

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

**QE2 Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea**

**21 September 2017**

Stephen Chipp (Chairman)  
Joss Loader (Vice Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

Carol Albury  
\*George Barton  
\*Kevin Boram  
\*Ann Bridges  
Clive Burghard  
Robin Monk

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Roy Barraclough  
Keith Bickers  
Sean McDonald  
Nigel Morgan  
Louise Murphy  
\*Luke Proudfoot  
Bob Smytherman  
Steve Waight

\*Absent

**JOSC/17-18/20     Declarations of Interest/Substitutions**

Cllr Smytherman declared an interest as the town crier and toastmaster in a voluntary capacity

**JOSC/17-18/21     Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Committee held on 27 July 2017 be approved as the correct record and signed by the Chairman

**JOSC/17-18/22     Public Question Time**

There were no questions from members of the public

**JOSC/17-18/23     Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items.

**JOSC/17-18/24     Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision**

There were no items.

## **JOSC/17-18/25      Scrutiny Review of Youth Engagement**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which was sent to all Members, a copy of which was attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 7. The report before members detailed the findings of the Youth engagement working group.

The Chairman of the Working Group introduced the report to the Committee and summarised the findings and recommendations of the group particularly the support in the provision of a support worker, improved communication streams and an improved website.

**Recommendation:** that the report and recommendations be referred to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration

## **JOSC/17-18/26      Joint Leaders interview**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which was sent to all Members, a copy of which was attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. As part of its Work Programme for 2017/18, the Committee had agreed to interview the Leaders on their priorities for 2017/18. The report detailed for members the portfolio responsibilities of the Leaders.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Leader: *What are the current proposals for the senior management team structure and how will the recent vacancy impact on delivery of the council's vision and priorities?* The Leader told members that the Chief Executive had been directly managing the four Heads of Service within the Customer Service Directorate and there would be further consultation with the. Members were told that the services had performed well during the absence of the director and detailed the achievements of those services.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Leader: *Does the Leader support the Worthing Journals' campaign to reinstate the town's Pier Master to assist visitors to the town and boost our tourism offer.* The Leader told the committee that the Pier Master had recently been instated and there was an intention to incorporate the role as part of a wider 'greeters scheme'.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Leader: *What proposals does the Council have to maximise the income from Weddings at the Town Hall and are there any plans to open up the building at weekends when other events are taking place at the Assembly Hall such as wedding fairs?* The Leader detailed for members the upturn in weddings at the town hall, including one saturday where there were five consecutive weddings held on one day. He explained that the opening up of the town hall during other events being held in assembly hall such as a wedding fair incurred a prohibitive cost. When asked about the cost the member was told that it would be provided by the Executive Member for Customer Services (WBC) at a later date.

A Member asked the following question: *Are there any plans to establish an elected Mayor for the Greater Brighton City Region?* The Leader stated that there were no plans and never had been. The Greater Brighton City region was overseen by an economic board.

A Member asked the following question: *We have recently seen an instance whereby a former council director is working as a consultant for a major developer in the Adur district. He has led public consultation exercises on their behalf.* Members were told that there were no such clauses in the contract of staff because they would be legally difficult to enforce. Upon further questioning it was agreed that further information would be circulated on the matter from the legal department.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Leader: *Over the last 12 months, what achievement have you delivered that has had the greatest beneficial impact for the residents of Worthing?* The worthing Leader listed a set of achievements as follows:

- Protection of excellent front line services;
- High quality Environmental Health checks;
- A large capital Investment programme;
- Supporting the most vulnerable people;
- Involvement in parts of Montague Street and Fulbeck Avenue;
- A good cultural programme with improving attendance at Theatres, Museums and other cultural activities;
- Involvement in A27 negotiations in which the feelings of local residents had been made clear;
- The quality of Comms had come on 'leaps and bounds';
- Partnerships with other bodies had got real results including ultrafast broadband;
- Working with local groups on projects such as going local and public health programmes;
- The Leader told members that the number one achievement was the greater Brighton improvements that had hooked in millions of pounds of investment which in one case was helping to unlock development;

Responding to a further question about communicating these successes the Leader stated that the Council's message needed to be 'gotten out there' but that the situation was improving.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted

## **JOSC/17-18/27     Delivering *Platforms for our Places*: Mid-Year Report 2017**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed

copy of these minutes as item 9. Before members was copy of the report by the Chief Executive which was presented to the Joint Strategic Committee on 11 July 2017 which provided a short overview of progress against a range of commitments set out in *Platforms for our Places* over the first six months of the programme. At the meeting, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) was asked to consider and question the Chief Executive and Executive Members on the progress in delivering the activities in Platforms for our Places.

