



Delivering *Platforms for our Places*: Mid-Year Report 2017

Report by the Chief Executive and Councils Leadership Team

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides 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. It introduces our new commitment progress tracker and enables Joint Strategic Committee to have top level oversight over progress against all five Platforms.
- 1.2 Given their number, the progress of all commitments has not been set out in this report or the Progress Report at [Attachment A](#). Individual Executive Members will be aware of the detailed progress of commitments relevant to their portfolio.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In December 2016 Adur and Worthing Councils adopted *Platforms for our Places* as the Councils' direction of travel for the next three years. As a result of Joint Strategic Committee report on *Platforms for our Places* (December 2016) the Joint Strategic Committee requested reports on a six-monthly basis on the progress being made on the commitments set out in *Platforms for our Places*.
- 2.2 *Platforms for our Places* builds on the need to explore and reset our relationship with our residents, recognising as Councils we cannot and should not do everything for everyone. However that we still have a role in providing the essential services for our residents, and work with partners to create 'platforms' upon which our communities can build happy, healthy, prosperous and connected places.
- 2.3 *Platforms for our Places* identifies five platforms that are underpinned by a series of commitments:
 - a) Our Financial Economies
 - b) Our Social Economies
 - c) Stewarding our Natural Resources
 - d) Services and Solutions for our Places
 - e) Leadership of our Places

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The Progress Report (Attachment A), provides an overview of the main highlights, challenges and future focus in the development of the five platforms identified in *Platforms for our Places*. The progress report also provides an overview of the current status of Platform commitments. In addition to the progress report, it may be helpful to draw out particular emerging issues further.

3.2 Major Projects

3.2.1 The development of key sites across Adur and Worthing are identified by the Councils as vital in developing our financial economy. We have seen significant development on the Adur Civic Centre site, with the building completely demolished by May 2017. We are now in Phase 2 with Architects appointed to develop options for the scheme. The Worthing Planning Committee granted permission for the Aquarena site, with the sale of land to the developer expected to be completed by July 2017 and work on site expected to commence shortly thereafter.

3.2.2 The Councils have been allocated in excess of £18 million in financial support through the LGF from our successful bids to the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. The funding will enable the Councils to unlock key sites across Adur and Worthing. With this funding the Councils' are developing options for taking a more pro-active role in securing development that will help realise the economic potential of our places. Ongoing engagement between project managers, technical and building services, legal services and procurement teams; and an effective use of the Council limited resources is also required to deliver complex projects.

3.3 Improving our visitor and cultural economies

3.3.1 The Councils have strengthened and improved the visitor and cultural economies in Adur and Worthing. The Shoreham Farmers' Market was awarded Sussex Farmers' Market 2017 at the Sussex Food and Drink awards, while Adur's other markets go from strength to strength. In Worthing 'Discover Worthing' was launched to attract new and return visits to the town. The Councils also launched a summer events calendar demonstrating how the collaboration between the visitor economy and the Councils can enhance the offer for visitors to both areas.

3.3.2 Our cultural economies also play an important role in supporting our visitor economy and developing Adur and Worthing as a home of arts and culture for the benefit of the community and visitors alike. The Ropetackle Arts Centre successfully won their bid for funding from Arts Council England. This was aided by leveraging grant money from Adur District Council. The creative hub, Colonnade House, has established itself on the cultural landscape of Adur and Worthing and beyond. In six months of opening creative spaces and studios are nearly at 100 per cent occupancy and booking of ground floor exhibition space are secured well into 2018.

3.3.3 Worthing Theatres and Museum continue to develop its artistic and cultural programme. Worthing is now considered a leader in contemporary circus, through collaboration with key circus organisations. The second year of *Summer of Circus* builds on the success of its inaugural year in 2016. The Museum's *Isolation*

Chamber has received national coverage. A well developed programme with strong and innovative marketing have contributed to Worthing Theatres and Museum's improved year end financial position. At the end of 2016/17 the overspend was reduced from £120,000 to £25,000.

3.4 Improving Customer Service

3.4.1 A number of services across the Councils are focused on improving the customer experience. This is important in improving the efficiency of the service and commercial competitiveness, and maintaining the confidence of our communities. Improvements in customer service were delivered through the Councils' digital strategy, service transformation and improvement and collaboration with internal and external partners.

3.4.2 Improved telephony systems have provided greater customer insight and better call center performance. The average wait times for customers in February 2017 were a quarter of those recorded as recently as September 2016. Customer insight has informed service transformation projects including, Housing Repairs, Waste Services and Planning & Building Control. Customer Service and Digital are also working to improve the Councils' Complaints and Compliments digital platform to ensure it is an effective tool to manage, respond and learn from complaints and compliments received from residents.

3.4.3 **Adur Home Repairs:** A self-help digital solution is currently being developed for Adur Homes repairs. This sits within a wider project between Housing, Digital and Design and Building and Technical Services, who are working together to improve repairs and capital improvements across Adur Homes.

3.4.4 **Adur Revenue and Benefits:** Bringing Adur Revenue and Benefits in-house is intended to improve customer service, and collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates. Revenue and Benefits are also in the position to use their relationship with other support services to refer customers. In the longer-term joint revenue and benefits services will see customer enhancement for Adur and Worthing residents, including on-line self-service.

3.4.5 **Clinical Waste:** A new digital platform has improved internal process and the customer journey for clinical waste, which is a key revenue generator within our waste services offer.

