

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

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**27 January 2022**

Councillor Charles James (Chairman)  
Councillor Richard Nowak (Vice-Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

Joss Loader  
Ann Bridges  
Carol Albury  
Joe Pannell  
Sharon Sluman

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Louise Murphy  
Jon Roser  
Daniel Humphreys  
Sally Smith  
Vicki Wells  
Rosey Whorlow

**Absent**

Councillors Vee Barton, Mandy Buxton, Debs Stainforth

**JOSC/51/21-22 Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Bridges declared an interest with regards to previous involvement as a ward councillor in the West Beach sewage leak incident.

**JOSC/52/21-22 Substitute Members**

Councillor Andy McGregor declared a substitution for Councillor Mandy Buxton

Councillor Jeremy Gardner declared a substitution for Councillor Debs Stainforth

**JOSC/53/21-22 Confirmation of Minutes**

That the minutes of the meeting of the 25 November be approved as the correct record

**JOSC/54/21-22 Public Question Time**

The Committee had received a number of questions in advance of the meeting. The Chairman explained that due to the number of questions received, question time would be extended beyond the usual time period. Of the questions received in advance, two members of the public were present to ask their questions. The Chairman announced that the other questions would be read out on behalf of those other members of the

public and would be answered as part of a presentation by representatives Southern Water.

A Member of the public asked the following question: *Given evidence that sewage in the old Civic Centre backed up into toilets during heavy rain and that raw sewage was observed in the street near the skate park as recently as 2021 what does Southern Water consider to be sufficient sewer infrastructure to be in place in this low-lying area to cope with an increase of 2,400 new residents from the proposed new developments? Will we be facing foul water in Shoreham streets like East Lancing or regular discharges of raw sewage into the already polluted River Adur?*

A representative of Southern told the committee that work was in progress to see what level of work would need to be undertaken. The Free wharf site was in construction and on assessment of this, there was capacity for foul water and the location of the development that surface water issues could be addressed.

A Member asked the following question: *What plans do Southern Water have for a)connecting the Shoreham houseboats to the main sewer on Shoreham Beach and b) infrastructure improvements to prevent raw sewage being pumped into the River Adur at Ropetackle, Shoreham, as occurred in October, 2021?* The committee was told that to achieve this a multi-agency approach was needed. Southern Water would be happy to support the connection and explain how technically this could be achieved. This, however, would need to be a joint and collaborative matter.

A resident stated that questions that had been pre-submitted were not relevant for those present and the Chairman undertook to ask Southern Water to answer those questions in writing.

Those residents not present had their questions read out as follows

*I'm an all year round swimmer in the sea. As a result I would very much like to know that the sea quality is being tested all year round, not just between March and September as now. Also I would love to be able to swim in local rivers, as well as seeing greater diversity in animals and plants, but the information available regarding the water quality of those is very negative, there seem to be many pollutants being put into all our rivers, drainage from CSOs, farmland etc. When can we expect for this to be more comprehensively controlled?*

*I live very near the Adur and am absolutely disgusted to read of the many times Southern water discharge untreated sewage into our river. It is dangerous to people and to wildlife, and is inexcusable from a company that for a long time has paid hefty dividends to its shareholders.Can you please describe exactly what you intend to do ,and within what timescale, to ensure that raw sewage will only be discharged in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances, eg when there is a storm surge, and not on any sort of a regular basisAnd can you please also describe what steps you are taking to ensure the development that is planned for Shoreham will not lead to additional discharges?*

*I moved to Worthing from London during the pandemic. As an avid open-water swimmer, my motive behind moving to the coast was to be able to access the sea. Little did I know at the time that it would not be that simple, given the sea is a literal dumping ground for raw sewage - and somehow it is being allowed to continue by the government and local authorities. Since finding out how bad the environmental situation is in our rivers and on*

our coastline, I am now embarrassed whenever I have visitors who without exception ask about swimming in the lovely-looking sea, only to be told it is sometimes too dirty to swim in. Many of my friends are from abroad and it is difficult to fathom how backward water treatment systems are in the UK. This should ring an alarm bell with local authorities and not least with the government. Even if the environmental aspects do not bother you, what about the inevitable decline of coastal economies in the future if people simply do not want to live here or come here for tourism? The economy will dry up. I urge you to approach the Southern Water presentation with scepticism, given this will have been vetted by professional corporate investor relations teams. Please ask questions such as why executive compensation is so high when such large-scale illegal activities, with reputational and monetary losses for the company, but even more devastating consequences for coastal ecosystems, people's health and the public image of the British coastline, are occurring under these executives' watch. I personally am trying to find ways to volunteer and put money into charities like Surfers Against Sewage that are taking action, for example by devising ways to put forward a stronger case to regulate these rogue companies, such as collecting data on pollution in the sea water. I can see many private individuals are doing the same. Meanwhile, I note the mention on the JOSOC event description about campaigns by Southern Water and local authorities to inform the public about the issue. These campaigns are quite insulting. We, the local residents, are pouring our private funds into trying to fix an issue which is about what should be a public utility - and the company itself that is conducting these illegal activities is educating the public. How does this make any sense? Moreover, I urge you to look up Southern Water's Twitter page. Why is the company tweeting greenwashed marketing tweets when this resource of a paid social media manager could be harnessed to do e.g. a cleanup of the coast with that same salary? No one follows Southern Water's social media for the marketing nonsense. Please represent your residents from the perspective from which they are observing this huge problem that is Southern Water and the broader issue.

