

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

Worthing Town Hall, The Gordon Room

5 July 2022

Councillor Dr Beccy Cooper (Chair)

Adur District Council:

Councillor Neil Parkin
Angus Dunn
Carson Albury
Kevin Boram
Emma Evans
Steve Neocleous

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Emma Taylor
John Turley
Carl Walker
Vicki Wells
Rosey Whorlow
*Councillor Rita Garner
*Councillor Martin McCabe
*Councillor Helen Silman

**Member not present*

[As agreed by JSC in June 2022, the same number of Cabinet / Executive Members from each council would be present at each JSC meeting to ensure equality of voting]

Other Members Present

Adur District Council:- Councillor Lee Cowen

Worthing Borough Council:- Councillor Kevin Jenkins

JSC/9/22-23 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

JSC/10/22-23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 7 June 2022, were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

JSC/11/22-23 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

JSC/12/22-23 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

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 5.

The report outlined the revenue financial monitoring position for the end of the 2021/22 financial year for the Joint Strategic Committee, Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils. At the time of publication, the Statements of Accounts were in progress, due to be completed by the end of June with the audit scheduled to commence in August 2022. It was noted that any adjustments that emerged from the audit, would be reported to members later in the year.

The final position for operational services were overspends in Adur District Council of £208k and in Worthing Borough Council £2m. This was a variation to the projections reported at quarter 3 when operational outturns were predicted to be an overspend of £585k in Adur and £1.6m in Worthing.

Overall outturn positions were an underspend of £183k in Adur District Council and an overspend of £196k in Worthing Borough Council. This represented a 2% underspend against the budget for Adur and 1% overspend in Worthing.

The table at 4.6 of the report outlined the components contributing to the outturn positions in 2021/22. There were no proposed budget carry forward requests for 2021/22.

The outcome was an improvement overall for Adur District Council and a deterioration for Worthing Borough Council from that forecast in the quarter 3 monitoring report '3rd Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (Q3)' when net overspends of £47,000 and £14,000 were being projected in Adur and Worthing respectively. The main movements in the last quarter were set out in appendix 5b.

A Member asked questions in relation to Car Parking income (figures for June 2022, compared with June 2021 and benchmarked against June 2019) and Worthing Borough Council's debt position. Officers did not have figures for June 2022 to hand but observed that car parking income continued to be suppressed following the pandemic but had been improving. Benchmarking figures could be provided after the meeting. Officers also advised that when considering the amount of debt, consideration should be given to the value of the Council's assets. Members were informed that the value of the Council's assets far outweighed the value of the Council's debt and therefore the Council was not overborrowed.

Another Member asked a question in relation to support from the government and sought clarification in relation to the Adur Council General Fund being under-borrowed (para 7.10). Officers advised that the position in Adur was very different to that in Worthing as the Council was not carrying anywhere near as significant commercial risk as car park income had bounced back remarkably well. The government's covid support had finished, so the Councils were not expecting any more funding for covid. The Councils were receiving more new burdens funding for some of the new measures the Council was implementing in respect of the energy cost crisis. For example, the Council was administering £150 payments to all council tax payers in bands A to D. It was noted that the Councils borrowed to fund their Capital Investment Programmes, however, the Councils were able to use their cash flow to fund expenditure in lieu of borrowing as a

short term measure. The Councils had been holding a lot of cash over the past few years, due to the administering of government grant programmes. The Councils had used their cash flow advantage to fund the capital programme in the interim, the benefit of which was reduced interest costs.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Angus Dunn, seconded by Councillor John Turley and unanimously supported.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee recommended that Adur District Council, at its meeting on 21st July 2022 and Worthing Borough Council at its meeting on 19th July 2022:-

- a) NOTE the overall final outturn for 2021/22; and
- b) APPROVE the net appropriations from General Fund Reserves in the year, as detailed in section 6 of the report, totalling: Adur District Council £2,050,390 and Worthing Borough Council £4,971,169.

Call In:

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

JSC/14/22-23 Financial Performance 2021/22 - Capital and Projects Outturn

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 outlined the financial monitoring position for the end of the 2021/22 financial year for capital schemes included in the capital programmes of the Joint Strategic Committee, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.

Information was also provided in respect of capital receipts for the 2 constituent authorities.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated officers in progressing the programme of works in very difficult circumstances.

It was noted that the Worthing Cabinet was happy to support the recommendations in the report with the caveat that the new administration in Worthing were reassessing the Capital Programme to ensure that it followed their Economic Strategy.

Recommendations 2.1 (ii) (a) to (d) in the report were proposed by Councillor Angus Dunn, seconded by Councillor Kevin Boram and unanimously supported by the Adur Executive Members. All Worthing Cabinet Members abstained from the vote.

Recommendations 2.1 (iii) (a) to (d) in the report were proposed by Councillor John Turley, seconded by Councillor Vicki Wells and unanimously supported by the Worthing Cabinet Members. All Adur Executive Members abstained from the vote.

