

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

Worthing Town Hall

24 November 2022

Adur District Council:

Joss Loader
Mandy Buxton
Carol Albury
Tony Bellasis
Ann Bridges
Paul Mansfield
Sharon Sluman
Debs Stainforth
Catherine Arnold
Joe Pannell

Worthing Borough Council:

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

Absent

Cllr Carol Albury, Cllr Cathy Glynn-Davies and Cllr Sharon Sluman

JOSC/46/22/23 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Loader declared an interest as a trustee of the Shoreham and Adur Food Bank.
Cllr Howard declared an interest as a member of Worthing Food Foundation and Broadwater support
Cllr Sparkes declared an interest as a member of West Sussex County Council

JOSC/47/22/23 Substitute Members

Cllr Catherine Arnold substituted for Cllr Sharon Sluman
Cllr Joe Pannell substituted for Cllr Carol Albury

JOSC/48/22/23 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 13 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

JOSC/49/22/23 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

JOSC/50/22/23 Members' Question Time

No questions from the Members were received.

JOSC/51/22/23 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

JOSC/52/22/23 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There were no call-ins

JOSC/53/22/23 Interview with Adur Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 8, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes.

A member asked, "Paragraph 5.14 in the Priorities for Adur report Adur Priorities indicates that further investment for the Proactive Programme and the OneStop "Money Coaches will continue", both excellent pieces of work by the council. Will this investment further expand the scope of these services in response to the Cost of Living Crisis (COLC) to include identifying vulnerable demographics and training money coaches around energy specific savings eg. energy tariffs and efficient use?"

Response - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing said Proactive was the internal approach that continued to provide valuable insights, help and support, for people at risk or facing real difficulties. In addition to the councils' ongoing proactive calls using their Customer Contact team, they were also working with two housing cohorts up until Christmas. Using Tell Jo as a digital tool to reach out to more residents, enabling them to self assess, self signpost and ultimately signpost back to the Council for help and support, they were expanding their ability to contact more residents.

Once they did make contact, or people contacted them, they could offer and signpost to a wide range of support, not just money coaching, but also ensuring the correct benefits were being received and bringing in other services delivered by their partners. This included working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to help get people back into work.

As part of their organisational redesign they would be mainstreaming Proactive into their teams and the way they worked with people that were vulnerable, connected to their new ethical debt policy approach. Using their LIFT platform they were expanding the way this was identifying vulnerable people through their teams. Tell Jo would enable them to reach more people.

In addition, they were also continuing to develop their cost of living work with a wider set of partners - their wider community safety net - to help support people and build their resilience in communities.

A member asked, "What safety net does the Council have in place in the event that our much needed food banks become unsustainable or insufficient in the face of the ongoing and increasing Cost of Living Crisis?"

Response - the council continued to work in partnership with key public sector agencies, the voluntary and community sector, businesses and their communities through the Cost of Living roadmap and related action plans, to ameliorate the wide ranging impacts being faced nationally as a result of the COLC. They were working with food groups to help them become more sustainable and both Councils had identified the need for a donation based fundraising mechanism to be set up to support food provision in Adur and Worthing. They were in the final stages of writing a proposal for this activity with a view to this platform being in place for early December and relevant reports were being prepared for Cabinet Member approval.

A Member asked, *“How will you meet the challenge of securing Council income whilst also leading a policy of empathic debt collection?”*

Response - it was vitally important to identify those facing financial hardship early and provide the appropriate support. They had brought in an “ethical debt policy” in November to set out the Councils’ approach. This included contacting people early, making appropriate repayment arrangements, and signposting people to appropriate support including money advice. Where they were struggling to make contact with a customer to make an arrangement, they worked with their debt recovery agents to ensure those cases were assessed for propensity to pay and that they were dealt with by their welfare teams. Their ongoing work would be to ensure their system was good at understanding circumstances, and was supportive for those that “can’t pay” and more robust for those that “won’t pay”.

A member asked, *“The council suspended its Out of Hours Noise Service well over a year ago, due to issues with the service provider. What is the current provision for people wanting to report unacceptable levels of noise outside office hours?”*

Response - following the service provider being unable to fulfil its contractual requirements, a request for other providers to register an interest through a tender portal had been made which resulted in no companies coming forward. In the absence of a provider customers were still able to report unacceptable levels of noise out of hours but those would be actioned on the next working day. Customers who had access to a mobile device could use the Noise App which allowed customers to record instances of noise when it affected them which could be reviewed by officers. In addition they also had the ability to install specialist noise recording equipment and officers would make out of hours visits at times when the noise is likely to occur.

A Member asked, *“Adur District Council (ADC) has publicised that it's awarding £500 grants to organisations providing "warm spaces". What is the take up, currently, and is there scope to increase the size of the grants if temperatures plummet to below average in the New Year?”*

Response - they had received 9 applications for Adur, 5 had been successful and 4 were currently being processed, the grant value was not anticipated to cover the costs of the activity but was a contribution to those generously hosting warm spaces. The grant value had been benchmarked against other warm space activity, it was not anticipated that it would be increased.

A member asked, *“Within your portfolio there is responsibility for Police performance and intelligence liaison.”*

Huge reductions in police funding have led to steep rises in crime in the local community- from flytipping to bike theft and burglary - and the percentage of these crimes unsolved is at a record high to the extent that some are effectively decriminalised.

Will you now look toward working with our partners to reinstate at least one Police and Community Panel in Adur - ideally covering three main areas - Sompting & Lancing, Shoreham and Southwick & Fishersgate?"

Response - there were currently no plans to develop a bespoke forum for this purpose. Having consulted with the Neighbourhood Policing Team inspector, they had confirmed that from a policing perspective, they wanted to focus on contributing to existing community led initiatives. Adur was also represented at the Joint Action Group monthly meeting where Members could raise community concerns with a variety of partners and receive feedback on crime types, rates of incidence and partnership activity to address them.

Further questions were raised regarding communicating with communities in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour. Members were told that the council were working with the police and other groups through data sharing to regularly and meaningfully engage with communities.

JOSC/54/22/23 Interview with Worthing Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 9, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, this item was deferred to a later meeting.

JOSC/55/22/23 What the Councils are doing to help with the cost of living crisis

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 10, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes.

A Member asked, "The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for this work states: those already most socially disadvantaged are likely to be those most at risk of not coping including groups such as those protected through the Equality Act 2010. What analysis is being done to capture data around these protected groups in deprivation who are seeking help and given the funded community groups (since 2021) have had over £142k are they capturing data on this?"

Response - a further, more detailed Cost of Living EIA assessment had been done that set out actions to engage with a range of diverse communities in Adur and Worthing. Work on this had commenced. A data profile for Worthing had been produced which identified more vulnerable communities using national and local data sets (for example the Councils' own LIFT data). This was due for updating with 2021 census data. The profile for Adur was also pending 2021 census data. A Cost of Living Data Sharing Working Group had been set up with external partners to look at ways to collate and share aggregate data in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of where resources should be targeted to meet need.

A Member asked, *“Working with providers locally (page 60): How confident are you that Southern Water engages effectively for the outcomes of this plan?”*

Response - Southern Water had been contacted requesting information about the schemes available to support people in managing their water bills or water related debt. They were also asked to discuss with the Councils other possible measures that could be taken. There had been no reply to date and this needed to be re-actioned. They said that Southern Water were part of a bigger discussion with a number of other organisations and bringing them together in partnership.

A member asked, *“Target financial support where it's most effective (page 61): For the support to be inclusive of all residents, what alternative options are available to support those with a lack of access to online information?”*

Response - The Cost of Living Information Leaflet included the telephone numbers of all key support services, as well as their websites, so people without online access are able to contact them. There was also a digital inclusion action in both CoL Action Plans, and work would be done with West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Digital Inclusion Officer to identify support strategies for people to access online services. A number of 'in person' community engagement events had taken place to support them in sign posting residents to the help that is on offer. These events invited a number of other agencies and organisations to help meet the needs and requirements of those who needed assistance.

A Member asked, *“Funding and resources (page 64) - What approach will be developed to crowdfunding opportunities with local businesses to address the cost of living impacts?”*

Response - Just Giving sites for Adur and Worthing were proposed with a tentative launch date of 9 December. This was subject to Cabinet Member endorsement and ratification. Funds raised would be used to support groups in the Adur and Worthing food network in relation to food provision and hardship.

A Member asked, *“Re Cost of Living (Worthing JSC Sub-Committee on 6 September 2022 - JOSCA Agenda page 44 - Paragraph 3.5 of the report Worthing JSC Sub-Committee COLC report. Regarding the statement ‘investment in infrastructure and support to food groups since 2021 of over £142k, with a further £25k to be allocated in 2022/23.’*

How much of the £142K was allocated directly to Worthing food groups for food and how much for infrastructure excluding any monies to WSCC Comm Hub?”

Response - a total of £98,025 had been granted to Worthing Food Groups for food supplies, through Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) Round 2 and Worthing Borough Council CoL funding. Funding was allocated through a small grants round and allocation according to need/demand. All funding was administered through Community Works with Food Groups agreeing allocation criteria and eligibility.

£70,653.20 had been spent on support other than food supplies, this funding was allocated to groups through a small grants round and allocation according to need/demand. All funding was administered through Community Works with Food Groups agreeing allocation criteria and eligibility. Funding was spent on the following:

Signposting leaflet - printing costs

A shed for an allotment

Rental for 6 months for a food pantry and community fridge (small grants bid from a collective of Worthing food groups)
A 'Food First Liaison Manager' post
A Food First event
Food Insecurity Mapping of Worthing
Community Food Network Administration Support

A member asked, "Regarding the statement 'In 2022/23 all available COMF funding is being used to address the Cost of Living impacts. £25k will go directly to food groups and £75k is being used to develop infrastructure and support delivery of a cost of living programme of work.'