I'd like to be kept abreast of any plans by Southern Water to clean up our rivers, seas and waterways. It's important to me as a sea swimmer that our waterways are kept free and clear of the pollutants caused by dumping raw sewage. It's clear that Southern Water need to take serious (and fast) measures to update their existing outdated infrastructure so that it can cope with our increased seaside population. I'd like to know exactly when they plan to do this, and how it will fund the updates. I'd also like to know how they plan to cease dumping sewage during any interim, and any efforts they plan to make to make good damage caused by previous dumps.

I would like to know why Southern Water believes it can illegally dump raw sewage into the sea. Perhaps it believes the fines are not big enough to dissuade it from doing so? As a Worthing resident I was surprised to receive a 2021 Christmas card from Southern Water. I would much rather they spent my money on tackling the pollution they are causing.<sup>1</sup> The recent 5 raw sewage discharges (in 8 weeks) onto the residential seaside streets of Lancing saw months of ongoing repair work at the sewage site in Freshbrook Road (on the corner of Stable View) with noisy vast tankers and flood lights at the site almost every night for weeks on end. While obviously nowhere near as bad as the hellish and frightening situation for flooded residents of West Beach, these constant emergency works meant that there was industrial noise and bright white light all night long around the houses nearby in Freshbrook Road, Stable View and all the way along to Larkfield Close, disturbing our sleep with noise and continuous bright white light every night for several weeks..As the sewage system in this area clearly isn't fit for purpose and capacity, and as there will undoubtedly continue to be 'emergency' works for the foreseeable future (whenever there is heavy rain?) due to Southern Water's inadequate

sewage system, please can they take measures to at least obscure their floodlights from public view so that the light is contained and noise may also be minimised. At present they only have a wooden garden fence along a short part of one side of the sewage plant and open wire netting around the rest of the site, which does nothing to contain the light and industrial noise. Their vehicles also left a huge amount of mud and mess around the pavements. In future, please can Southern Water return to tidy up the area after all the heavy vehicles have gone? 2. What assurances can you give to residents of South Lancing that Southern Water are going to improve the sewers to make future toxic sewage bursts in our seaside area less likely? 3. How much are Adur and Worthing Council and Southern Water spending on the "Beauty of the Beach" campaign, including producing two promotional films? Do you (and they) not think it is hypocritical for them to 'advise' the public on keeping our beaches clean when they continue to dump toxic raw sewage into the sea?

Dear southern water can you explain why it has taken so long to start work on fixing pipe work on the west beach estate and why when you state in your apology letter that you have known about the ground water problem and the fact that the council laid the wrong pipes in the 1970s, that you didn't work faster to remedy this problem. We have had to deal with 4 major bursts in under 2 months and 15 bursts in the last 10 years this is a failure that lies solely at ians feet? Can southern water confirm that any work done on the west beach estate that southern water does will be back filled with foam concrete and won't have to be fought for again and why won't southern water take responsibility for other drainage systems on the estate e.g soakaways and gully systems?

Regarding the recent upsurge in people swimming in the sea and plans to increase sea swimming and water safety activities for adults and children over the next few years. I am a sea swimmer and sea swimming instructor living on Shoreham Beach. I have run 2 Water Safety programmes for kids from The Perch in Lancing in 2018 and 2019 and plan to run another there this summer. I also participated as a Beach Lifeguard in the pilot Sea and Sauna wellbeing scheme run off Worthing Beach by Worthing council this past autumn. I have plans to develop the sea swimming sessions I currently run in the summer on Shoreham Beach to make them accessible to a wider audience. to benefit the health of more Adur and Worthing Residents. I also hope we can get some more children's sea safety schemes running in Shoreham and Worthing. The sea is now being used for swimming in year round in unprecedented numbers and is now a real 'movement', which could last for years - not a short term fad. Thousands of sea swimmers are now grumbling about Southern Water. I can see the enormous change in infrastructure that is needed to curb pollution levels at our local beaches (and in Shoreham Harbour by the RNLI station in particular) but something needs to be done. Please can Southern Water, for a start, make their reporting of sewage outfalls more timely and accurate (I have little confidence in the Beachbuoy reporting tool - there is a lag in reporting time) and then outline what their plans are for cleaning up the water in popular bathing spots. We - as sea swimmers - would also like to be better informed about how much risk (ie. what are exact pollutant levels and what do these mean for our health) we are taking when swimming. Please could there be better education and more transparent and accessible reporting available to us whilst the larger and more costly infrastructure issues are being worked on?

