

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

QEII Room, Shoreham Centre

20 September 2018

Stephen Chipp (Chairman)
Andy McGregor (Vice Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Carol Albury
Catherine Arnold
Kevin Boram
Paul Mansfield
Joss Loader
Lavinia O'Connor

Worthing Borough Council:

*Roy Barraclough
Keith Bickers
Rebecca Cooper
*Karen Harman
*Charles James
Sean McDonald
Bob Smytherman
Steve Waight

*Absent

JOSC/18-19/24 Declarations of Interest/Substitutions

Councillor Jane Sim declared her substitution for Councillor Charles James

Councillor Bob Smytherman declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council and as a trustee of West Sussex Coastal MIND

Councillor Steve Waight declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

JOSC/18-19/25 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Committee held on 26 July 2018 be approved as the correct record and signed by the Chairman

JOSC/18-19/26 Public Question Time

A resident asked the following question: *I write as an Adur resident and as representative of Shoreham-By-Cycle - a local group advocating for better cycling facilities in the Shoreham area.*

I have a question that relates to the item marked 'Further Changes to the Planning System' in the Financial Economies section (page 19) of the JOSC agenda papers (Platforms for our Places): To what extent do the leaders expect the updated National Planning Policy Framework to affect the facilitation of cycling and walking as means of everyday transport in Adur? Will all future planning applications be considered with a view to how they may improve Adur's walking and cycling environment?

(the Leader of Adur was not present for public questions but answered the question under the Leaders interview) The member of the public was told that the previous version of the NPPF emphasised the importance of cycling and walking and all sustainable modes of transport. However, as indicated the revised version does strengthen the wording and will assist with negotiations to secure improvements and/or contributions towards improved cycling and walking from new developments. This was already an integral part of the recently adopted Adur Local Plan. Work was currently underway on the Adur Wide Sustainable Transport Strategy and was currently looking at a wide range of measures to improve sustainable transport across the District.

JOSC/18-19/27 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

JOSC/18-19/28 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There were no call-ins and there were had been no applications for call in since the last Committee

JOSC/18-19/29 Delivering Platforms for our Places progress report, mid term review and refresh of commitments

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Digital and Resources, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 6. The report before Members included copies of the reports from the Chief Executive which were presented to the Joint Strategic Committee on 10 July 2018 which provided an overview of progress against a range of commitments set out in '*Platforms for our Places*' over the period January to June 2018 and also a mid term review and refresh of the commitments contained in '*Platforms for our Places*'. 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 commitments and activities in Platforms for our Places and the refresh of the commitments.

The Chief Executive introduced the report to the Committee. The Leaders of both Councils were present along with Members of both Executives to answer questions.

A Member asked the following question: *Given the significant challenges we face to improve recycling rates are there any plans to work with other Councils across the County to implement a single method of collecting recyclables and if so what is the timescale for this.* The Chief Executive told the Committee that the Councils worked closely with other authorities across West Sussex. The range of materials that could be recycled was determined at a county wide level as the contract with Viridor is with WSCC and that the method of collecting was therefore already the same and consistent across all Districts and Boroughs in West Sussex. The Councils were proud of the quality of recyclables it returned to the processing site. There were ongoing education initiatives to promote recycling in order to raise recycling rates. Recent examples of these initiatives were the Sompting Big Local who had been funded £65k to raise public awareness in their local area and a recent trial in Findon Valley where the councils trialled different methods of communicating recycling messages with householders using a range of consultation methods. As a supplementary it was asked whether the councils were going to move to fortnightly collections. The Leader of Worthing Borough Council responded and told Members that the Councils were proud of the currently weekly refuse collection service.

A Member asked the following question: *Given the significant level of Capital works required to our buildings has any assessment been made of which buildings are surplus to our requirements and can be either sold or leased to other providers to minimise this liability?* Members were told that the Council had begun work to commission a review of all corporate buildings (buildings where Council employees are in on a regular basis) to ensure that any opportunities are identified. The project would produce a Corporate Estates Strategy, Business Case and Implementation Plan and was expected to report in spring 2019.