Bearing in mind that the local independent food banks are struggling to manage demand and only have enough funds to last until Christmas, can you explain if:

The government set the criteria to split the funds in this way, so that only a quarter goes to the food groups. If not, who made this decision, WSCC or WBC?"

Response - an additional COMF allocation of £100,000 was made available to Adur & Worthing council in 2022/2023, this was in addition to previous COMF funding which had already been made available to food groups. The decision to provide an additional amount of £25,000 to food groups was intended to provide urgent help and support to groups immediately with local demand.

Decisions about the remaining funding had not yet been confirmed. However, given the need for food was ongoing during those difficult times, there was a need to develop a longer term and more sustainable approach to how local groups could be supported, in the context of the cost of living action plan. Therefore some of this resource was being used for infrastructure; to support groups to be more sustainable and therefore make best use of those resources. These decisions were being made jointly between Members and senior officers, in accordance with their cost of living action plan

It was also important to add the role of WSCC here too who had also been providing direct funding support to some local groups.

A Member asked, "I am aware that food groups need to be sustainable but if they don't have enough food or funds to continue then they won't be sustainable anyway, so no amount of infrastructure will help.

What type of infrastructure is being funded. Please exclude any short term solutions such as 6 months for premises or a short staff contract because they cannot be judged as sustainable if they are only short term. If this hasn't been decided yet please give an outline of possible infrastructure solutions?"

Response - further to the response above, these decisions had not yet been finalised. However some of the infrastructure being developed included premises for groups (still being sourced), a JustGiving platform and campaign, and the ability to deliver work locally in different neighbourhoods in Worthing. These proposals were still being worked up by officers for Members with detailed options and briefings for each proposal.

A member asked, "when Father James spoke to the Full Council to ask for funding for food for our residents in need, we were told by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Wellbeing that the Council will not provide short term help. This is a cost of living crisis. A

crisis requires an immediate response to address immediate need. I'm going to keep reframing the same question on Food. Community groups who feed our residents are running low on resources. Why are we only giving £25k across Adur. What more are you going to do around food?"

Response - the Council had provided more than £131,000 to support food groups in Adur; this funding supported short term support of food supplies through a small grants round, allocation of COMF and Council funding. There was an additional £25,000 made available and went to both Adur and Worthing food groups. Additionally, groups were supported through the infrastructure organisation.

Community Works which provided support for fundraising, information, networking and advice. Importantly they had set out a full work programme through their cost of living action plan to address the wide ranging issues - beyond food - and were working with their partners to galvanise their support.

A Member asked, "Since the publication of the report and the committee meeting on 6 September the government has announced further support on energy bills and the intention to raise UC and state pensions by 10.1%. As such have you changed any of the focus and priorities within the action plan?"

Response - the priorities as set out in both Action Plans had not changed following recent announcements as a clear focus of the plans were to deliver comprehensive, more sustainable initiatives that reduced costs for people and helped support their incomes in the longer term. The proposed increases for pensioners and UC recipients were welcomed.

A Member asked, "The paper states that 'at Council a commitment was made to identify another £100,000 to support this agenda'. £58,100 has been added thanks to the underspends in the Treasury Management budget but the £41,900 which makes up £100,000 is being withdrawn from the hardship fund. Are you happy that this is another £100,000 or is there still £41,900 to be added to support the agenda?"

Response - the 41,900, was a subset of the £100,000.

A Member asked, "Last month our neighbours at Horsham District Council announced that they were allocating £500,000 to help combat the cost of living crisis. How do you explain the apparently large difference in amounts pledged by Horsham District Council and Worthing Borough Council?"

Response - the support referred to may have related to the plans announced by Horsham DC in June (although this was by no means certain). £300,000 was allocated to support a range of initiatives which was funded from underspend in 2021/22. Of course Worthing ended that year with an overspend of £196k which meant that they did not have the same opportunity.

Horsham DC had a very different financial position to the Councils'. Horsham District Council had reserves of over £48m. Whilst they had an overspend in the current year, this was only in the region of £230k compared to the significantly higher pressures experienced by Worthing Borough Council.

Further questions were raised about the accessibility of community engagement events. Members were told that they were inviting as many organisations and reaching out to as many people as possible.

JOSC/56/22/23 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny - Interview with the Chairman of the Adur and Worthing Safer Communities Partnership

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 11, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes.

This report provided the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) with information on the work of the Adur & Worthing Safer Communities Partnership (A&WSCP) in order for JOSC to scrutinise the work of the A&WSCP and interview the Chairman of the Partnership, Councillor Kevin Boram.