3.4.6 **Building Control and Planning:** Identifying similar customers and business process, a customer-focused online tool is being developed for Building Control and Planning Customers.

3.4.7 **Worthing Theatres:** An excellent programme and quality customer experience provided by fully trained staff has seen 40% of our ticket bookers attending four times or more, well exceeding the national standard of 24%.

3.5 Developing our organisation

3.5.1 In response to the Adur and Worthing Councils adoption of *Platforms for our Places*, conversations have commenced across the organisation on how we can best deliver the ambitious plan Elected Members have adopted. A series of workshops

were held for staff and managers, and constructive conversations are taking place among senior management about how we can work together more effectively to deliver the Councils' objectives.

3.5.2 In addition conversations have begun with staff about the development of a People Strategy. This work is about looking at what how our organisation can be at our best and what changes we need to make to get there.

3.6 Working with our Partners

3.6.1 Working with our Partners is a core aspect of *Platforms for our Places*. We continue to build our relationship with partners across our places and across Platforms. Already in this report there are examples of the Councils' working with public, private, and the community and voluntary sector to deliver commitments. However we do recognise that it is our public and community and voluntary sector partners are experiencing challenges with funding and capacity. This may be a result of competing service demands, or the effort required to redesign services that increases the skills, capabilities and resilience of our population. For example health and social care providers managing increasing service demand for older people, while still meeting the needs of children and young people. In some cases our public and community and voluntary sector partners are critical to realising the Councils' ambition, and therefore may place delivery at risk. Looking forward we are working to develop our community leadership and engagement, by creating principles and tools with our partners to redefine and reshape our offer to communities and enable proactive community leadership.

3.6.2 **Stewarding our Natural Resources:** We have had some real successes working with the Community to steward our green space and natural environment.

- a) Successful collaboration and ongoing partnership working with Allotment Self-Management;
- b) 43 groups across the District and Borough are engaged with the Green Space Partnership, co-chaired by The Conservation Volunteers;
- c) The establishment of a Sustainability Network with attendees from public, private and not-for-profit sector interest in collaborating and sharing to promote sustainability in our Places.

3.6.3 **Systems Leadership:** We continued our working with the Local Government Leadership Centre to develop our collective leadership capabilities. Working with young people and public and voluntary sector leaders we are developing a "What young people need to thrive" programme, centred on the building blocks needed for strong emotional wellbeing and resilience. We will be using this to influence and shape programmes across Adur and Worthing in ways to help grow these capabilities.

3.6.4 **Going Local:** Recognising the power that social and community solutions have to a person's health and wellness and the role that Councils play in promoting this. Our Going Local (social prescribing) programme (with the Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group and West Sussex County Council), set up in November 2016 has now seen nearly 260 individuals, and provided the time and space to explore their real issues with them and connect them into services and community based solutions.

3.6.5 **New models to deliver Housing:** The first half of a £10 million loan facility to Worthing Homes has been advanced, enabling them to deliver additional social housing in Worthing. Further financial and legal due diligence work is undertaken to enable the next part to be released in December 2017. In Adur District Council, plans are being developed to deliver new homes on two sites at Albion Street at a Cecil Norris House; and work is being commissioned to review the potential of Adur Homes in-fill sites. This will provide valuable learning to Adur Homes, while contributing to the district's housing need.

4.0 Legal

4.1 Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provides for a general power of competence and empowers the Councils to do anything which individuals generally may do, in the UK or elsewhere, for a commercial purpose or without charge and for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

4.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Councils to do anything which is intended to facilitate or is conducive to or ancillary to any of its functions.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 Financial implications will be addressed as part of the budget process.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 Joint Strategic Committee are asked to:-

- a) Note progress made and challenges experienced during the first six months of the *Platforms for our Places* programme and emerging issues identified.
- b) Request a further update report to January 2018 Joint Strategic Committee.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

- *Platforms for our Places* (adopted by Adur District Council - 15 December 2016; adopted by Worthing Borough Council - 20 December 2016)
- "Platforms for our Places" - Unlocking the power of people, communities and our local geographies [Joint Strategic Committee Report - 6 December 2016 (Item 6)]

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of the progress made on the Councils' three-year plan - *Platforms for our Places*.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

- 2.1 A commitment is made in *Platforms for our Places* that members would be regularly informed about progress under the the plan.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

- 3.1 The report provides an overview of how the Councils are contributing to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Adur and Worthing; and activities to improve the financial and organisational efficiency of the Councils.

4.0 Equality Issues

- 4.1 No specific equality issues are addressed in the report, however they are considered as part of the implementation of *Platforms for our Places*.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- 5.1 No specific community safety issues are addressed in the report, however they are considered as part of the implementation of *Platforms for our Places* through specific commitments.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

- 6.1 No specific human rights issues are addressed in the report, however they are considered as part of the implementation of *Platforms for our Places*.

7.0 Reputation

- 7.1 The progress outlined in the report demonstrates Adur and Worthing Councils are taking active steps to promote our Places, and are successfully working with partners to help our places thrive.

8.0 Consultations

- 8.1 All service areas within the Councils contributed input to the development of this report.

9.0 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Publication of the report provides residents an opportunity to be informed about the activities of the Councils. Community Engagement and partnership are important elements underpinning the delivery of *Platforms for our Places*. Risks to publish and

not to publish are both low, however there may be reputational impacts regarding transparency and engagement which should be considered if the Joint Strategic Committee does not agree to the recommendation.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 As outlined in paragraph 3.6 partnership working forms an important part of realising the ambition set out in *Platforms for our Places*.