A Member asked the following question: *Given that both Councils services and workforces are now fully integrated how confident can Council tax payers from each Council be that monies generated in their area are spent in their area and that any cross-subsidy between Councils is fully transparent?* The Leader of Worthing Borough Council told the Committee that the Joint Strategic Committee dealt with the issue regularly as part of regular budget reports and was confident that there was no cross subsidisation.

A Member asked the following question: *My question relates to suggested NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) changes will require careful monitoring and*

review – this isn't pro-active enough. The July revisions are due to be considered in applications submitted from day of publication (annexe 1 212 attached) and having read through some of the changes I see that Viability Assessments are to become publicly available (except in the cases of confidentiality) to provide transparency to community and a record of the developers CIL/106 infrastructure money. What will officers be doing to integrate NPPF changes and publishing VA's? Members were told that the changes to the NPPF were anticipated following the draft NPPF that was published earlier in the year. As a result the Development Management Section was already requesting applicants to submit financial viability appraisals and had started incorporating financial information into Committee reports before the revised NPPF came into force (New Monks Farm application considered on the 18th July included the submitted financial appraisals). Following the NPPF all financial appraisals would be published unless the applicant can demonstrate that there are clear confidentiality reasons for not doing so. A workshop was being arranged for all Members and Officers on the NPPF and will be partly run by Consultants that review a number of the viability reviews submitted by applicants.

A Member asked the following question: *Via NPPF changes a new house build scheme is available called Home England – I would have expected to have seen this mentioned here, with some considered thought on it. I will be raising this at next JSC, but why not noted here?* Members were told that the document did not record everything that the councils did. However the Councils had established a working relationship with Homes England in 2016. The Council were in continuous discussions with Homes England about their funding streams and how this can contribute to our place.

A Member asked the following question: *Page five of the NPPF relates to economic, social and environmental objectives of planning to be met, what consideration has been put into place around these that impact our LA Planning powers? Re: environmental – cycling, walking considerations in initial plans submitted? NPPF came into force immediately and for any current undetermined planning application the applicants have been requested to assess whether the changes affect any consideration of the application. Committee reports now all refer to the revised guidance and Planning Officers are now assessing submitted schemes in light of the new guidance.* Members were told that some of the most significant changes related to plan-making and would impact on emerging plans. The Joint Area Action Plan which was currently being considered at an Examination in Public is to be assessed under the 2012 version of the NPPF under the transitional arrangements. The emerging Worthing Local Plan (which is broadly structured around the economic, social and environmental objectives set out in the NPPF) would need to be reviewed in due course against the recent NPPF revisions prior to the Local Plan submission to Government next year.

A Member asked the following question: *With reference to ERDF (European Regional Development fund) funding for Colonnade House, Worthing, There's a wish for it go self-funded in future. How long can our Local Authority apply for ERDF funding for, what's the decision timeline and could this application success be threatened by hard Brexit?* Members were told that organisations could secure funding until the end of 2020.

A Member asked the following question: *Natural resources – page 25 Solar Panels. Who is the contractor secured and will we see a take-up promotion across our Council stock in Adur, working with housing associations etc? How is our Local Authority capitalising on the feed in tariff before it runs out in April 2019.* Members were told that the first Council photovoltaic array was installed in 2017 at Portland House through the 'Your Energy Sussex' partnership with installers Ecosphere. Adur & Worthing Councils were proceeding with the second solar photovoltaic (PV) installation via a solar framework set up by Portsmouth City Council, tendering was underway and the installation was expected to be completed by the end of the year. The Councils had requested a desktop study from Portsmouth City Council which evaluated the high level viability and feasibility of installing solar PV on Council owned buildings that are on our list of top 30 electricity consuming sites. This list included some Adur Housing sites. The withdrawal of the feed in tariff did not signal the end of viability for solar PV. Officers would continue to explore options for renewable energy for council buildings after March 2019. A Member asked why Portsmouth City Council were being consulted and were told that more information would be circulated on that question.

A Member asked the following question: *Stewarding our natural resources – page 24 – someone want to ask anything about electric charging points? Why is there not an electric charging point on Shoreham High Street? – this would have sent a strong message and taken a space for polluting car off the road? Is this being considered re: Dec 2018 (page 58) next charging sites plan?* The Committee was told that the Councils were unable to install electric vehicle (EV) charging points on-street. The highways authority was West Sussex County Council who held decision making powers over these installations. They were not giving approval to on-street charge points until they had defined their own EV charging strategy which was due to be released at the end of the year. The Councils would apply for charging points once it was possible and parameters were known.

A Member asked the following question: *The Stagecoach site is a regular red - is there any positive update on this?* Member were told that dialogue with Stagecoach and their advisors had continued and although those discussions remained commercially confidential the councils had been pleased with the commitment that

senior managers had given to exploring potential options. Members were also given some background into the complexity of the issues surrounding the site.

A Member asked the following question: *Financial Economies - Good to see the Portland Road and South Street public realm development moving forward, but what is being done to address the issue of non-development of the Montague Centre, located at the heart of our town centre?* Members were told that public realm improvements at Portland Road and South Street continue, with a final design for the former due before the end of the year. Both schemes constitute Phase 1, all remaining schemes (including Montague Place) would be looked at as additional funding came forward. Members were told that a Senior Officer had met the development company in relation to Montague Place in the past couple of weeks. The Company was scheduled to engage with the Councils at pre-application stage for a different mixed use scheme.

A Member asked the following question: *Social economies commitment tracker - Since the HRA was introduced in April, has there been any change in the number of homeless people in Worthing and Adur?* Members were told that some of the Councils' concerns regarding the Act had started to be played out. There had been an increase in the number of homeless amongst single people with complex needs especially physical or mental health problems. Members were told that caseloads of existing officers had risen significantly and were given a breakdown of the figures relating to active homeless and those receiving housing advice. There was ongoing time put into liaising with Mental and General hospitals and that when 'duty to refer' came into force there would be a further increase in demand. The Committee was told that there had been some success of social prescribing in reducing homelessness.

A Member asked the following question: *Can we please have an update on the Lyndhurst Road facility run by WCHP (Worthing Churches Homeless Project), in terms of turnover, people moving on, any issues and success stories.* Members were given a response that had been provided by WCHP as follows: Lyndhurst Road opened on Monday 30th April 2018 and received over 100 referrals for the service and into the new single homeless pathway that started around the same time. The service has worked with over 45 individuals since opening and has had 7 positive move-ons into independent accommodation as well as further supported/longer term residential services. WCHP employed a skilled staff team of 15 from a range of backgrounds and experience including Police, Prison and Social Work. There was a three week training and induction programme for all prior to opening including areas such as Safeguarding, Substance Misuse and Mental Health. The service is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with a minimum of two staff on site at all times but during the week there can be up to 10-12

individuals on site as other multidisciplinary teams are based there. The service continues to receive a large amount of referrals for each vacancies and demonstrates the need for this service in the local area and continues to try and work collaboratively with to address any issues or concerns that have been raised since the service began. This includes a dedicated phone and email address for anyone to report concerns and regular meetings with key local businesses, residents and councillors.'

A Member asked the following question: *How will the proposed WSCC £6 million Supporting People cuts affect WBC housing and homelessness capacity and provision?* Members were told that WSCC had published a set of 'proposals' and the councils had been advised that they would not be making any formal decisions until late 2018. The councils were working with local authority and provider colleagues from across West Sussex to fully understand the potential implications of a range of options. The Councils would also review what opportunities there were to collaborate to ensure that retain valuable services were retained at a time of considerable challenge across the County. The Councils remain committed to strong partnership working with other authorities, local providers, as well as WSCC.

A Member asked the following question: *Since the Council adopted the new Public Health Strategy in March 2018, what key things have been improved/introduced/removed due to lack of evidence of effectiveness?* Members were given a breakdown of the work being taken on the public health agenda. A further question asked by the Member about how green spaces fed into the wellbeing agenda who was told that this was an important material consideration.

