



WORTHING BOROUGH
C O U N C I L

12 December 2023

**Worthing Council Meeting
12 December 2023**

The Gordon Room, Worthing Town Hall

6.30 pm

Agenda

11 December 2023

ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL are hereby summoned to attend for the following business:

Part A

7. Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council (Pages 5 - 8)

To consider recommendations to the Council, details of which are set out in the attached items as 7A, 7B and 7C.

Reports are available on the website as listed below:

	Executive / Committee	Date	Item
A	Worthing Licensing & Control Committee	18 September 2023	(i) Licensing Act 2003 - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy
B	Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 November 2023	(i) Review of JOSC Work Programme
C	Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee	5 December 2023	(i) Council Tax Support Scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2024/25

8. Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by the Executive (Pages 9 - 18)

To receive a report from the Leader as item 8. The report contains decisions taken by the Cabinet, Cabinet Members, the Joint Strategic Committee and the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee since the last Council meeting.

There will be up to 15 minutes for Cabinet Members to make any statements on the report. There will also be up to 15 minutes for Executive Members to respond to questions on the report. These questions will not be the same as any to be asked under Item 9.

Paul Brewer
Director for Sustainability & Resources:
Adur & Worthing Councils,
Town Hall, Chapel Road,
Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1HA



Paul Brewer
Director for Sustainability & Resources

Recording of this meeting

The Council will be live streaming this meeting, including public question time. A recording will be available on the Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting. The Council will not be recording any discussions in Part B of the agenda (where the press and public have been excluded).

For Democratic Services enquiries relating to this meeting please contact:

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WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Council
12 December 2023

Extract from the minutes of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 30 November 2023

JOSC/058/23-24 Review of JOSC Work Programme

Members discussed the response from Southern Water, that they would not attend a public meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and representations that could be made to the water regulator. They also discussed the two proposals that had been submitted for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme. The first regarded the operation and role of PubWatch which could be found in Appendix B and the help Worthing council could provide to those with 'metallic implants' in their bodies in relation to ICNIRP Guidelines, which could be found in Appendix C.

Resolved:

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to

- note the progress to deliver the JOSC Work Programme for 2023/24 as contained in the Appendix A;
- Make representations to OFWAT regarding the Southern Water decision not to attend JOSC;
- The Joint Chairs writing a letter to the Chief Executive of Southern Water expressing concern that Southern Water would not attend the public JOSC meeting;
- Add the scrutiny request detailed in appendix B to the work programme;
- Decline the scrutiny request detailed in appendix C because the issue related to matters that the Councils were not responsible for; and
- **Recommend to the meetings of Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council in December 2023 that the changes made to the JOSC Work Programme since it was agreed by both Councils in April 2023 be noted.**

Resolved

(Link to the report on the website - [Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2023 - Appendix A](#))



**Extract from the minutes of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee - 5
December 2023**

**WJSSC/074/23-24 Council Tax Support Scheme for Worthing Borough
Council in respect of 2024/25**

The report before members explained Council Tax Support was a scheme to help some people pay their Council Tax. This depended on their income and personal circumstances and was only available to some people in the UK who were living on a low income. The Council Tax Support scheme must be considered each year as part of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (which introduced the framework for localism of Council Tax Support), with Members confirming revisions, continuing the scheme as is or replacing this with another scheme.

The Scheme formed an important part of the Council's ambition to become the fairest coastal town by supporting people who were living on the lowest incomes. It should be noted that whilst the Council was experiencing extreme budgetary pressures, this scheme was one way in which the Council was responding to the enduring impacts of the cost of living to help lift people out of poverty. Given the importance of the scheme, the report asked Members to continue the scheme with no changes and to recommend the scheme to the Full Council in respect of 2024/25.

Questions were asked about consultation and the structure of the Council Tax. Members were told that the scheme was important to the Administration to relieve the burden on those hard pressed by the cost of living crisis. Members were told that the current system of council tax was out of date and needed revision.

Members supported the report, it was noted that results from the recent budget consultation supported investment in Cost of Living Support.

Resolved

- 1) That the content of the Report be noted
- 2) **that the Council Tax Support scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of working age customers for 2024/25 be recommended to council and should**

- a) **Be based upon the current Council Tax Support scheme for 2023/24 with no restrictions; and**
- b) **Not be further altered with any other changes beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit.**

(Link to the report on the website - [Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on 5 December 2023](#))



Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by Cabinet Members, the Joint Strategic Committee and the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee since the last meeting of Council

A Decisions Taken by Individual Cabinet Members

Listed below is a summary of decisions taken by the individual Cabinet Members since the dispatch of the agenda for the last Ordinary Council Meeting. Details can be found on the Cabinet Members Decisions webpage.