A Member asked the following question of the Chief Executive: *Whilst being a pioneer of fast connectivity sends out the correct messages and brings some fantastic benefits over the next few years is there a danger that we could be left paying for an out of date technology that there will be no demand for towards the tail end of the scheme? The economic viability of the scheme appears to be calculated over too long a term. E.G. 5g wireless will be between 1-10 gigabits.* Members were told that 5G wireless will not replace fibre, instead 5G deployment is dependent on the availability of nearby fibre networks to work. The Gigabit project will ensure that a full fibre network exists in Adur & Worthing which could be easily upgraded if necessary.

A Member asked the following question of the Chief Executive: *Whilst the waiting times and other positives resulting from the new phone system are great news the underlying reliability and lengthy sustained outages of late create a level of concern. Why did these outages occur, why was the system down for so long and what is in place to ensure any future issues are resolved inside an acceptable/appropriate time scale?* The Chief Executive relayed to members an incident report that detailed the two outages on Monday 10 July and Monday 17 July, these were due to electrical faults with the Councils' suppliers. The suppliers had taken measures to make sure that similar incidents could not happen in the future and there had been robust conversations with the directors of those suppliers.

A Member asked the Chief Executive what he would have done differently and why. The Chief Executive told members that he may have put less time and effort into devolution considering the change of policy direction of central government.

A Member asked the Adur Leader the following question: *There is mention of a new strategy focused on messages that are sharper and clearer. Is this a written strategy? If so, please can members have sight of the strategy. If not, what format does it take? Who agreed its remit and terms? How is it delivered?* The Adur Leader told members that the new communications team at the Council were providing more robust communications by taking a more 'newsroom' approach. Stories were attracting interest from national media and the approach was a vastly more dynamic situation. The Chief Executive told members that there was no written strategy and that the communications team were crafting real stories about real people, there was a focus on getting the stories and getting them out so that people could respond to them. Members were given figures that showed an increase in views and visits to the councils' social media sites. Upon answering a

further question the Chief Executive stated that a short paper on strategy could be put together.

A Member asked the following question for the Worthing Executive Member for Regeneration: *What is the expected timeline between the demolition of the Teville Gate car –park and the Council receiving a planning application for the site and does the leader envisage using additional resources from the Local Growth Fund to assist in bringing forward the much needed regeneration of this key gateway site?* Members were told that the car park would be boarded up by the Christmas period and that there were plans to begin consultation in October / November.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Executive Member for Regeneration: *What is the timeline for completing the Seafront Investment Plan and how much money is invested in this project?* Members were told that the Seafront Investment Plan was due for completion by the end of 2017 and members were told that the Council was seeking to provide a plan to guide how it invested and developed what was a prominent public asset for the town. Along with work to improve the wider public realm the Councils would be looking at a variety of resources to draw upon, in order that the seafront remained the crowning feature of the town.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Executive Member for Customer Services: *What are the current plans to outsource Worthing Theatres to a Community Trust similar to the one setup to run Leisure Services?* The Executive Member told the committee that the two services were not comparable business models, She emphasised the importance of culture to the local economy and that in recent years the councils had developed a reputation for quality at a national level and even internationally. The committee were told that audience growth had exceeded all expectations and the income secured from shows helped to provide a firm platform for considering future options for Worthing Theatres going forward.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Executive Member for Customer Services: *What additional resources have been allocated to support the high levels of demand for our homelessness Services?* The committee was told that the 2017/18 revenue budget allocated additional resources of £362,000 per year to housing need. A further £75,000 was allowed for in the draft 2018/19 budget for new emerging cost pressures.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Executive Member for the Environment: *In addition the resources allocated to resolving the issues at Brooklands Lake has any monies been identified to improve to the other facilities on the site to improve the visitor experience ready for the next summer season?* The committee was told that £50k from the estimated underspend on the project would be re-invested in scoping the brooklands masterplan along with a newly formed focus group.