A Member asked the following question: *Stewarding Natural Resources - How is the masterplan for Brooklands being developed and when can the public expect to be consulted on this?* Members were told that a master plan for Brooklands Park had been developed using the consultation feedback received by the local community and key stakeholders during a consultation exercise carried out in Spring 18, where over 800 plus responses were submitted. Members were told of plans to bring the masterplan to fruition and of dates for public engagement

A Member asked the following question: *How many vehicles are using the electric charging points?* Members were given the following information:

- Electric vehicle charging points have been installed in three locations. One at Brooklands Park car park, one in Pond Road car park, shoreham and two in High Street MSCP in Worthing. The usage figures for the period February - September 2018 at each of the sites are as follows:

- Brooklands 157 occasions
- Pond Road 290 occasions
- High Street MSCP 232 occasions

Responding to a follow up question members were told that information would be circulated relating to the type of modelling used regarding expected usage.

A Member asked the following question: *Commitments - Re Paragraph 3.9 of JSC report on refresh of commitments - "Whilst it will not be helpful to comment in this covering report on each of the 140 plus commitments" - As this is a strategic document, and by its own admission does not cover everything that the Council does, would it be possible to review these 140 commitments, consider the key priorities for Worthing and condense them substantively into strategic goals?* The Committee was given an explanation of how commitments were broken down underneath platforms and strategic commitments. It was suggested that the public were more likely to be interested in seeing the outcomes of the platforms than the commitments listed in a document.

A Member asked the following question for the Worthing Executive Member for Digital and the Environment *Recycling: The current rate of 37% is poor. Is the Executive Member confident of reaching 50% in 2 years time?* The Executive Member told the Committee that rate of recycling compared well with other authorities nearby and explained some of the initiative being carried out in order to raise recycling levels.

A Member asked the following question: *Agenda Page 53- 2.5.2 Timescale/Milestones (b) Question- What exactly does – Clear agreement on how development specific proposals will be surfaced, supporting place shaping initiatives?* Members were told of a number of joint ventures with partners that would agree specific proposals to ensure that local communities benefit from the regeneration of town centres and places. Examples were given including the Public Realm Board where the Council was actively working with WSCC to set out a programme of public realm improvements. Members were also told about the work with Sussex Yacht Club that had benefited both the yacht club in terms of facility improvement but provided other benefits such as flood defence and improved cycle/ footpath access.

A Member asked the following question: *Services and Solutions for our Places Agenda Page 63- 4.1.1 (a) How do you envisage a digital prototype helping homeless people and people with mental health issues?* Members were told that the Councils were using Systems Leadership approaches to work collectively with partners and other key stakeholders to develop innovative and sustainable

approaches to addressing challenging problems. 'Making Homelessness Everyone's business' was one such project. Whilst digital approaches were suitable in addressing issues, they were not always appropriate in relation to these areas of work. Whilst there was no specific 'digital' element to the work undertaken to collectively minimise the risk of homelessness and support those with mental health issues, the 'Going Local' social prescribing project and the associated 'Find it' app, both had key digital elements developed by A&W Councils, which contribute greatly to these areas of need as well as others.

A Member asked the following question: *Question: 4.2.3 - How were the £200,000 savings in 2017/18 achieved?* The Committee was told that had been achieved through reducing the costs of a number of corporate contracts. Responding to a further question about future savings targets the Committee was told about plans to improve contract management and the joining of groups to benefit from large scale contracts.

The Executive Head of Environment and Digital was asked a question about waste minimisation and the effect that this had on recycling rates. Members were informed that a reduction of waste mean that recycling would go up as a proportion of the total waste weight.

Resolved: that the report be noted

JOSC/18-19/17 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 7. The report before Members gave background information on the Portfolios of the Adur and Worthing Leaders to enable the Committee to consider and question the Leaders on issues within their portfolios.

