

Extract from the Joint Governance Committee - 24 January 2017

**JGC/16-17/044 The Appointment of External Auditors for Adur District
Council and Worthing Borough Council**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

The report summarised the changes to the arrangements for appointing external auditors following the closure of the Audit Commission and the end of the transitional arrangements at the conclusion of the 2017-18 audits. It was noted that the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 required authorities to either opt in to the Appointing Person regime or to establish an auditor panel and conduct their own procurement exercise.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee recommended to Adur and Worthing Councils that both Councils opt into the Appointing Person arrangements made by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors.

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JGC/16-17/045 Proposed Revisions to Contract Standing Orders

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 11.

The report proposed some further amendments to the Joint Contract Standing Orders. The provisions had been the subject of consultation with both Executive Members of Resources, Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee and the Council's Leadership Team.

The Committee noted that the procurement limits had been reviewed to reflect those in other Councils and a summary of this information had been attached to the report as Appendix 1.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee recommended to Adur and Worthing Councils that the revised Contract Standing Orders be approved.

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JGC/16-17/046 Elected Member Involvement in the Appointment and Discipline of the Councils' Senior Officers

Before the Committee was a report by the Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 12.

The report informed the Committee that the Monitoring Officer had undertaken a review of the Councils' existing arrangements for the recruitment, appointment, discipline and dismissal of its Senior Officers and, with a view to ensuring an efficient, streamlined, independent and fair process, had made proposals for change.

It was noted that if the proposals were adopted by the Councils, they would be subject to consultation with Unison, and consequential changes would need to be made to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and the Terms of Reference of Staffing Committees within the Councils' Constitutions. Further, it was likely that the Committee structure would change, with the abolition of the Joint Senior Staff (Appeals) Committee. Further, consequential changes would need to be made, by Human Resources Officers, to the Councils' Recruitment & Selection and Disciplinary Policies.

The Committee discussed the merits of Options 2 and 3, as outlined in the report, acknowledging that Member involvement in such issues had not always resulted in best outcomes in the past.

A Member sought clarification in regards to when meaningful consultation with the Executive would take place. The Committee was advised that detailed information would need to be shared with the Executive, including the reasons for appointment or dismissal, prior to implementation.

It was proposed and seconded that the Committee recommend the adoption of Option 2.

Resolved,

That the Joint Governance Committee:-

- agreed option 2 as their preferred option and included the wording *‘the appeal officer would either be the Head of Paid Service or an officer nominated by him, of whom he is satisfied as to competency and independence’*;
- recommended to both Adur and Worthing Councils the adoption of option 2, subject to consultation with Unison; and
- recommended to both Adur and Worthing Councils that they delegate the authority to the Monitoring Officer to implement the adopted option and in particular to make consequential changes to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and the terms of reference of the Staffing Committees in each Council’s Constitution.

Extract from the Joint Strategic Committee - 2 February 2017

JSC/092/16-17 Joint Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 to 2018/19 Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies 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.

The Committee noted that the Councils are required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

The report provided information in relation to:

- the capital expenditure plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure was charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings were to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments were to be managed).

The Joint Strategic Committee was asked to approve the prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy.

It was noted that Adur and Worthing Councils treasury advisers, Capita, had supplied an interest rate forecast and other market information and that Officers had added property funds to the list of non-specified investments. Fixed term deposits were offering very low interest rates and Officers had been researching the option of investing in the CCLAs Local Authority Property Fund for a better return.

A Member questioned the impact of a forecast rise in inflation, to 2.7%, on the interest rate forecast from Capita. Officers advised that Capita were due to revise their forecast in the coming days.

Decision:

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. approved and adopted the TMSS and AIS for 2017/18 to 2019/20, incorporating the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements;
2. **recommended the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements of the report for approval by Worthing Council at its meeting on 21 February 2017, and by Adur Council at its meeting on 23 February 2017;**
3. recommended the report be noted at the meeting of the Joint Governance Committee to be held on 28 March 2017.

Extract from the Worthing Executive meeting of 6 February 2017

W EX/004/16-17 Worthing Overall Budget Estimates 2016/17 and Setting of 2016/17 Council Tax

The Executive had before it a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, attached to the signed record of these decisions as item 4.

The report represented the culmination of the annual budget exercise and asked the Executive to consider the following:

- The final revenue estimates for 2017/18 including any adjustments arising from settlement;
- An updated outline 5-year forecast;
- The provisional level of Council Tax for 2017/18, prior to its submission to the Council for approval on the 21st February 2017.

The budgets reflect the decisions taken by Members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals and any committed growth. The report also updated Members about the impact of the draft 2017/18 settlement.

The major points raised within the report included:

- A full update on the impact of settlement. The Council should prepare itself for a continuation of the reduction in Government resources for another 2-5 years (Section 3.2 of the report) ;
- Identified that the Executive will need to consider whether to increase Council Tax by maximum level possible of £5.00 (2.27%) or by a lower amount (detailed in paragraph 5.10);
- Identified that the Executive needs to consider the new growth item in paragraph 5.11.

The budget was presented by Executive Member portfolio. The draft estimates for 2017/18 had been prepared, as usual, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the budget requirement of the Council Tax requirement).

The Prime and Crime Commissioner has consulted on an increase to the council Tax for 2017/18 of £5.00 or 3.36%. The proposed 2017/18 budget was considered by the

Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 20 January 2017 and an increase of £5.00 was approved.

The comments of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January had been emailed to all Executive members for their attention.

The Director presented the report drawing attention to the budget position and the impact the reducing grant would have over the next few years. For the forthcoming year, the Director identified at paragraph 5.10 options available to the Executive suggesting that a 2% increase, amounting to 8p per week, would ensure that the Council had a balanced budget and fund some new initiatives.

The Executive Member for Resources proposed an increase of 2% in council tax for 2017/18 which was seconded.

There was a discussion on the proposed increase and the recommendations before the meeting.

Decision the
Executive

(i) Approved the growth item detailed at paragraph 5.11;

(ii) Agreed to **recommend** to Council the draft budgets for 2017/18 at Appendix 5 as submitted in Executive Member Portfolio order, and the transfer to Reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £13,468,630;

(iii) Agreed to **recommend** to Council an increase of 2% making Band D for Worthing Borough Council's requirements in 2017/18 as set out in paragraph 12.3 of £224.64 per annum.