A Member asked the following question for the Adur Executive Member for Resources: *As the Shoreham Centre is a relatively new building, why didn't the council include solar panels in the original design/build specification? Would it have been more cost-effective to have included them from day one? When will the options currently being assessed be available?* The committee was told that the building was originally designed with Solar Panels in mind, there had been an agreement with the West Sussex YES partnership and carrilion to help with the design but West Sussex were unfortunately not able to follow through. Subsequently the council had been learning from the Portland House installation and were investigating options such as size, location etc. Members would be updated with a timeline once the Executive Member was further advised by officers.

A Member asked the following question of the Worthing Executive Member for Regeneration: *Noting the proposed demolition of the Teville Gate car park and expected Planning Application by the end of the year, when do you expect the redevelopment of the site to commence?* The Executive Member told the committee that the developers had indicated hope that cranes would be overhead by 2018 subject to the planning process. *The Questioning member asked if the demolition of the Teville Gate car park would bring the development forward and by what length of time.* The Executive Member told the Committee that the demolition of the car park was not something that was for the benefit of the developer, instead the LEP money used to demolish the Car Park would save the taxpayer money on maintenance costs. However if the demolition of the car park encouraged the developer to bring the other buildings down on site then it might precipitate a quicker process for cranes to be onsite.

A Member asked the following question of the Executive Member for Customer Services asked the following question: *The update notes a reduced overspend for 16/17 of £25k, down from £120k the previous year. As the Theatres budget increased by £135k over the same time period ( £1,288,270 15/16; £1,423,430 16/17), how successful (financially) has the cultural programme really been?* The Executive Member told the committee that it was worth noting that the service had direct control over their direct costs which had reduced by 48% whilst income had increased by been up by 35% by 13/14. The Theatres section did have an overspend of 25k which was offset by other areas within the department and that Theatres and Culture as a whole were on track to achieve the budget in 17/18.

A Member asked the following question of the Executive Member of Customer Services: *A further increase in the Theatres budget for 17/18 of £189,930 (13.3%) seems excessive. Do you agree?* The Executive member told the meeting that she did not agree and that the increase was due to two factors - An increase in salary costs of £191k which was partially offset by net additional income (£79k) and a swing in the cost of support costs. The increase in pay costs had come about because of a restructuring of the cultural area, an increase in pension costs and the pay award.

**Resolved:**that the report be noted

## **JOSC/17-18/18      Review of Public Space Protection Orders**

Members were asked to note that there have been no further developments since the last report to the Committee in June 2017. A further report will be presented to the Committee on 25 January 2018.

A Member asked What Council resources are allocated to the PSPO policy of both Councils? The Committee was told that essentially no resources had been allocated and that no PSPO had been issued. The whole premise of the PSPO was that it was a deterrent.

## **JOSC/17-18/19      JOSC Work Programme 2017/18**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which was sent to all members, a copy of which was attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 11. The report updated the Committee on the work contained in the 2017/18 Work Programme.

The committee discussed the requests for Scrutiny:

Air pollution: the committee discussed the request for scrutiny on the issue of air pollution and made the decision to receive a scoping report giving background to the issue and options for how the item should be scrutinised moving forward.

Parking on pavements and grass verges: The committee decided not to include this request for scrutiny on its work programme as it was a matter for West Sussex County Council.

Closure of public toilets and Shoreham and Worthing train stations: The committee decided not to include this request for scrutiny on its work programme as it was a matter for Southern Rail that the Committee had no influence in the matter.

Policing Levels: Members agreed to move the date of the meeting in January to the 13 February in order to accommodate attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner where she could be questioned on that topic and other matters.

A Member asked that as a matter of urgency the Committee investigate the potential loss of public car parking spaces in Worthing given the closure of Teville Gate and future development planned at the Grafton Car Park, the Committee agreed to add the matter to the work programme

**Resolved:** That the progress in implementing the Work Programme for 2017/18 be noted and the Work Programme be amended as agreed.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.25pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

**Chairman**