Leader

None

Deputy Leader

None

Cabinet Member for Regeneration

* JAW/010/23-24 *Conservation Area Character Appraisal Reviews*
JAW/011/23-24 *Worthing Conservation Area Reviews*
JAW/013/23-24 *Joint Draft Statement of Community Involvement*
JAW/015/23-24 *BEACH bid*

Cabinet Member for Resources

JAW/012/23-24 *Application for Voluntary Redundancy*
* JAW/014/23-24 *Strategic Property Investment Fund Refurbishment Contract Award - Eskan Court, Milton Keynes*

Cabinet Member for Housing & Citizen Services

None

Cabinet Member for the Environment

None

Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing

None

Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure

None

Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

None

** The Worthing Cabinet Member abstained as this was a matter relating to Adur District Council*

B. Decisions taken by the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on 9 November 2023

Details can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

The matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda:-

JSS-C(W)/031/23-24 Greening Principles - Approach to greening our spaces

The purpose of the report was to outline the Council's approach to greening our spaces and to deliver the headline principles that guide the approach. The key pillars of the Council's support of greening, across the borough, were taken from the administration's values to be Fair, Green and Local.

In recognising the breadth and passion of local residents, Friends of, and environmental associations and in understanding the administration's vision to be a 'Council for the Community' and in light of the Council's commitment to the climate and ecological emergencies, the report outlined the need for wider community participation and stewardship of our green spaces.

Decision

1. That the emerging Greening Principles for Worthing and their adoption for use across the council's practice be affirmed.
2. That the authority embeds the emerging Greening Principles as foundation values within the new Parks & Open Spaces Management and Town Centre Management Plans.
3. That the Greening Principles be used as core to the Greening Guide.
4. That the Greening Principles, as pivotal policy in all aspects of environmental growth and development, be endorsed.
5. That the authority promotes the Greening Principles as a way to harness community power and engagement in the fight against climate change and the ecological emergency.

The report updated the Sub-Committee on the progress made on the delivery of the 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme for Worthing Borough Council. The programme included schemes which supported the delivery of services by the Joint Services Committee

Worthing Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. As part of the declaration, Members committed to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The report before members presented the fourth annual update on progress towards that target.

Since the previous report, the council had completed a number of decarbonisation projects that had significantly decreased gas consumption across the councils' property portfolio. As a result, reported emissions for 22-23 decreased by 5.4% when compared to the previous year.

Members were given an update on carbon reduction projects and were told that a fleet strategy would be introduced in the following year.

Members discussed the report and noted that the update presented part of the council's work. There was other work ongoing towards the climate emergency that would involve other stakeholders within the community.

Decision

- 1) That the councils' current carbon emissions and carbon reduction work programme be noted; and
- 2) That it be noted that further funding bids may be made, in consultation with the relevant executive member, and that if required further reports would brief members on the outcome of the bidding process.

The report before members advised members of the proposed marketing of the Grafton Multi-Storey car park (GMSCP) and adjoining council owned properties and sought the Committee's approval of the assessment criteria for those bids received.

Decision

1. That the contents of the report be noted and that the key development priorities for the site be agreed.
2. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Regenerative Development to:

- a. Proceed with the marketing of Grafton Multi-Storey car park and adjoining council owned properties.
 - b. Present a report back to the Joint Strategic Sub-Committee following the outcome of the marketing process (set out in pages 5 to 6).
3. That authority was delegated to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to approve the Marketing Brochure.

C. Decisions taken by the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on 5 December 2023

Details can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

The matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda:-

JSS-C(W)/75/23-24 2nd Quarter Capital Investment Programme & Projects Monitoring 2023/24

This report updated the Sub-Committee on the progress made on the delivery of the 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme for Worthing Borough Council. The programme included schemes which supported the delivery of services by the Joint Services Committee.

A Member questions about required savings for 2024/25 and staff shortages in the Technical Services area. Members were given the background to the proposed savings which would be discussed at the JSC meeting on 7 December. The Committee was told that shortages in technical services were acknowledged and that there was an upcoming organisational restructure.

Members supported the proposals within the report and progress and completion of other schemes was lauded.

Decision

1. that the reprofiling of the Worthing Borough Council capital schemes as advised in paragraph 6.1 and appendix 2 be noted; and
2. that the changes to the current schemes as set out in section 6.2 of the report be noted.

JSS-C(W)/76/23-24 Redevelopment of 5&7 High Street to provide Emergency and Temporary Accommodation (EA/TA)

The report before members sought approval for the refurbishment and extension of the Council owned property at 5-7 High Street and 52 Ann Street, Worthing to provide emergency and temporary accommodation (EA/TA) and requested a budget to complete the redevelopment of the site.

The recommendations supported the Council's ambition to directly deliver homes for EA/TA and, if approved, would make a contribution towards the achievement of the targets set out in the Adur and Worthing Housing Strategy for 2020-2023, 'Delivering Pathways to Affordable Homes' document and subsequent Delivery Plans.

This report examined the increasing demand for EA/TA in Worthing, the Council's commitment to owning its own stock of EA/TA, and reviewed the options available to the Council for the future of the buildings. It identified a Preferred Option (2) which entailed the retention of the facade of both buildings, demolition of the rear extensions and reconfiguration of the building into EA/TA flats. This option was the most economically viable and would help meet local housing needs.

The report also noted the continuation of Colonnade House as an economic contributor as well as the adjoining commercial / retail units. The introduction of temporary accommodation at 5-7 High Street would ensure all buildings had an 'active use' in this part of the town centre.

The legal position concerning the Overage to be applied to No. 5 High Street was being explored with West Sussex County Council to ensure that the Council's Legal Team's interpretation of the Overage clause within the Deed of Transfer is the same as that of West Sussex County Council's legal team i.e. overage did not apply to the Preferred Option. Once this was determined, officers will be able to proceed at pace to appoint consultants to undertake the surveys and more detailed design work required to deliver this option.

A Member asked a question about the commercial and residential split between the proposed housing and the use of Colonnade House and if consultation had taken place with Colonnade House on the decision. Members were told that Colonnade House were content with the new scheme and were glad that there would be no interruption to commercial activity on the site.

Decision

- 1) Subject to the Director for Place being satisfied (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources) that the overage provisions referred to in this report do not apply to the proposed preferred option and receipt of Homes England Funding referred to at paragraph 2.2 below, to approve the Preferred Option (2) to convert the buildings at 5 and 7 High Street and 52

Ann Street into EA/TA for the reasons outlined within this paper and to enable the council to fulfil its statutory housing duties under S188 and S193 of the Housing Act 1996.

- 2) That a budget of £1,745,300 from the unallocated temporary and emergency accommodation budget to deliver the project, alongside anticipated funding of c.£600,000 from Homes England be approved
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Director for Housing and Communities to invite tenders for the construction work, and to enter into all necessary contracts to enable the project to progress through the construction phase right through to completion.
- 4) That the continuation of the commercial / retail uses to the south, including Colonnade House, as the adjoining buildings be noted.

JSS-C(W)/77/23-24 Local Authority Housing Fund grant funding allocation for Worthing Borough Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Housing and Communities, 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 9.

The report sought approval of the use of grant funding provided to Worthing Borough Council for the acquisition of homes for refugees under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme, administered by DLUHC. Approval was needed to allow the councils to deliver this programme.

This report set out the need for these homes, the funding which the council could benefit from to deliver the homes, the borrowing necessary and viability of the programme and the options considered to deliver it.

Decision

- 1) that the Local Authority Housing Fund grant of £809,083 from the government and to commit to delivering the accommodation required under the fund be accepted.
- 2) That a budget of £914,213 was approved by way of a loan to enable the purchase of properties in Worthing. The loan accounted for 53% of the project budget, with the grant covering the remaining costs and the cost of borrowing to be covered from rental income in the first year of occupation.
- 3) A total budget of £1,723,296 was approved, comprising £809,083 of grant funding, and £914,213 by way of a loan.

- 4) That it be noted that when the homes are no longer needed by refugees they will be used to provide Emergency and Temporary Accommodation (EATA) for eligible local households in need.
- 5) That authority was delegated to the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness Prevention to approve the selection of properties which we will acquire through the fund.

D. Decisions taken by the Joint Strategic Committee on 7 December 2023

Details can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

The matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda:-

JSC/26/23-24 2nd Quarter Revenue Monitoring Report 2023/24

This report updated the Joint Strategic Committees with the expenditure and income projections for both Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council for the financial year 2023/24, compared to the Revenue Budget approved by both Councils in February. Whilst the 'spend to date' would be the position as at 30 June 2023, the forecast outturn position would reflect the latest information available to ensure an up-to-date forecast is presented.

The outturn projection for the 2023/24 financial year for the Worthing Borough Council General Fund was a net overspend after reserve transfers of £1.541m and for Adur District Council General Fund was a net underspend after reserve transfers of £33k. A breakdown was set out in section 4.4 of the report.

The position had been achieved as a result of very significant in-year spend controls and savings process delivering £1.1m in forecast savings, largely counteracted by significant emerging new pressures.

Decision

- 1) That the report and projected outturn position for Worthing Borough Council against the approved revenue budgets and proposed use of reserves (Appendix 2b) be noted.
- 2) That the report and projected outturn position for Adur District Council against the approved revenue budgets and proposed use of reserves (Appendix 3b) be noted.

JSC/27/23-24 2024/25 Budget Engagement Insights

The report summarised the findings from the budget engagement for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.

A Member asked a question about the way in which figures in the report were presented. Members were given further information on what the figures represented and the comment around language used would be noted for future insight reports.

Members welcomed the introduction of young people into the survey and explored ways in which engagement could be improved in the future.

Decision

That the findings be noted, as part of the finalisation of the Budget 2024/25 in advance of the Joint Strategic Committee in February 2024 and Full Council meetings later that month.

JSC/28/23-24 2024/25 Budget Update

The report provided members with a progress report on the delivery of the financial strategy for 2024/25, along with details of the proposals that would help deliver a balanced budget for the next financial year and beyond.

Members were asked to note that the proposals at Appendix 3 have been considered in advance of the Chancellor's Autumn statement and the provisional settlement, expected on or just before 20 December. As such they were proposed for approval but it was anticipated a further review following these key announcements. Whilst the proposals remained undetermined and open to review and because the Appendix contains commercially sensitive information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council, the information at Appendix 3 was exempt pursuant to Schedule 12A Paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972

In line with the decision to bring all financial reports as joint reports to JSC (with the exception of the capital programmes); the report included items for consideration by each individual authority as well as specific budget proposals to increase income, to deliver efficiency, and other savings initiatives for 2024/25 which impact on the Joint Strategic Committee.

A question was raised about the nature of service contracts and whether discussion with partners concerning proposed reductions in service contracts.

Decision

- 1) That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and make comment on the savings proposals to the Joint Strategic Committee.

- 2) That the current 5 year forecasts at Appendix 1 be noted;
- 3) That the committed growth items as set out in Appendix 2 be noted;
- 4) To note the current budget update and progress towards developing the 24/25 budget and approve the approach taken by officers and areas of focus for savings proposals. Fully costed proposals to go to the Adur and Worthing Cabinet meetings.

JSC/29/23-24 Adur and Worthing strategic acquisition approach for Temporary Accommodation

The report updated Members on the strategic acquisition programme to acquire more affordable temporary accommodation (TA). The purpose was to reduce the extraordinary cost pressures of meeting housing duties to place homeless households in more affordable accommodation, compared to using more expensive nightly-booked accommodation (which is subject to fluctuating and expensive rates that change during peak periods), and to secure better quality accommodation, enabling more people to remain closer to their local families and social networks.

Decision

- 1) That the progress made to date by using long-term leases and service level agreements to reduce budget pressures and improve our provision of temporary accommodation having regard to the financial implications in this report be acknowledged.
- 2) That Subject to the information contained in this report and the exempt appendix, to authorise the Director for Housing and Communities to enter into two separate new 5-year service level agreements (containing a 3-year break clause) with Revival Investments Limited for the acquisition of nomination rights to 37 units of managed temporary accommodation, with one service being located at High Street, Littlehampton, and another combined service at Goring Road and George V Avenue, Worthing, to enable the councils to discharge the housing duties owed to homeless households under S188 and S193 of the Housing Act 1996.
- 3) that authorisation to enter into contracts for acquisition of temporary accommodation by way of long-term leases and service level agreements will continue to be obtained using the existing delegated authorities and governance arrangements set out at paragraph 4.3 below be noted and approved

JSC/30/23-24 Digital Rapid Improvement Programme - Impact Report

This report before members aimed to offer members a thorough summary of the Digital Rapid Improvement Programme's progress from April 2023 onwards. It sought to provide an update on the savings achieved thus far and a cumulative projection for future years.

The report demonstrated the programme's value and its critical importance going forward as the Councils continued to undertake significant organisational redesign with the need to create simplified and digitised processes and systems that reduce costs and improve resident experience.

The report explored the testing of the introduction of artificial intelligence as a digital capability that could generate significant improvements, efficiencies and improved resident experience.

Decision

- 1) That the the current 5-year forecasts be acknowledged;
- 2) That the proposed savings be acknowledged;
- 3) That the allocation of an additional £250k to fund the resources required to support the Rapid Improvement Programme for the fiscal year 2024/25, with an estimated payback period of 3 years be supported.

E. Urgent Decisions taken by the Cabinet

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended).

None.

Local Government Act 1972

Background papers

None.

**Councillor Dr Beccy Cooper
Leader of the Council**