

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

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

**29 October 2015**

Councillor James Butcher (Chairman)  
Councillor Stephen Chipp (Vice Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

Ken Bishop  
Ann Bridges  
Liz Haywood  
Rod Hotton  
Emily Hilditch  
Liza McKinney

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Roy Barraclough  
Keith Bickers  
Charles James  
Mary Lermite  
Nigel Morgan  
Luke Proudfoot  
\*Vino Vinojan  
Keith Sunderland

\*Absent

Also present:

WBC Councillors: Councillor Mark Nolan  
ADC Councillors: Councillor Angus Dunn

<b>JOSC/15-16/30</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest/Substitutions</b>
There were no declarations of interest	
<b>JOSC/15-16/31</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b>Resolved</b> that the Minutes of the Committee held on 24 September 2015 be approved as the correct record and be signed by the Chairman.	
<b>JOSC/15-16/32</b>	<b>Public Question Time</b>
There were no members of the public present	
<b>JOSC/15-16/33</b>	<b>Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions</b>
There were no urgent items.	
<b>JOSC/15-16/34</b>	<b>Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision</b>

There were no items.

**JOSC/15-16/35**

**Interview with the Executive Members for Resources (Angus Dunn ADC, Mar Nolan 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 Adur & Worthing Councils Executive Members on their portfolio responsibilities and priorities for 2015-16.

The Executive Members gave a brief overview of their portfolios and the associated upcoming challenges.

The Worthing Executive Member was asked the following questions:

- Whilst appreciating the on-going constraints with the budget process and sympathising with the Executive Member for Resources on his ongoing work to balance the books; does he envisage any increase in the parks and gardens allocation of resources? I am thinking in particular, of Worthing's shop window - the Promenade - which really could do with some TLC and colourful planting, instead of the endless grass. *The Executive Member informed the Committee that he had not received a request for an increased budget from the Executive Member for Environment so there would not be an increase in the budget. Members were told about initiatives from the Worthing Town Centre Initiative increasing local involvement in flower planting.*
- With the proposal to approve premises status for Worthing Town Hall to conduct civil ceremonies, will there be a budget allocation for refurbishment for those areas to be used for civil ceremonies? *The Executive Member informed the Committee that there was some money available through an underspend that would be put towards carpeting and painting work. The Executive Member said that the Council needed to consider how the area would be improved and come up with innovative ways to fund the project.*
- Can the Executive Member provide a list of property and land assets and Worthing Borough Council own including the approximate or latest monetary value of these sites; and let us know if he would be open to the possibility of the sale of non-essential assets to raise Council revenue? *Members were told that a list was available to view on the website and that a list of assets with values were available as part of the balance sheet. The Executive Member stated that he would consider selling non-essential assets but would not seek to leave the Council assetless. Members were told that the council's ability to borrow relied in-part to its asset portfolio*
- In the interests of open government it would be great if all companies or individuals quoting for contracts could be told that there was no commercial confidentiality on our contracts. What would be the consequences if we implemented this rule. After all it would be the same for all? *The Executive Member stated that he did not agree with the premise because private*

*companies would not want to do business under those circumstances and would not want to disclose their bids to competitors.*

The Adur Executive Member was asked the following questions

- What is the current position regarding the ADC reserves and how does this compare with this time last year? It is requested that the actual figures for 2013, 2014 and 2015 are supplied. Assuming that the reply reveals a considerable decrease in the reserves, what arrangements are in hand to repay or boost this depletion? Is it that the reserves have been depleted in expectation of the Civic Centre? *The Adur Executive Member recounted figures that showed no major depletion in reserves and the questioner withdrew the rest of his question.*
- Who is contracted to do the non-housing property repairs? Are you happy that a long term view is being taken for the management of these properties? *The Executive Member explained that the responsibilities varied depending on the property as responsibilities were shared with impulse leisure properties. The Executive Member commented that he was content that the Council had a good plan to maintain its properties. Members were told of the approved contractor list and the new procurement strategies*

During general questions to both Executive Members the Committee had a further discussion about the effect of changes to the way business rates were distributed and what the details of those changes might be. Members discussed the need for the Councils' to become more self sufficient when it came to funding and how that would make them more resilient in future.

A Member raised the Google privacy policy and explained the effect that it might have on interactions with constituents. The Digital and Design manager explained that data security was good and told members that other Government departments such as the Cabinet Office had moved over to Google.

**JOSC/15-16/36**

**Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - New Ways of Working**

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 8. As part of ongoing regular review meetings, the Joint Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of JOSC had discussed the possibility of introducing some new working practices to improve the way that the Committee undertook its overview and scrutiny role and had agreed that those new practices should be submitted to JOSC for consideration.

The Chairman of the Committee gave a presentation to the summarising the contents of the report. In response to concerns about removing Executive Member Interviews from the agenda he stated that it was his intention to make sure that Executive Members were summoned to meetings where issues fell within their portfolio and that

they would be expected to take the lead on presenting issues to JOSC, answering questions and being held accountable for their role.

The Chairman explained to Members that he was asking the Committee to agree to the proposals in principle and that a further 'creative session' involving all Committee Members would develop the proposals further before adoption.

**Resolved:** that the committee agrees in principle to the proposed new ways of working and to discuss them further in more detail at a 'creative session' in November 2015.

**JOSC/15-16/37**

**Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme – 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 a signed copy of these minutes as item 11. The report outlined progress on the work contained in the 2015/16 Work Programme.

**Resolved:** that progress on the work programme be noted

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.12pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

**Chairman**