Recommendations 2.1 (i), (iv) and (v) were unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

- i) noted the outturn position for 2021/22;
- ii) **recommended** that Adur District Council at its Council meeting on 21st July 2022:
 - a) Note the overall capital final outturn for 2021/22;
 - b) Agree the net carry over of General Fund Capital underspends for Adur District Council as detailed in paragraphs 5.3 of the report;
 - c) Approve the financing of the Adur District Council 2020/21 Capital Investment Programme, including the use of capital receipts as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report; and
 - d) Approve the carry forward of Council resources underspends to fund budget pressures as detailed in paragraph 4.2.2. and summarised in paragraph 5.6 of the report.
- iii) **recommended** that Worthing Borough Council at its Council meeting on 19th July 2022:
 - a) Note the overall capital final outturn for 2021/22;
 - b) Agree the net carry over of General Fund Capital underspends for Worthing Borough Council as detailed in paragraph 5.10 of the report;
 - c) Approve the financing of the Worthing Borough Council 2021/22 Capital Investment Programme, including the use of capital receipts as set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of the report; and
 - d) Approve the carry forward of Council resources underspends to fund budget pressures as detailed in paragraph 4.2.2. and summarised in paragraph 5.15 of the report.
- iv) noted the additional external funding awarded by Homes England towards housing schemes as set out in paragraph 7.1 and delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects to enter into the associated funding agreement;
- v) noted the final projected benefit from completed invest to save schemes as outlined in Appendix 5 of the report.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for decisions (i), (iv) and (v) will be 5.00pm on the 15th July 2022.

There is no call in for recommendations (ii) and (iii) to Adur and Worthing Councils.

JSC/15/22-23 Developing a revenue budget for 2023/24 against a backdrop of high inflation

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 7.

The purpose of the report was to propose a budget strategy for the development of the 2023/24 budgets with the added challenge of high inflation. When the 2022/23 budget was set, the war in Ukraine had yet to start and it continued to affect global economies

with a prolonged impact on the energy markets and the consequential cost of living challenges which confront our communities as well as ourselves.

The report aimed to set out how the Councils would address the challenges of the next few years, outlining the revenue forecast and setting out strategic responses to the challenges ahead. With the detailed budget proposals for 2023/24 coming forward to the Joint Strategic Committee in December, this report set out the broader context for the detailed work that would be undertaken over the intervening months.

As set out in the following pages, the Councils would be increasingly reliant on council tax income, business rate income, and their own income generating services. The Councils had a good track record in innovation, working creatively in partnership, transforming their digital capabilities and putting the customer at the heart of their services, so that there was capacity to continue to deliver the Councils aspirations. Innovation in funding, investment and commercial income would be ever more important, aligned to key goals such as housing provision, tackling the climate crisis and supporting the local economy.

The Councils' new corporate strategy was being developed which would influence the final shape of the budget when it was set for 2023/24.

Work had been underway for some time to address the financial challenges for 2023/24 and beyond. This would continue over the summer and autumn, and the Organisational Leadership Team would be working to produce new financial plans designed to deliver a balanced budget over the next 3 years. The outcome of the service planning process would be presented to the Joint Strategic Committee for approval in December 2022 as part of the development of the 2023/24 budget.

A Member asked questions regarding additional funding and commercial risks referenced in the report. Officers advised that there were no new funding streams, although there were external funds for specific areas of work such as nature restoration. Services would be reviewed in depth and findings taken to JOSOC in due course. The commercial risks related to car parking income and other commercial services such as trade waste and commercial waste.

Members welcomed the report and thanked officers for their innovative work over a sustained period of time.

An amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Councillor John Turley; that 'the budget strategy for Worthing Borough Council will be developed to fall in line with the new economic strategy which will be brought to the Joint Strategic Sub-Committee (Worthing) in September, and will have due regard to the joint arrangements with Adur District Council'. The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Emma Taylor and supported by all 6 Worthing Cabinet Members. The Adur Executive Members abstained from the vote.

The recommendations, as amended, were proposed by Councillor Angus Dunn, seconded by Councillor Carl Walker and unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

- (a) Noted the report and the outline 5-year forecasts in Appendix 3;
- (b) Approved the proposed budget process as set out in section 6 of the report;
- (c) **Recommended** that Adur District Council approve the Budget Strategy for 2022/23 as outlined in Section 9 of the report;
- (d) **Recommended** that Worthing Borough Council approve the Budget Strategy for 2022/23, as outlined in Section 9 of the report, noting that the budget strategy for Worthing Borough Council will be developed to fall in line with the new economic strategy which will be brought to the Joint Strategic Sub-Committee (Worthing) in September, and will have due regard to the joint arrangements with Adur District Council.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 15th July 2022.

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

JSC/16/22-23 Phase 1: Organisational design and capability building

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.

Since the appointment of Dr Catherine Howe as Chief Executive (CEX), the organisational leadership team, made up of senior officers within Adur and Worthing Councils, had been meeting to develop a new Corporate Plan to replace 'Platforms for our Places' as well as looking at what organisational changes were needed. The next phase of this work was for staff, member and community engagement to allow a wider group of people to contribute to this work over the course of the summer in order to inform budget conversations into the Autumn.

The report outlined the first phase of organisational changes, which were targeted at creating the capability and capacity needed to deliver wide ranging changes. It was built around the principles of participation, resilience and adaptability, which would be needed in order to deliver the Corporate Plan once it was agreed.

Also included were changes needed to reflect a renewed emphasis from both Councils on communication and engagement (both internally and externally), and the additional capacity needed to support democracy and participation.

A Member asked questions about the timing of the two phases of work and the increased focus on democracy and participation. Clarification was provided in regards to the timetable for the two phases of work and officers advised that in regards to participation, the report was about building capacity to do some of these things better. Conversations will be required with both Councils as to what they want to do with that capacity around communications, engagement and participation.

Another Member asked what was the priority, meeting the budget or maintaining front line services. Officers advised that the National Pay Award was outside of the Councils control and the Chief Finance Officer was having to make assumptions about what the likely outcomes of those negotiations would be. This process would require the working up of a set of agreed priorities across both Councils finding a balance between what the Councils invest in and what they don't. The report signalled the start of that process and set out the parameters of how the Councils wanted to do this work.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Carl Walker, seconded by Councillor Steve Neocleous and unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee

- a. noted that the Chief Executive would be proceeding with the phased organisational design changes outlined in the report;
- b. requested that the Chief Executive bring back the developed three year programme for implementing the new Corporate Plan to this committee for consideration in advance of the budget setting process and prior to its consideration by both Councils;
- c. agreed that the Corporate Plan be the basis of the next phases of organisational change.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 15th July 2022.

JSC/17/22-23 Proactive interventions to support low income residents

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for 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 described changes in the national and local context since the start of the year and included information about a further 66 residents that the Proactive team had been able to engage by mid May 2022 (out of a total of a further 294 that were contacted via phone since our last report).

The report detailed progress in moving from an experimental approach to a more embedded programme within the Councils, using the learning from the case review approach detailed at section 5.6, additional digital tools to enable residents to self help, and improved insight into residents contact with other council teams. The report also set out how the Councils partnership working on the cost of living was progressing and outlined plans for joint working between the Councils and relevant partners.

A Member asked questions about the inclusion of Universal Credit data, whether the work to call residents on the housing application waiting list had started and when the dashboard would be ready. Officers advised that work was already underway with the DWP in regards to the inclusion of universal credit and data sharing. Responses to the

questions regarding calls to residents on the housing application waiting list and the dashboard would be provided following the meeting.

An amendment requesting a progress report in 6 months, was proposed by Councillor Emma Taylor, seconded by Councillor Kevin Boram and supported unanimously.

The recommendations in the report, as amended, were proposed by Councillor Kevin Boram, seconded by Councillor Carson Albury and supported unanimously by the Committee.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the contents of the report; and
2. requested that the Interim Director for Communities reports back in 6 months on progress against the next steps outlined in the report.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 15th July 2022.

JSC/18/22-23 JOSC report on the evening and night time economy

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 10.

The Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) was asked to receive and note the findings and recommendations of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) review on the Adur and Worthing evening and night time economy (ENTE). Those recommendations followed on from the discussions of a Working Group set up by JOSC. A copy of the report from the Working Group to JOSC was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The JSC was also asked to consider the findings and recommendations from a previous report which was tabled at the cancelled JOSC meeting on 19 March 2020.

The JOSC Working Group recognised that the challenges faced by the ENTE had not gone away and it found, from speaking with some business owners, relevant stakeholders and receiving comments from members of the Adur and Worthing communities, that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was still being felt and the future remains uncertain.

The Working Group had identified a number of findings and the Working Group considered that its report and findings/research could help the Councils and other agencies in developing the ENTE for the benefit of local communities, businesses and visitors to the areas.

Members queried whether this work had been focused on the post covid position or was an amalgamation of the work carried out both pre and post covid. It was noted that other covid recovery work could incorporate some of the recommendations outlined in the

report and one of the difficulties experienced in opening up the night time economy post covid, was the lack of people wanting to work in the sector. Therefore there was an employment issue as well as a recovery issue going on which was not covered in the working group's findings.

It was proposed that the report be referred back to JOSC and brought back to this Committee at a later date. In the meantime, the comments from the Joint Strategic Committee would be relayed back to JOSC, via the JOSC Chairs.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee requested that the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee take another look at the report in light of the comments made with a view to the report being brought back to a future meeting.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 15th July 2022.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.06 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman