

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Governance Committee
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils
QEII Room, Shoreham-Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea**

31 May 2022

Councillor Andy McGregor (Chair)

Adur District Council:

Councillor Rob Wilkinson
Councillor Catherine Arnold
Councillor Tony Bellasis
Councillor Kevin Boram
*Councillor Lee Cowen
Councillor Gabe Crisp
Councillor Jim Funnell

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Rita Garner
Councillor Mike Barrett
Councillor Ibsha Choudhury
Councillor Charles James
Councillor Nigel Morgan
Councillor Helen Silman
Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Andy Whight

*Absent

JGC/1/22-23 Substitute Members

Councillor Debs Stainforth substituted for Councillor Lee Cowen.

JGC/2/22-23 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Arnold declared an interest as CEO of Adur Voluntary Action.

Cllr Waight declared an interest in items 6,7 and 8 as the cabinet member for WSCC with responsibility for IT.

JGC/3/22-23 Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 22 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

JGC/4/22-23 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

JGC/5/22-23 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

JGC/6/22-23**Internal Audit Annual Reports**

Before the Committee was a report from the Acting Head of Internal Audit, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 6.

The report sought to update the Joint Governance Committee members with the Head of Internal Audit's opinion reports on the systems of internal control at Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council during 2021/22.

The report included the IT disaster Recovery arrangements for the Council and with respect to Adur, the Housing procurements for systems in governance.

Questions were raised by members regarding Fire Safety, management response times, Worthing Theatres and Museum procurement, the disaster recovery arrangements, new and emerging threats, whether GDPR had been included in the updated plan, deadline dates on the report.

A specific question was raised asking how many Council computer systems were affected by the IT disaster. The Officer didn't have that information to hand and stated he would report back with an answer.

During debate members recommended that a presentation from the specialist Digital Auditors utilised by the Council be delivered to the committee and that the possibility of increased digital risk should be debated at a future meeting.

Resolved

That the Joint Governance Committee noted the Internal Audit Annual Reports.

JGC/7/22-23**Annual Governance Statements 2021/22**

Before the Committee was a report from the Director for Digital and Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The Joint Governance Committee was asked to review and agree the Annual Governance Statements for 2021/22.

Officers explained that the statement included the IT disaster Recovery arrangements as it was a key matter of concern.

Members raised questions on the Code of Conduct review, status of items remaining amber year to year, not complying completely with SOLACE in all aspects, the training monitor system - Trello, council insurances being affected by recovery plans in place, how we engage with communities and whistle blowing policies.

With regards to the Council Insurances query, the Officer requested that she be able to come back with a reply after referring to the relevant insurance documents.

During debate members discussed the increased issue of member conduct complaints involving social media, particularly in Worthing Council.

Social media was also discussed in relation to the need for guidance for councillors about the role of social media in their positions and what is expected of them when monitoring their accounts for queries and comments from the community.

Considerable debate took place regarding the S151 Officer non-inclusion on the Corporate Leadership Team. The Committee requested that, in the event that the S151 Officer was not a member of the Corporate Leadership Team following the review of the organisation structure, that the Chief Executive attend a future meeting of JGC to explain the rationale behind the decision.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Cllr Boram, seconded by Cllr Crisp and following a vote, were unanimously supported by the Committee.

Resolved

The Joint Governance Committee

1. noted the evidence of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and the Progress Report produced to deal with any issues arising from these requirements as set out in Appendix A; and
2. approved the Annual Governance Statements for each Council as set out in Appendices B and C to this report.

JGC/8/22-23 Risk & Opportunities Update Report

Before the Committee was a report from the Director for Digital and Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The report provided updates on the management of the Councils' risks and Opportunities including disaster recovery and hardware failure.

During consideration of the report, Members raised a number of queries including:-

- The cost of living crisis and the Council's One Stop Money Coaches. Members thought it was essential at this time an elevated cost of living, that this team was staffed to capacity. It was suggested that staff from teams with reducing caseloads be utilised within the Money Coaching team.
- The Housing supply issue and when funds from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill would be available.
- The Councils' commercial property portfolio.
- Flood Risk project.
- Inflation, particularly how this would affect salary increases.
- Council energy contracts ending and the increase of energy costs expected.
- Government financing with relation to the climate change crisis.

** The meeting was adjourned at 8.27 pm and reconvened at 8.35 pm.*

Cllr Stainforth proposed and Cllr Arnold seconded the following motion -

That members of the Corporate Leadership Team consider how best to reflect concerns of this committee over staffing matters, as part of their next review of Risks and Opportunities, and how this be reported on the Risks and Opportunities Register and that the review should also include any additional cost implications and impacts on the current staff and our services.

The Committee voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Resolved

That the Joint Governance Committee

- noted the progress in managing risks and opportunities.
- requested that members of the Corporate Leadership Team consider how best to reflect concerns of this committee over staffing matters, as part of their next review of Risks and Opportunities, and how this be reported on the Risks and Opportunities Register and that the review should also include any additional cost implications and impacts on the current staff and our services.
- unanimously agreed to receive a further progress report in November 2022.

JGC/9/22-23 Modernising and Updating the Councils' Constitutions

Before the Committee was a report from the Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 9.

An internal governance review had been conducted by the Councils' Monitoring Officer identifying opportunities for amending and modernising both Councils' Constitutions, bringing them in line with best practice and to ensure they were lawful, fit for purpose and up to date, better reflecting the needs of Members and communities and enabling improved decision making and enhancing the democratic process.

The report sought approval from the Joint Governance Committee for the creation of a Working Group to consult on the proposed changes to the two Constitutions, enabling the Monitoring Officer to create final draft Constitutions for approval by the Joint Governance Committee on 27 September 2022, with a recommendation that Adur and Worthing Full Councils each ratify the amendments at their meetings in October 2022.

Members debated the size of the working group and following a proposal that was seconded and supported following a vote (17 for and 1 against) agreed that the Working Group should actively canvas all Members and should have the following political make-up -

Worthing - 4 Labour members, 2 Conservative members and 1 Liberal Democrat member.

Adur - 3 Conservative members, 2 Labour members, 1 Green member and 1 Independent member.

Resolved

The Joint Governance Committee -

- noted the content of the report and approved the creation of a Working Group, with the membership as specified above and with the terms of reference proposed at paragraph 4;

- requested a further report on changes proposed by the Working Group at its meeting on 27 September 2022 with the intention of making recommendation to the Full Councils at their meetings in October 2022 (via Joint Governance Committee and Joint Strategic Committee) for approval.

JGC/10/22-23 Joint Governance Committee Appointments: Parish Councillors

Before the Committee was a report from the Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

This report advised Members of the Joint Governance Committee of the nominations from Lancing Parish Council and Sompting Parish Council for Parish representatives to be appointed to the Joint Governance Committee as co-opted Members in accordance with the Constitution.

Resolved

The Joint Governance Committee -

- noted the nomination from Lancing Parish Council of the appointment of Cllr Mike Mendoza as a Co-opted Member of the Joint Governance Committee for 2022/23 and recommended the appointment to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.
- noted the nomination from Sompting Parish Council of the appointment of Cllr John Salisbury as a Co-opted Member of the Joint Governance Committee for 2022/23 and recommended the appointment to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.

JGC/11/22-23 Annual Review of Member Conduct Complaints - 2021/22

Before the Committee was a report from the Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 11.

The report advised Members of the Joint Governance Committee of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer that Elected Members had breached the Code of Conduct. Complaints received related to Elected Members of Adur District Council, Worthing Borough Council, Sompting Parish Council and Lancing Parish Council.

The report advised of all complaints received during the municipal year 2021/22, action taken by the Monitoring Officer, and/or the Council, including any attempts at informal resolution and the outcome.

Resolved

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the report and the actions taken by the Monitoring Officer and/or Council.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.37 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman

