

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Strategic Committee
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

QEII Room, Shoreham Centre

8 February 2022

Councillor Neil Parkin (Chairman)

Adur District Council:
Councillor Angus Dunn
Councillor Carson Albury
Councillor Brian Boggis
Councillor Kevin Boram
Councillor Emma Evans

Worthing Borough Council:
Councillor Kevin Jenkins
Councillor Edward Crouch
Councillor Sean McDonald
Councillor Heather Mercer
Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Nicola Waight

Other Members Present:-

Worthing Borough Council - Councillors Carl Walker and Rosey Whorlow

JSC/80/21-22 Declarations of Interests

Councillor Edward Crouch declared an interest in item 7 as a Director of Worthing Homes.

Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes declared an interest in item 8 as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

JSC/81/21-22 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 11 January 2022, were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

JSC/82/21-22 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

JSC/83/21-22 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, 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 5.

The report updated the Committee on the latest wave of Coronavirus (Omicron) which necessitated the Government taking urgent action in the pre-christmas period. In late December, the Council was informed of a new business grant scheme targeted at those businesses who were most severely affected by this new variant.

To ensure the swift distribution of funds, the Chief Executive had been called upon to use her urgency powers to approve a budget virement and this report advised Members of the Executive of the executive decision made, and asked for their endorsement of those decisions.

A Member asked whether it was possible to find out how the process of grant allocation had been experienced by local businesses in Worthing. Officers advised that the deadline had been extended until the 18th March 2022 and that informal feedback suggested that both the grants and the process for allocation had been well received. The Councils had been able to design their own process, as they had the right technology in place to do so, which enabled an application process that was user centred and applicable for businesses. The Councils would seek more structured feedback at a later date.

Members congratulated officers for getting the grants out to businesses and the recommendation, as set out in the report, was unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision

That the Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the content of the report and endorsed the decision made by the Chief Executive;
2. delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to adjust the budget for any future fully funded government covid relief schemes.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and 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 report was the final budget report of the year, the culmination of the annual budgeting exercise, and asked members to consider:

- The final revenue estimates for 2022/23 including any adjustments arising from settlement; and
- An updated outline 5-year forecast.

The budgets reflected the decisions taken by members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals and any committed growth. The budgets were still to be adjusted for the proposals to invest in services detailed in Appendix 2 which were considered by the Adur and Worthing Executives the previous week.

The budget was analysed by Executive member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2022/23 had been prepared, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension cost adjustments that did not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The respective Adur and Worthing 2022/23 Estimates and Council Tax setting reports had already been considered by the Worthing Executive on 31st January 2022 and the Adur Executive on 1st February 2022. Both the estimates for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council included their respective share of the cost of the Joint Strategic Committee.

Officers advised that since writing the report, the Councils had received full settlement which had resulted in the following marginal changes:-

- Adur District Council was better off by £570; and
- Worthing Borough Council was better off by £2,400.

As a result, Officers were not proposing to amend the budget papers going before the Full Council meetings later in the month.

A Member questioned whether Officers were satisfied that an inflation figure of 2% was sufficient. The Committee was informed that it was difficult to be absolutely certain. The biggest element of inflation that the Councils experienced was with pay. Settlement was still awaited for the 2021/22 pay award by the negotiating body and that pay award was expected to be 1.75%. Officers advised that looking ahead to next year, it was likely that most Councils would struggle to offer more than 2% but the Councils would have to wait and see how the negotiations went. There was some risk to the Councils energy budgets going forward, but the Councils had to a certain extent mitigated that risk by committing to short fixed term contracts, so weren't expecting to experience those inflationary pressures until the latter part of 2022/23. In addition, there were inflation provisions within the budget to help mitigate against those increases.

The Committee acknowledged that these were financially challenging times and these financial pressures were unlikely to ease in the near future when the outcome of the pandemic was better understood. The reports mapped out where the 2 Councils were in paragraph 3.3 of the report, setting out the strategic programmes the Councils had established to deliver new income and savings for the next 5 years. These included the Major Projects programme which would lead on delivering regeneration projects to increase employment space and additional housing and the Strategic Asset Management programme which would lead on delivering the income growth associated with the Strategic Property Investment Fund.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. noted the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 2 which were considered at the Executive meetings in early February; and
2. noted the proposed 2022/23 budget detailed in Appendix 3. The respective Council shares had been approved by the Adur and Worthing Executives. The budget would be adjusted for any changes to the Investment in Service proposals.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

JSC/86/21-22 Joint Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & 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 7.

The report asked Members to approve and adopt the contents of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 to 2024/25 for Adur and Worthing Councils, as required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

- i) approved the adoption of the TMSS and AIS for 2022/23 to 2024/25, incorporating the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements; and
- ii) **recommended the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements for approval by Worthing Council at its meeting on 22 February 2022, and by Adur Council at its meeting on 24 February 2022.**

Call In:

The call-in deadline for decision (i) will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

There is no call-in for recommendations to Adur and / or Worthing Full Councils.

JSC/87/21-22 Celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, 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 8.

The report updated members on the proposed programme of activities to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and to release funding to support the proposed programme of events.

A Member questioned whether the local programme of events, designed by the Councils, was in keeping with how local residents would like to celebrate the platinum jubilee. Officers advised that there were some activities that the Councils would be coordinating, at the behest of the palace or the national programme. Otherwise, the approach is to create a toolkit that enables residents to organise what they want to do.