The question I want to submit is a simple one; when is the rapacious discharge of sewage into the sea going to stop? I want Southern Water to name a firm date that cannot be fudged or obfuscated. Not the usual "we aim for" and give a timescale of between 2-6 years. I want a statement which says clearly "We will achieve clean water

*status by.....” and then give assurances of how this will be done and if not what penalties they will have to face. Currently, the pathetic responses to this simple question by Southern Water only go to show that public health is not a priority - profit is their main objective. As a long time sea swimmer I have battled against innumerable gastric infections and was told by doctors that sea swimming was the most likely cause of some of the more obscure bacterial and parasitical infections I’ve acquired. This should not be happening. We should not be afraid of the waters around our shoreline. The government should be rigoursly pursuing companies like Southern Water and tightening up legislation around “necessary overflow discharges.” Water companies use this loophole to justify their activities. I have also had a series of ear infections which I believe are related to my sea swims. I have to pay Southern Water along with everyone else and I think the reckless and often illegal discharge into rivers and the sea is a serious health hazard and they should be held to account through the courts if necessary, made to compensate councils individuals and not just government depts. I absolutely commend your attempt to highlight this long standing problem and along with many others like Feargal Sharkey believe this issue is more important than just the “inconvenience” to wild swimmers, what water companies are doing is poisoning a natural resource that belongs to all of us.*

*We are a group of all year round swimmers and Adur residents. We love our river, sea, beaches and are big supporters of the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project. Given Southern Water's ongoing practice of discharging raw sewage into the sea and river – which threatens all the above - please can you explain:*

- 1) Why do you continue to support planning applications for large property developments when your infrastructure and capacity for treating current waste is so inadequate? Your responsibility is to ensure the required infrastructure is in place before any environmental effects occur.*
- 2) Do you support the call for water companies to designate a stretch of river as bathing water by 2025 and if so what are your plans for doing so? If you don’t support this goal, why not?*

*Now that the immediate problems caused by the degrading sewage pipes on West Beach Estate have been temporarily solved could Southern Water confirm their timetable to (a) replace the main in full (b) repair or replace tanker damaged roads and pavements as currently we feel as though we are living in a perpetual building site.*

**JOSC/55/21-22**

**Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

**JOSC/56/21-22**

**Matters referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision**

**JOSC/57/21-22**

**Presentation from Southern Water on issues relating to bathing water quality and the provision of other services**

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 the signed copy of these minutes as item 7. The report before Members provided some background information to assist the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) in scrutinising the Adur and Worthing bathing water quality results and other Southern Water services. Officers from Southern Water will be attending this meeting to present further information on these issues.

Representatives of Southern Water were at the meeting to answer a presentation and answer questions. The representation was summarised as follows:

- There had been a change in the company and there had been a £1bn investment in the company;
- Overall £3.8bn had been invested;
- Projects of particular note were network digitalisation, control centre improvements and operational response improvements;
- There was a significant investment of £140m investment across Adur and Worthing;
- The investment included a range of supply matter as well as a large investment in East Worthing to improve the resilience to improve treatment works as well as at Shoreham;
- Members were told how money was spent with the majority of investment went to maintaining assets and keeping operations running. Other expenditure included taxes, rates etc and keeping costs down;
- Targets included Event Duration Monitoring (monitoring of spills) technology installed at 100% of sites;
- 80% reduction in the use of storm overflows;
- Zero pollution incidents by 2040 (it was recognised that this was currently too high);
- Target 100 – the area was water scarce and investigations on how to move water across the area ie. from reservoirs across the South East, desalination re-use and a reduction of water usage;
- Operating a fully integrated water environment working with all water users;
- Southern water operated a combined sewer system in normal conditions the system handled raw sewage from domestic and industrial properties. In normal conditions barring a blockage this sewage would be treated to the required standards and discharged to a water course. In those circumstances storm overflows should not be used;
- Rainwater entering the sewers from a number of sources in a combined system can cause storm tank overflows. New developments were encouraged to introduce systems whereby rainwater could not enter the sewage system;
- There was a beachbouy sytem in place to show outfall events on the website of Southern water;
- The company could not block up pressure relief valves as this could create flooding;
- The company supported the amendment to the Environment bill and the company wanted to reduce the use of storm overflows by 80% by 2030;
- There were 5 pathfinder projects to demonstrate principle on how to reduce the use of storm overflows;
- There would be future engagement on the processes and studies on these issues;
- There were broadly 3 types of interventions to reduce types of flooding and storm overflow use: upstream source control, system optimisation and infrastructure enhancements;
- Members were given ideas as to what solutions might look like including smart water butts, water gardens and soakaways;
- Members were told that bathing water results for 2021 were good for Lancing, Beach Green and Worthing. Results for Shoreham Beach and Southwick were listed as excellent;
- Details were given on plans for improving bathing water quality including desktop studies, site walkovers, lift look surveys, outfall caging, water sampling and CCTV investigation of foul sewer network;
- Members were told of misconnections across the South East and were told that 3m litres of wastewater had been removed from the surface water network and the environment;
- Bathing water results had been improving since 2017, plans were outlined to further improve the situation;
- Members were told about plans to build water neutral developments including water saving, carbon saving, money saving, improving resilience and enabling future housing

A Member asked the following question: *I note from the presentation that the target date for zero pollution incidents is 2040. Given that when Southern Water was fined a record*

*£90 million for deliberately dumping billions of litres of raw sewage into protected seas over several years for , the sentencing Judge said the offences showed ' a shocking and wholesale disregard for the environment, for precious and delicate ecosystems and coastlines, for human health and for fisheries'. Taking into account the number of illegal pollution spills that have already been made, how is a target date of 2040 acceptable?* Members were told that the situation was unacceptable and there was a need to focus on improvements for the future. There was a large task ahead as there was a large sewer and pumping network. Part of the challenge was using the investment to meet these targets. 0% pollution was the target. The network and where problems came from included irresponsible use of sewers and an education programme was needed and would take longer to solve. There were reports on the company's website to highlight progress and setbacks.

A Member asked the following question: *With climate change having a profound impact on water provision, water firms have been warned that the south east of England faces shortages in coming decades unless billions are invested in infrastructure. How much will Southern Water be investing specifically to mitigate the effects of climate change in a densely populated area such as ours?* Members were told that work was undergone across the southeast as part of a water resource management plan. Movement of water across regions would have to be considered. A consultation was coming out in the summer to look at options. There would be significant investment in the process.

A Member asked the following question: *Climate change and increasing urbanisation also increase risks of flooding. Torrential rainfall in the UK has seen properties devastated by flooding from foul water and sewage. How is this risk being evaluated and mitigated in our area?* Members were told that there was a new process that was reviewed every 5 years involving a number of stakeholders. Options were being considered over the long term. It was recognised that the extreme rainfall being seen was happening, there was a need to consider thinking drainage differently beyond using bigger pipes. The drainage and wastewater management plan was the vehicle being used to recognise the effects of climate change

A Member asked the following question: *Do you test the quality of the water at Ivy Arch Road, East Worthing and Sea Lane where spills were reported in 2019 and 2020? And if not what provision is there to test the water at these locations in the future?* Members were told that a response could be reported later. If pollution had been spotted It would help Southern water to find out the sources of the problem.

A Member asked the following question: *It is gratifying to see that Bathing water quality has improved in Worthing from Sufficient to Good. What is your strategy to improve this so that all areas are Excellent?* There was hope that there was a natural improvement because 2017 results were no longer counted by DEFRA. Important work was work by misconnections, there were important educational projects aimed at beach users.

A Member asked the following question: *Spill data published on the Southern Water website tells us that: The (combined Storm Overflow) CSO at Sea Lane Goring, reported 1 spill in 2019 and 6 spills with a total duration of 26 hours in 2020. The Ivy Arch Road Worthing CSO discharged once in 2020. The East Worthing CSO discharged 3 times in 2020. These spills will have had a detrimental impact upon bathing water quality in these areas, Sea Lane is especially popular with the growing kite surfing community. What measures are being taken to reduce the frequency of spills to zero at these locations?* Members were told that there were no investment plans for that area in the current year,

however, there were regional plans across the south east for CSO reduction. There would be consultation on a study during the summer. Southern water would support an application for testing of other areas for bathing water quality

A Member asked the following question: *Bathing water quality testing data published on the Defra website tells us that: The current status for bathing water quality in central Worthing (at Heene) is "Good" despite two elevated readings of e.coli and Intestinal eIntestinal Enterococci in June and July (2021). What is known about these two elevated readings? Did they coincide with weather events or CSO spills? Will these two elevated readings affect the 4 year rolling average or is the bathing water classification for 2022 still expected to be excellent?* Members were told that the water qualification remained as excellent. There was not much known about the reading cited. There were no CSO releases at that time. The feeling is that the CSOs would not have had that effect and there was no knowledge of the weather at that time. It was offered that there could be further investigation to bring forward more substance. It was suggested that the matter could be included on an agenda for the technical steering group. Data shown on the Beachbouy app contained historic information to the start of 2021.

A Member asked the following question: *Can WBC have access to the mapping of your assets - specifically Combined Sewer Overflows, foul and storm sewer lines, pumping stations and known overflow points and their operational status including the operational status of Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) technology?* Members were told about the development of a product application interface so this could be linked to the surfers against sewage app and Southern Water would be happy to have discussions about whether this could be linked to a local authority. With regards to the asset question, Members were told that the belief was that the information was shared with local government technical officers but that would need to be confirmed at a later date.

A Member asked the following question: *Your presentation states that customers directly affected by the Lancing sewage issues will be refunded, receiving a full back year of wastewater charges. Those indirectly affected will receive six months.*

*I fully agree that those directly affected should receive the most compensation. However, the knock-on effect on the A259 and need for temporary lights have caused huge problems for local motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Residents have endured lengthy traffic jams outside their homes. How do you define "indirectly affected" and how wide is the scope? Is compensation given automatically or do people have to apply?* Members were told that customers that live on the west side of the Westway were counted as being impacted indirectly this also applied to customers along the a259 that were affected by the traffic management and tanker disruption. Further information could be made available to those customers seeking confirmation at a later date after the meeting.

A Member asked the following question: *What is Southern Water doing to address the fact that 60% of blockages are being caused by human behaviour - ie the disposal of un-flushable products. Are there new engineering solutions that could be further explored to reduce the impact? What is being done to further educate the public?* The Committee was told that a large proportion of pollution and flooding happened as a result of blockages. That had been a focus in the previous five years that would continue and support for the future would be welcomed. There were engineering solutions including monitoring sewer level monitors.

A Member stated that it was pleasing to hear that southern water could install waste pipes to houseboats, it was surprising that there was not a figure for the cost of this. It



was asked how Southern Water could support residents to get those pipes installed. The Committee was told that it was joint effort with different agencies. The Council and Environment Agency would work with Southern Water to come up with solutions.

A Member asked the following question: *Last year, Southern Water was fined £90 million for the widespread and long term breaches of environmental law that allowed 6,971 unpermitted sewage discharges into river and coastal waters from 17 sites across in Kent, Hampshire and Sussex between 2010-2015. Since these offences were found to be caused by deliberate failings, causing major harm (Category 1) to protected areas, conservation sites and oyster beds, how will SW rebuild public trust?* Members were told that the first step was increasing transparency which included the introduction of the 'Beachbouy' system. The second thing was to address performance issues there had been significant improvements but there was a need to go further which was highlighted in the pollution incident reduction plan. Thirdly there needed to be action undertaken which was highlighted in the pathfinder plan

A Member asked the following question: *When it comes to planning applications, Southern Water reports (whilst considering the application in question), often do not take into consideration the collective impact on infrastructure from combined surrounding planned or "in-build" developments. Why not a collective approach, it's all additional pressure on pipe network?* Members were told that Southern Water did capture the cumulative impact and worked with the Authority to project forward on planning development and housing projections.

A Member asked the following question: *Can we be advised what the work to identify the misconnected household water drainage involved and has this now been completed?* The Committee was told that the misconnections team were very proactive. When a problem was found through investigation the aim was to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

A Member asked the following question: *In your professional opinion, what else needs to be done in order for Worthing to achieve an excellent rating, in what time Scale?* The Committee was told that Worthing was already excellent. It was the job of Southern Water and Partners to maintain that standard and inform the public how to help to do this.

A Member asked the following question: *I am the Adur District and Parish Councillor for Widewater Ward in Lancing and have been their Councillor since 2008. I am deeply concerned about the waste water mains on West Beach estate. The recent burst mains on West Beach are not a new phenomenon as this has happened before. Although mains were repaired one of them burst again immediately before Christmas, causing yet another very unpleasant smell and raw sewage on residents door steps that trod into their homes. It was stated in emails to myself and Tim Loughton MP that your representatives would knock on resident's doors and talk to them however several said that no one came. I note that your report states that costs of water rated customers will be credited as a full year of waste water charges. This will not compensate for the horrendous experience of having raw sewage on their door step for Christmas. Myself and Tim Loughton MP received an email stating that a new Main would be fitted this year, however your statement to this Committee says that this would be difficult and would not be easy. Can you please tell me exactly when the new Main is likely to be fitted. This problem will not go away in its present state and the same situation will happen again on West Beach. Incidentally there was another leak there last Friday , this time a water main that sent a fountain of water into the air.Re your referral to water*

*quality , it has been reported by Kite Surfers that untreated sewage has been seen in the sea off Lancing Beach.* The Committee was told that there had been impact and there was a commitment to replace the main. The job was underway and were targeting the current year. However the main was a complicated main and there were options that needed to be drawn up.

A Member asked the following question: *On New Monks Farm: Do you have an update on connections to the main sewer from the New Monks Farm development, as to whether the foul sewer from the training ground has been connected yet to the main, and is the new wastewater pumping station on site in operation yet and what connections have been made to it? Is Southern Water still confident it will handle all the extra flows?* The Committee was told that it was connected and in operation. There was no awareness of flow or capacity issues on that site.

A Member asked the following question: *Whenever the 30 ton tankers used the highway on West Beach to deal with the recent burst pipes, they have further damaged the very fragile road and pavements. Isn't it SWs duty to repair anything that it damages whilst carrying out these works?* The Committee was told that this was correct, damage was being assessed and this would be rectified within the/a month.

A question was asked about the river Adur. The river was being used a lot and there was concern about elevated levels of enteric bacteria. Were there any investigations into the levels of enteric bacteria and where it was coming from and was there any joint working With the Environment Agency. The Committee was told that to act there would need to be designated as a bathing river. This would allow sampling and justification of investment. A proposal was put forward to move towards designating the Adur in Shoreham as bathing water. This was proposed, seconded and approved

A Member asked if any CSOs in Worthing were being investigated for removal. Members were told that there was no awareness of any but that Southern Water would get back to the Committee on this issue

A Member asked a question about micro-plastics and what was being done to measure the emanation of micro plastics from the works of Southern Water. Members were told that micro-plastics had been banned to some degree. The Environment Agency were working on this area. Members were told that the matter would need to be taken away and reported back on.

A Member asked how sheltered Southern Water was from interest rate rises and whether investment was ring fenced away from an increase in debt repayment. Members were told that regulatory businesses were somewhat protected. Investment made the company more resilient to changes in interest rates.

A Member asked about reports of untreated sewage on lancing beach. Members were told that they would need more information to be able to comment. It was recognised that there needed to be some guidance about what was pollution and what was naturally occurring.

A member asked about targets across the Southern water region and where local plans, targets and timescales for Adur and Worthing fitted in. Members were told about the drainage, wastewater management planning process whereby objectives were set on a locally important basis. This was available on the website

## Recommendations:

- I. Installation of water sampling at sea lane, goring by sea;
- II. Enabling and/or improving linking of asset mapping and the sharing of information with the Councils;
- III. Southern Water specify to the Environment Agency the DNA sampling this bathing season so that there could be an improvement in pollutant identification;
- IV. Southern Water propose alternative methods of meeting the cost of connecting the houseboats to the main sewer, revisit previous meeting notes, representation made in relation to costs and involving the houseboat association. Options should include the management of grey water and black water tanks used by boats. To set up a joint meeting in future to take the matter forward;
- V. That Southern water check alignment of assumptions against planning permissions and in-build developments for the collective effect on the infrastructure;
- VI. To work together to designate the river Adur in Shoreham as a bathing river to enable bacterial testing;
- VII. That the Committee receive information on the levels of micro-plastics entering the water courses if available;

## **JOSC/58/21-22      Interviews with the Executive Members for Environment and Digital & Environmental Services**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which had been circulated to members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. The report before members set out background information for the Adur and Worthing Executive Members for the Environment. Members were asked to consider and question the Executive Members on issues within their portfolios.

The Executive Members were present to answer questions

A Member asked the following question: *Following on from the A&W Climate Assembly: how many of the 18 recommendations have been followed up to date and how has the impact of the assembly been measured?* Members were told that the authorities had started working on 14 of 18 recommendations from the climate assembly and these were measured using a RAG rating. (4 green - being delivered, 10 amber - underway/ partially delivered, or paused, 4 red - not yet started / not our remit so partnership working required). Progress on the recommendations had been formally presented to the Climate Assembly Members in January, April and October.

The recommendations had also been weaved across the sustainability framework and were recognised across the councils as something of great value.

Recommendations were regularly referred to in press releases and webinars/presentations and have been progressing on actions that weren't in plans before they were put forward, e.g. restoration of New Salts Farm as a centre for excellence in education around climate change, and have connected with the community to develop this.

The authorities continued to engage with the community through various online activities (weekly blog, quarterly online magazine, social media posts) and through more traditional stories in the local papers.

A Member asked the following question: *Councillors in Central ward receive many complaints about lack of public conveniences in the town centre and the condition of those that are open. Can you tell us what action is being taken to address this issue? Public conveniences are critical facilities for our town.* Members were told that Accessibility Audits for ten Worthing public conveniences were completed in January 2022. These audits had looked at how we could improve accessibility to meet the generic needs of people with disabilities, including those with mobility, cognitive and sensory impairments. This information would assist in developing a prioritised programme of capital works spread across the next few years. The programme would be agreed with relevant Executive Members utilising funding from the Capital Investment Programme. The capital budget allocation for 2022/23 is £230,000 and £100,000 for 2023/24

A Member asked the following question: *Adur and Worthing Council ceased providing in-house pest control in 2018 but does still have an obligation under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act. What action is being taken in areas where there are growing problems eg the increase in rat population at Brooklands.* Members were told that the Prevention of Damage of Pests Act 1949 required the owner and/or occupier to take action to destroy vermin on their land. The Council's Public Health and Regulation had the necessary powers and skills to work with affected communities and businesses to manage rodent populations. In relation to Brooklands, the Rangers and Park Team were aware of the increase in rat sightings at Brooklands and were using the Council's contractor to undertake an assessment and take the necessary action to destroy any vermin and tackle any harborage areas.

A Member asked the following question: *What happened to the £50k paid to consultants for the "Science Experience" plan for Brooklands that now seems to have been scrapped?* Members were told that Landscape Consultants were appointed in 2018 to prepare a masterplan for the redevelopment of the park. This resulted in the Brooklands Masterplan that was approved at the Joint Strategic Committee meeting in March 2020. In preparing the masterplan three key principles were distilled from the original concept and used to develop the masterplan of which one was the principle of "Learning" The Masterplan thus agreed as a principle that Brooklands Park would become an outdoor interactive classroom and science learning resource supporting the wider Science Technology Engineering and Maths curriculum. Schools and families will find new opportunities for learning about habitats, ecosystems, forces and materials. The Parks department would also be piloting new planting schemes to feed into how the councils responded to the issues of climate change and sustainability. This principle was then brought to life through the designs and masterplan.

A Member asked the following question: *Has a soil test been undertaken at The old GoKart track at Brooklands and will the Council be responsible for any cleanup at the GoKart Track?* Members were told that no intrusive soil survey had been undertaken at the old GoKart track. In line with legislation and Environment Agency guidance the Council would be responsible for decontamination of the site should hazardous materials be found and should a redevelopment of the site requiring its removal be proposed.

A Member asked the following question: *One of the first things I was asked about as a councillor was the future of the popular pitch and putt course at Brooklands. Are there any plans to reinstate this either at Brooklands or elsewhere?* Members were told that the Council agreed a new Brooklands Masterplan at its meeting in March 2020 which set out its vision for Brooklands. The masterplan sets out that the area where the pitch and putt

course was would be landscaped as “glades” as part of the redevelopment works. The former golf course has left a legacy of existing trees and mounds. It was proposed to plant additional trees and shrubs to create different spaces that are protected from the wind. These outdoor 'rooms', named 'glades', would have different characters based on the colour and type of planting, natural play features, sculpture and science activities. The glades would vary in size and be connected with a path system that extends the length of the park. It was envisaged that the route and items along the way could be used by all the community and form part of children's activities organised by the Council's Park Rangers, and Friends of Brooklands. Other designed features were integrated with the glades and gardens to make up the overall connected landscape through which visitors pass and enjoy.

The intention was for the glades to become an important learning opportunity for school students within the National Curriculum. There were no current plans for a pitch and putt course elsewhere in Worthing.

A Member asked the following question: *It's been reported that the refuse staff are in dispute over pay and conditions and morale is at 'rock bottom'. How is the council dealing with this dispute both as a responsible employer, a consistent service provider and also the need to manage the future financial implications?* Members were told that Issues relating to pay and conditions were managed by the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service and her team. As such the Executive Member was not in a position to respond in detail. However the Executive Member had been advised that a review of the waste service was underway which was looking at pay, terms and conditions and working practices. The review started in October and as part of this, a staff engagement framework was being put in place to ensure frontline staff had the opportunity to raise their concerns and ideas and have a say in the future design of the service. This review was being undertaken with clear sight of pay and conditions across the organisation, and the importance of ensuring fairness and consistency, as well as assessing financial implications. As part of the work a redesign of refuse and recycling rounds would be undertaken to ensure they had sufficient capacity to deal with the significant growth in housing numbers. It was understood that a formal dispute had not been lodged however, officers were keen to have conversations with anyone, including staff and trade unions, who had concerns about the service. Anyone who wished to do so should contact the relevant Head of Service or Director.

A Member asked the following question: *With regard to the completion and opening of Brooklands Park, the HealthyAW 2021-2024 Delivery Plan (Appendix 1 pp28) states - quote; "Park open and construction finished by January 2023." What are the key milestones and timeline to ensure this stays on track and that the park opens in 12 months as stated?* The Committee was told that the contract in place was for a year with damages applied if not completed in time. There was a strong team in place with regular meetings that would be monitoring the progress against the programme. Areas would be sectionally opened as they finished so not all the park would be shut for the duration of the contract except for the car park area.

A Member asked the following question: *The work to transform Brooklands park started just this Monday with a year's estimate in getting the work completed. I understand that the work will take place in phases across different areas of the park at different times. However the Public Conveniences in the West Car park will shut throughout the whole of the year. This will effectively exclude some members of the public such as the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with young children from enjoying the areas of Brooklands that remain open. Whilst it is to be expected that the toilets will be shut for*

*some time when the work is to be undertaken, why will they be shut for the whole year, when all the other areas of the park will be opened and closed according to the phases of work being undertaken.* Members were told that whilst some areas of the park could be kept open and others opened sectionally this was not easy for all of the areas. The new masterplan would have new toilets as part of the new cafe. The old toilet block would need to be demolished to achieve this. This was scheduled for fairly early in the programme to allow for the testing and ground works required for the new building. It was asked *In the making of this decision did any form of equalities impact assessment take place as part of the risk assessment process?* Members were told that the Authorities worked with consultants to ensure design proposals were fully inclusive and fit for purpose. Equalities impact assessments had been undertaken for the project and proposals as a whole rather than relating to a specific issue arising from the construction.

A Member asked the following question: *Every Christmas there is a huge amount of paper and cardboard for residents to recycle. Come the Christmas period recycling bins are over full with card and other recyclable waste often left on the street and certainly in Worthing Central fly tipped. In order to encourage even more recycling, and to avoid streets being with various recyclable materials, Might it be helpful to schedule an extra recycling collection over this period, possibly just prior to Christmas day?* Members were told that the authorities did not have the resources to provide extra collection days. A reasonable amount of 'sidewash' was collected for both refuse and recycling over this period. Once crews had caught up the service provided a Christmas Tree collection service.

A Member asked the following questions which were taken together by the Executive Member: *Q1 When the Council last ran a study on open space, sports & recreation, a large percentage of residents found the state of the Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAS) to be poor or very poor, and the report noted that there were none in Southlands or Widewater, with recommendations about access to such facilities within walking distance . What are the plans to address this and bring MUGAs to these wards? Q2 It has been noted in the 22/23 budget a total of £500k being spent on Buckingham Park. My residents tell me that they have seen no improvement in the facilities at Parklands Park in what feels like a decade. When will we see fair allocation of public money for Parklands park and other smaller parks to improve life for children and families in more deprived areas?* Members were told that the team prioritised on condition of the equipment within the Adur parks. The approach was to work with Friends of Groups & local Councillors to create what residents wanted for and in their parks and looking at the future management plans of them. This enabled a tailored approach to each area and opened external funding streams. A good example of this was the Shark Park in Eastbrook Ward. Most recently the authorities had been working with residents and the Councillors in Widewater Ward on plans for Larkfield Park, which could include a MUGA if that is what they chose. As for Parklands, this was one mile from the MUGA in Buckingham Park. The Executive Member had been working with local residents and a Southlands Ward Member on making improvements to Southlands Village Green which backed on to Parklands and on forming a Friends of Group.

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities, 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 9. The report before members presented the Adur and Worthing Health AW Delivery plan.

The Interim Director for Communities was present at the meeting to answer questions.

A Member asked the following question: *The stated ambition to work more creatively in our communities and places is very welcome. What will the participatory ways of working look like in practice?* Members were told that Participation took many forms including social listening (meeting people and community groups where they lived) which was helping the authority to build a map that would be used to build shared understanding of what residents used and valued. Participation leads had focused on developing relationships with individuals and groups to develop more participatory approaches to commissioning projects. The planning of Community events was being taken on in a collaborative manner. Additionally members were told of other actions such as the climate assembly.