A Member asked the following question: *Following the disappointing response to the Council Tax Support scheme (CTS) consultation and subsequent review of consultations by the Committee, can the Leaders outline how they propose to not only increase the number of responses but generate meaningful engagement in the CTS process for 2019/20?* The Leader of WBC responded that he didn't accept that the the response rate was terribly low. The public had been asked the same question for the previous 6-7 years. Year by year the response rate had gone down because people won't keep responding on an issue if they had already given their opinion. In general the Councils were good at getting a response to consultations. The Adur Leader commended the work completed by the Scrutiny Committee on consultations. Members were told that response rates compared favourably when measured against other West Sussex authorities

A Member asked the following question: *Following the well published concerns by local providers of Housing Support services to County Council proposals to cut the funding can the leaders update the committee on what mitigation our councils are carrying out in the event of these cuts going ahead?* The Worthing Leader told members that it was important for the councils to engage with the consultation. It was his opinion that cuts in this area could be counterproductive for West Sussex.

A Member asked the following question: *In the approach to a potential hard Brexit, can you tell me what strategic contingency plans you are coming up with – have you submitted any Brexit Preparedness reports?* The Worthing Leader told the Committee of work he had undertaken as part of the LGA (Local Government Association) Post Brexit England Commission. He told Members that regardless of the Brexit outcome the councils should continue to do the best to promote local economies. The councils needed to focus on what it was doing to make themselves more resilient such as it's digital programme.

A Member asked the following question: *Consultation of negative RSG – LA's were invited to consult on technical consultation on 2019/2020 local government finance settlement – an invite to pilot 75% business rates retention. Did you provide consultation feedback, what were steps taken. The LGA were encouraging all member councils to reply?* Members were told that the Joint Strategic Committee had received a report and prepared a response at its July meeting.

A Member asked the following question: *Is the Leader satisfied with progress on trying to tackle homelessness?* The Leader told Members that he would not be satisfied as long as there were people living in doorways. Members were informed that the Council was working hard to address the issue and were given details of partnership working and initiatives that were being undertaken.

A Member asked the following question: *How does the Leader propose tackling retail decline in Worthing town centre?* The Leader disputed the assertion that there was retail decline in Worthing. There were some businesses that had left but similarly there were other businesses that had moved into the town. Worthing retail vacancy rates compared favourably to other seaside towns. Retail was changing and town centres should become destinations where cultural and leisure events pulled people into the town, for example Worthing had recently held a food festival.

A Member asked the following question: *Does the Leader think Worthing will become a dormitory town for commuters to London?* The Leader told Members that there was work ongoing as part of an economic strategy that looked at keeping high levels of employment in the town and in the surrounding area

A Member asked the following question: *The financial future of the Council could get difficult - what lobbying is the Leader undertaking via his Conservative party contacts for support for the pilot scheme recently discussed at JSC?* The WBC Leader told Members that the Councils had financial challenges since 2008. Local Government members would be put forward at Party Conference.

Resolved: that the interview be noted.

JOSC/18-19/19 Youth Engagement Update for Joint Overview and Scrutiny

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, 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 8. The report before Members provided an update to JOSC following the recommendations agreed by JSC in January 2018.

The director for Communities and the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing were present to answer questions

A Member asked if the Executive Member could provide a timeline for the appointment of Young People Champions and was told that there would be an announcement at the next full council meeting.

A Member asked if the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing consider that the County Council has sufficient youth workers /support in Worthing to help young people? *Members were told that Youth support from West Sussex fell under the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help team, and as part of their transformation all services have become more targeted. A&W Councils have a very close and constructive working relationship with the IPEH team and sit as part of their steering group as well as working closely with WSCC colleagues in identifying better ways of working such as the recent engagement with local schools to build awareness and resilience amongst students. Youth work did not stop at those employed by WSCC there were many individuals and organisations throughout the Borough who worked with Children.* Answering a follow up question the Executive Member stated that she would get information for the committee on the number of youth workers employed by West Sussex County Council.

Resolved: that the report be noted

JOSC/18-19/23 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Digital and Resources, 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 13.

The Committee discussed the work programme and agreed to add an item on the corporate estates strategy as discussed earlier in the meeting, the Committee also agreed to add an item on illegal Traveller incursions.

Resolved: That the work programme be approved and noted as amended

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.55pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Chairman