It was noted that road closure fees had been waived on all four days of the celebrations, to enable residents to hold street parties and that a significant number of applications had already been forthcoming.

In regards to tree planting, it was suggested that in Adur, residents would like to see this spread wider across the District rather than just being in Buckingham Park. Officers advised that this work dovetailed with work around a community tree planting scheme which was wider.

It was suggested that the Councils arrange another media release to promote the celebrations and remind residents that the closure date for applications was the 15th April.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. endorsed the proposed programme of celebrations; and
2. approved the release of funding to allow for the delivery of the programme from the Capacity Issues Reserve of each Council as follows:
 - I. Adur District Council £20,000
 - II. Worthing Borough Council £28,500

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

* Councillors Carson Albury, Brian Boggis, Kevin Boram, Angus Dunn and Emma Evans left the meeting at 6.56pm in accordance with the Joint Committee Agreement.

JSC/88/21-22 Union Place - Selection of Preferred Developer

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for the Economy, 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 advised the Committee on the outcome of a successful marketing exercise for the Union Place site and sought the Committee's approval to progress negotiations with

Roffey Homes regarding the development of the site for the purpose of delivering new homes, cinema, parking and employment space.

The report recommended that members approved Roffey Homes Ltd as the preferred development partner and that the scheme should be progressed by way of a Joint Venture Partnership between the organisations.

The report also outlined the key areas of negotiation, business case development and financial implications of the proposal that needed to be resolved in a further report to the Committee.

A Member questioned whether there was evidence to support the suggestion that residents wanted extended cinema provision at Union Place. Officers advised that there was strong support for a cinema on the site. A study had identified there was demand for a further 3 to 5 additional screens in the town and that there were 100,000 trips taken by Worthing residents, out of the town, to access similar cinema provision in Brighton and Chichester. It was noted that the average spend of a cinema goer was £35 per trip, so it had been estimated that for the number of trips identified, £3.5m was leaving the Worthing economy. The option put forward enabled the Council to keep the cinema option on the table whilst providing an opportunity to review the demand for cinema post pandemic.

It was also noted that Worthing Theatres and Museum strongly supported the provision of a cinema at Union Place.

Clarification was sought in relation to the impact of not taking back the NCP car park and the lack of hotel provision in the plans. Officers advised that the scheme was deliberately phased in two parts. It was recognised that getting hold of the NCP part was a costly challenge for the Council. It required NCP to come to the table and negotiate, as an organisation, NCP were known to be difficult to negotiate with. As a result, the Council had undertaken two viability appraisals, both of which had been shown to stack up. The hotel was a strong aspiration for the site, however, a number of hotel operators had been approached and there was no real strong interest in the site. It was felt that demand was taken up by existing hotels in the town.

The Committee also gave consideration to LCRs role in the proposals, the length of NCPs lease and the number of affordable units delivered through the proposals.

It was noted that the site had been vacant for a considerable period of time and that Roffey Homes had a strong record of delivery in the town. Support was expressed for the Joint Venture approach proposed and the Committee requested that an update be brought back to the next meeting of the Joint Strategic Committee on the 1st March 2022.

Decision

That the Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. noted the progress made in developing and enabling the site since the most recent update to the Joint Strategic Committee in November 2018 including the successful grant of planning permission and marketing of the site for a delivery partner;

2. agreed that Roffey Homes be the Council's preferred development partner for Union Place;
3. delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects & Investment to negotiate with Roffey Homes the most appropriate way to bring forward any potential development, noting that the current preferred option by Roffey Homes was for a Joint Venture; and
4. noted that a report would be brought back to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration detailing the final proposed documents, and to seek any required authorisations to continue with the proposed Joint Venture arrangement, with an update to be provided on the 1st March 2022.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

JSC/89/21-22 Worthing Local Plan

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for the Economy, 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 10.

The report informed the Committee that Worthing Borough Council was required to prepare a Local Plan to establish local planning policies for the Borough. After a number of years of preparation, the Worthing Local Plan was entering the final stages towards adoption. The Local Plan had been submitted for examination in June 2021 and the hearing sessions were held in November 2021.

The report informed the Joint Strategic Committee of the stage reached, the receipt of the Inspector's post hearing advice letter and the schedule of modifications proposed to be published for public consultation.

A Member questioned whether there was scope for brownfield sites in Worthing to deliver 30% affordable homes. Officers advised that the evidence supported the viability argument on these sites. The plan sought to be realistic and the approach had been supported by the Inspector.

It was noted that the Council had fought the Chatsmore Farm appeal robustly. This site had been identified within the plan as one of the Borough's green gaps and the Councils, under this administration, would fight on behalf of residents, to ensure that greenspace at Chatsmore Farm, the Goring Gap and at Brooklands would not be developed on.

Decision

That the Joint Strategic Committee:-

- i) noted the Inspector's Post Hearing Advice Letter;

- ii) noted the Schedule of Main Modifications and Schedule of Additional Modifications, including any additional recommendations from the Local Plan Inspector;
- iii) **recommended to Worthing Full Council the approval of the Schedule of Modifications for consultation; and**
- iv) approved the release of £70,000 from the Capacity Issues Reserve in 2022/23 for the examination costs.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for decisions (i), (ii) and (iv) will be 5.00pm on the 18th February 2022.

There is no call-in for recommendations (iii) to Worthing Full Council.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7.35 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman