

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

QEII Room, Shoreham Centre

22 September 2022

Councillor Joss Loader (Chairman)
Councillor Mandy Buxton (Vice-Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Carol Albury
Tony Bellasis
Ann Bridges
Paul Mansfield
Sharon Sluman
Debs Stainforth

Worthing Borough Council:

Ibsha Choudhury
Dan Hermitage
Margaret Howard
Daniel Humphreys
Heather Mercer
Jon Roser
Elizabeth Sparkes
Cathy Glynn-Davies

JOSC/22/22-23 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Joss Loader declared an interest as a trustee of the cat welfare trust

Councillor Mandy Buxton declared an interest as an Adur Homes Tenant

JOSC/23/22-23 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members

JOSC/24/22-23 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the 9 June 2022 be approved as the correct record.

JOSC/25/22-23 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

JOSC/26/22-23 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no items raised under urgency provisions

JOSC/27/22-23 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There were no items for call-in

JOSC/28/22-23 Interview with Adur Cabinet Member for Adur Homes and Customer Services

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability 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. As part of its Work Programme for 2022/23, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) had agreed to interview the Adur and Worthing Cabinet Members on their priorities for 2022/23. The report set out background information on the Portfolio of the Adur Cabinet Member for Adur Homes and Customer Services to enable the Committee to consider and question the Cabinet Member on issues within his portfolio and any other issues which the Cabinet Member is involved in connected with the work of the Council and the Adur communities.

The Adur Cabinet Member for Adur Homes and Customer Services was present at the meeting to answer questions.

A Member asked the following question: *I am aware, through case work, that people have been moved into temporary housing accommodation which lacks basic cooking and laundry facilities. Please confirm if that is currently the case?* The Cabinet Member told the meeting that some homeless people were booked into Bed and Breakfast (B&B). B&Bs were only used when no other suitable accommodation is available. Where families with children had been placed in B&Bs, the Council prioritise moving them into more suitable accommodation as soon as possible.

A Member asked the following question: *Please can you confirm the criteria for approving temporary accommodation and what is being done to ensure that people can carry out essential daily activities within this?* Members were told that all properties used for temporary accommodation were assessed for compliance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) standards. In line with the code of guidance, all accommodation was free of Category 1 hazards as a minimum.

That a property is compliant with the HHSRS does not mean it will be suitable for every household as each household had unique circumstances. Paragraph 5 of the Councils' Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy describes the factors that will be considered before deciding that a property is suitable for a particular household. These factors include location, size, condition and facilities of the properties, along with the circumstances of the family including any health issues within the household, education, employment and any special circumstances. A vulnerability and suitability assessment is carried to assess these factors each time a household is offered accommodation for the first time or moved to any other temporary accommodation. It is important to note that accommodation that may be deemed suitable for one household, may not be suitable for another due to their personal circumstances. Similarly, accommodation that may be suitable for immediate and short term placement, may not be suitable for long term placement.

A Member asked the following question: *What work has been done and what work can we expect to see in the near future to insulate socially rented homes to benefit both residents and the environment in light of the ever worsening environmental, energy and cost of living crisis?* Members were told that energy efficiency was a priority in regards to new build or rebuilds. Government grants were welcome for investment in technology

such as ground source heat pumps. Members were told that measures in the newly build Shadwells Court had reduced emissions by 90 tons per year.

A Member asked the following question: *What work has been done so far, and what work can we expect to see in the future, to develop an empathic protocol for collection of rent arrears, in light of the current cost of living crisis and its expected worsening in the near future?* Members were told that referrals were made to other agencies for support and assistance with rent arrears. Officers used the LIFT (Low income family tracker) data to identify fuel poverty households to ensure a holistic view taken when addressing rent arrears. Officers had also been working on the formation of an Ethical Debt Collection Policy for Council Tax and were seeking to build on this work in relation to rent arrears.

JOSC/29/22-23 Interview with the Worthing Cabinet Member for Citizens Services

This item was deferred to a later meeting

JOSC/30/22-23 Worthing Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure interview

This item was delayed to a later date

JOSC/31/22-23 Overview and Scrutiny and Joint Overview and Scrutiny in the revised Constitutions

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, sustainability 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 9. The report before Members set out the changes to the Overview and Scrutiny, Joint Overview and Scrutiny and relevant Procedure Rules sections of the Constitutions, which have been proposed by the Joint Governance Committee Constitution Review Working Group.

The Committee discussed the JOSC procedure rules and suggested amendments. of Particular note members discussed the membership and Chairmanship of JOSC, the compilation of Minority reports, and the use of Party Whip. It was noted that the Worthing version of papers was not present at the meeting. Members were told that the Worthing version mirrored the version of Adur.

Resolved: that the following be recommended to the Joint Governance Committee:

Membership of JOSC

Remove 3.2 and 3.3

Replace these with alternative supplied as part of the JGC papers:

The Chair of the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee][Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee] shall be appointed by the Council. The Chair will first be offered to a member of a Political Group that does not form part of the Administration or an ungrouped Member, with the Vice Chair being drawn from any other Political Group.

Minority Reports

Para 12.5 change from 5 working days to 1 week

Para 12.8 after 'Democratic Services.' add 'Support will be provided by the Scrutiny Officer'

Party whip

The Scrutiny Committee wanted it acknowledged that the role of scrutiny was non-political (objectively holding decision makers to account), prior to the paragraphs relating to the Party Whip.

Insert new para 16.1: "Scrutiny is seen as impartial and stays separate from party politics. Scrutiny councillors should use their political skills and understanding of the needs of local people to shape the discussions, whilst not acting in a party political manner or using the discussions to further party political objectives."

The proposed changes above to be replicated in Worthing OSC procedure rules Adur OSC procedure Rules and JOSC procedure rules

JOSC/32/22-23 JOSC Work Programme review

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 11. The report before Members The report outlined progress in implementing the work contained in the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) Work Programme for 2022/23.

The Scrutiny and Improvement Officer introduced the report to the Committee. Members were given an outline to changes in the plan. Members were told about scrutiny requests relating to building control and the cost of living crisis. In relation to building control, members were told that the Committee could look at general policy but not at specific planning matters Members agreed that papers on the cost of living crises should come before the committee.

Resolved: that the work programme be noted as amended

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.20 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman