the service and advice provided by the Legal team;
- iii) That on behalf of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillors Mark Nolan and Keith Bickers be involved with upcoming review of the Service;
- iv) That the Committee requests a further update report following the presentation of the full business case to Joint Strategic Committee on March 31 2015.

JOSC/14-15/70 Planning Enforcement Review

Before the Committee was a report by the Director the Economy, 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 10. Following a JOSC review of the effectiveness of planning enforcement a number of recommendations were put forward to improve the delivery of the planning enforcement role to improve public's confidence in the planning system. One of the recommendations emerging from two enforcement workshops held by a JOSC working party at the end of 2013 was to have greater involvement of the Building Control Section. It was agreed that from the 1st April the Councils Building Control Section would take a more proactive stance to ensure adherence to the approved planning drawings and the report before Member reviewed the effectiveness of those changes.

The Committee welcomed the report and the work undertaken by previous groups involved in addressing enforcement issues. Members stressed the importance of planning enforcement and there was a consensual view that the team should be given more resources to deal with breaches of planning conditions across Adur and Worthing. The Head of Economic Growth informed members that the Councils were considering requesting that West Sussex County Council hand over its powers of enforcement over A-boards and for sale signs and would include the Committee's comments in a report to the Joint Strategic committee on the issue.

Resolved:

- i) That the Committee records its concern at a lack of staff resources to deal with planning infringement and recommends to the Joint Strategic Committee allocate the resources required to deal with enforcement;
- ii) That the Committee receive a report from the Head of Economic Growth on enforcement issues concerning A-boards and for sale signs.

**JOSC/14-15/71 Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme – 2014/15 and 2015/16**

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 the signed copy of these minutes as item 11. The report outlined progress on the work contained in the 2014/15 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and asked the Committee to consider issues to be included in the Work Programme for 2015/16.

A Member asked that the work programme item concerning Food hygiene include detailed information on the number of establishments and the frequency that those establishments were visited.

Resolved:

- i) That the progress in implementing the Work Programme for 2014/15 be noted;
- ii) That the Committee recommends to the respective meetings of the Full Council that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2015/16 be endorsed

JOSC/14-15/72 Members Items

There were no Members' items

JOSC/14-15/73 Worthing Theatres Scrutiny Review

Before the Committee was a report by the Worthing Theatres Scrutiny Review Group, 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 13. The report set out the findings of the Adur and Worthing review of Worthing Theatres which was undertaken by a Working Group set up by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Keith Bickers introduced the report to the Committee and set out the Working Group's findings. The Committee was presented with a response to the review from the Executive Member for Customer Services, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

The Committee lauded the improved cultural offer presented by the theatres and noted that there was an ongoing improved financial position. Members discussed the general catering offer and how it compared to other venues locally.

Members discussed a recommendation to appoint a business manager and the Chair of the Working Group explained that the appointment of a Business Manager would allow the current manager to concentrate on continuing to provide an excellent cultural offer.

The Committee noted the working group's comments regarding recharges and agreed a further report should be brought before the Committee in 2015/16.

Resolved:

- i) That the Committee notes the findings from the review of Worthing

- Theatres;
- ii) That the Committee:
 - a) Supports the work already being undertaken to improve the Theatres budget as set out in Section 5.3 of the report;
 - b) Endorses the approach suggested by the working group as set out in Section 6 of the report and in the attached annex to the report with regards to further improvements to budgetary control and working practices within the Theatres section which can provide better value for money; and
 - c) Forwards these views to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration.
 - iii) That the Director for Economy and Head of Culture report back to the Committee in September 2015 on progress in implementing the recommendations from the review;
 - iv) That a report on policy and procedures relating to recharges applied by the Business and Technical Services section, to provide greater openness and transparency on the recharging system, to be added to the Committee Work Programme for 2015/16

JOSC/14-15/74 Worthing Beach Huts: Financial Options Appraisal

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 14. The report provided information on beach huts sited on the foreshore in Worthing in response to a question raised at a previous Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Councillor Bryan Turner, Worthing Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration, with responsibility for the Foreshore.

A proposal in the report stated that Based on the financial analysis carried out, consideration should be given into selling off Worthing's Council owned beach huts to receive additional Capital income for re-investment in other WBC capital funded schemes.

The Committee discussed the report and recognised the value in investigating different financial models relating to beach huts. The Committee noted that there was more work to be carried out which included consultation and investigation of the Social Value of Beach huts and Members stressed that the report before members only considered the financial aspect which had been developed as part of its work programme looking at the budget.

The Director for Communities proffered that it was legitimate for Members to have a debate on the provision of beach huts in the climate of austerity and that further work was needed to consult with tenants and to investigate further the suitability of the different options before Members .

Resolved:

- i) That the report be noted;

- ii) That the issues outlined in the report be put to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration.

JOSC/14-15/75 Worthing Local Development Scheme 2015-2018

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for the Economy, 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 15. The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were being asked to consider and comment on the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Members discussed the report and noted that it was proposed that any subsequent changes of a minor nature to the timetable that may be required will be delegated to the Director for the Economy or, in his absence, the Head of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. The Committee agreed that to ensure accountability there should be further clarification on what constituted as a minor change before the delegation be agreed by the Joint Strategic Committee.

Resolved: That the following be recommended to the Joint Strategic Committee:

- i) That the revised Local Development Scheme for Worthing (2015-18) is approved and that this is made available on the Council's website;
- ii) That any subsequent changes of a minor nature (subject to a clarification on the meaning of 'minor) to the timetable that may be required will be delegated to the Director for the Economy or, in his absence, the Head of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:55pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Chairman