A Member asked the following question: *The commitment to work in a more collaborative way with our teams is welcome. The LGA has spoken out in favour of giving Council's more power to consider the public impact of licensing decisions to protect communities from harm, reduce NHS costs and save lives. Given that alcohol consumption is estimated to cost the NHS 3.2 Billion pounds per year, with additional costs falling on other services, could more joined up work with the Licensing team be incorporated into the Delivery Plan?* Members were told that the Licensing Authority could only consider the four Licensing Objective in determining applications. Currently Public Health was not a licensing objective but this had been highlighted as a wish by the LGA for the future. Currently the Authority was not able to consider whether a new premises could exacerbate an existing public health issue such as hospital admissions related to alcohol. The Licensing team worked with other partners such as trading standards, Police, Fire and Rescue undertaking joint night time economy visits. The authority was investigating how the licensing teams could be utilised to improve public health such as how the Councils could work with businesses to promote and improve workforce health and wellbeing and recently in raising the profile of drink spiking in drinking venues across the District and Borough by providing posters, information, advice and best practice.

A Member asked the following question: *Five big issues have been identified for our communities. Given the extent of digital poverty in our communities, should digital access be included as an essential need to be addressed? It is increasingly difficult for residents without digital access to make and manage benefit claims, plus medical appointments are increasingly moving online, so this has a direct impact on Health and Wellbeing.* Members were told that Digital inclusion was an important need in communities. The Councils had secured funding to provide digital access points across Adur and Worthing. Prior to the pandemic there had been 30 digital volunteers had been present to support residents with digital access. Funding had finished for that project and scaled down versions were in place. There were more targeted approaches included as part of the unemployed or money mentor programmes.

A Member asked the following question: *Page 19 Of Healthy AW 2021 – 2024 states that 'our approach will use 'proportionate universalism' in our action, which means we will work with all of our communities (universally) but that we will target action proportionate to the level of disadvantage.' Please explain how this has been actioned in Churchill,*

*Peveler and Eastbrook, the three wards in Adur that the council has identified as having significant deprivation levels around health, employment and education, for example and are in the 10% or 20% most deprived in the nation (page 16).* Members were told that many services were targeted to reach areas identified as less affluent (examples given were early intervention and prevention projects) Members were told of a number of projects within the identified wards and told that a more data led approach would help the Councils to further target work, particularly preventative work.

A Member asked the following question: *What do you consider are the greatest challenges for the delivery strategy that the Health and Wellbeing team face in working to address inequalities over the different stages of the delivery plan? In particular, in earlier 'now' and in the 'next' stages of delivery.* Members were told the following

### **Now challenges**

- The first is the challenge of the scale of inequalities vs resources and how the Councils can play a key role in both providing services and helping to enhance and support the vital support net and ensure reach to those people that need most help now, including being inclusive across our communities
- Related to the first point, how we can develop more upstream preventative work with communities and balance this with the now needs that communities are facing

### **Next challenges**

- How we can really develop and embed participation into this approach and involve communities and partners in developing and shaping this work. Importantly, how we involve people in creating meaningful outcomes to our communities that help us work towards meaningful change and measure the change needed that drives us towards what matters locally.
- How we really embed health and wellbeing across the work of the Councils and places at a time of great change and challenge for our communities (which makes this work more important than ever) but that really does weave improving health outcomes into our business and activities. We can't do this all at once so we will need to involve our communities and members about what we prioritise, when and how

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### **Now and Next**

- The ongoing impacts of the pandemic will continue to be felt for many years across this agenda. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, and created new ones. There are key areas of challenge, but also of opportunity: pre-existing health inequalities; mental health; social care; pandemic duration and 'long COVID' are likely to continue to be felt. Our work to support groups and organisations in the community & voluntary sector and working with key partners through the LCN (Local Community Network) will be critical, as we further develop our approach to working within a complex system.
- Sustainable funding to support this work is always a challenge - and one the teams are great at grasping.

A Member asked the following question: *Para 3.1 can you define 'transformational change' in the context of the plan. What will this transformation entail?* Members were told that the new focus recognised the need to build towards a strong approach of thriving communities which recognised the complexity of the work and how it needed to change and adapt. Priorities were being connected into the changing strategic approach around people and place and connecting that to the councils' climate ambitions. The way the Authorities worked would also change with an intention to take a more participative approach.



A Member asked the following question: *The 'social determinants of health' Para 2.1.5 p.19. How will these factors be measured? Para 2.3.2 what measures are already in place, how will qualitative data be collected?* Members were told that this would be measured using both qualitative and quantitative measures

A Member asked the following question: *Will these measures compare the differences between areas of the highest and lowest areas of social deprivation in our communities?* Members were told that this would be determined and outlined more fully as the Councils developed more effective impact measures. However the intention was to build data capacity and capabilities to ensure that comparisons and contrasts would target resources to double down on inequalities.

## **JOSC/60/21-22      Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/22**

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities 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 10. The report before Members outlined progress in implementation of the work programme and sought a decision in relation to a scrutiny request concerning concessions along Worthing Parade.

Members discussed the report and agreed to note the progress of the work programme. The committee agreed to receive and review a report to a future meeting which explained the Councils general approach to Concessions along the Promenade and seafront and including the issues raised in the Scrutiny request

### **Resolved:**

- i) that the work programme be noted,
- ii) that the work programme request concerning concessions be added to the work programme.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 10.57 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

**Chairman**