A Member asked, *“How has the Safer Communities Strategy already adapted its practice as a result of the increasing social inequality, a recognised driver of crime and disorder?”*

Response - The Chairman of the Adur and Worthing Safer Communities Partnership stated that the three year strategy for 2021- 2024 had pre-empted the impact of social inequality with overt references to the need to consider how this could drive crime and disorder. The partnership continued to build on the initiatives that tackled the impact of social inequality - for example, funding further work to reduce school exclusions and keep children in education in recognition that pathways through education and into training and employment were key in preventing generational worklessness and hardship. The Partnership continued to prioritise access to support for accommodation and employment through the joint use of their rough sleepers’ initiative grant alongside AWC housing colleagues - supporting people into stable accommodation through their outreach team and employment through the work coaches. The partnership also contributed to a data analyst who they would be working with to ensure the partnership had data products that reflected the impact of social inequality, for example - monitoring particular crime types that they knew were likely to increase as people faced additional cost of living pressures which would enable the partnership to target resources appropriately.

A Member asked *“When the data analysis, intelligence assessment, census data and community consultation to prepare for Year 2 annual plan was undertaken, were factors relating to the full impact of the COLC known and taken into account? How has this influenced the strategic approach to achieving safer communities over the next 2 years?”*

Response - the full impact of the COLC was an ever evolving picture, which would continue to develop; some known factors would have been taken into consideration in the development of the plan. As a partnership they remained committed to analysing key data to take an evidence based approach to look at how they targeted partnership resources to keep their communities safe. They had made the COLC a standard agenda item for all meetings where crime and disorder was discussed so they could ensure partners were sighted and could coordinate partnership activity and adapt plans accordingly.

A Member asked, *“A November YouGov poll stated that 62% feel Police do not take sexual assault cases seriously enough – 20% of reported crimes in Adur are due to*

domestic violence. Whilst the changing men's behaviour partnership programmes led by the Sussex Police Crime Commissioner is a good initiative, what other work is going on to tackle this important issue (perhaps around the perpetrator's mental health)."

Response - West Sussex County Council lead the work on domestic sexual abuse and violence (DSAV) aimed at supporting those who were victims of abuse, and holding those individuals who perpetrated abuse to account for their behaviour. Programmes designed to reduce the incidences of abuse routinely looked at co-existing complexities. As a partnership, they looked for opportunities to input into the commissioning of services and also how they could ensure resources secured by the Police Crime Commissioner, translated into services and initiatives that benefitted Adur and Worthing. They anticipated that the cost of living crisis would escalate incidents of DSAV and were working alongside WSCC and local services to promote awareness of the increased risk and providing CoL resources to DSAV services. They were also working with YADA to look at the impact of the CoL on the increase in the sex work market. They were currently working with partners to look at local initiatives to tackle violence against women, using the recently released Safer Streets funding. This would include work in the night time economy to ensure safe travel home for women.

A Member asked, *"The strategy states that overall crime rate in Adur has risen by 6% from 2019 levels, what do you believe are the core reasons for this?"*

Response - crime rates can be influenced by a number of factors which might include an increase in the number of incidents, a change in reporting and recording methods, an increase in reporting more generally. Causes of crime are complex and impacted by several socio economic factors, such as poverty, drugs and substance misuse, having experienced adversity and trauma.

A Member asked *"Unlike other forms of crime, the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents on page ten of the strategy don't have any stats attached, what were rises and the paper suggests 3 lockdowns being the cause, will researched reasons be gathered?"*

Response - this level of granularity is not easily analysed for ASB, as there were motivational variances in the primary causal factors, it was however highly likely that the impact of 3 lockdowns would have been a contributory factor. The ASB figures outlined in the strategy were provided through the West Sussex Strategic Intelligence Assessment. As a service, they maintained statistics detailing the nature of the ASB cases they supported which could be provided on request.

A member asked *"The public's confidence in the Police is currently low. I have no issue with officers on the ground, who are doing their best in difficult circumstances, but what is being done to flag these concerns to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to help restore public confidence that we have adequate numbers of officers patrolling in Adur - particularly during the evening and at night."*

Response - discussions were being held with the Police & Crime Commissioner and their officers to consider how local policing could and have greater visibility in the communities that make up Adur. Similar conversations were also being held with the police and other important stakeholders in order to consider strategies for preventing crime as well as dealing with offences committed. An important aspect of this work had to be close engagement and involvement with young people as they were often the victims as well as involved in carrying out antisocial

and criminal activities. In addition they were aware that each of the communities within Adur were facing different issues. Consequently, this work would be community focused.

Further questions were raised around policies of poverty driven crime, ethical behaviour education in schools and data driven research on reasons behind crime. Members were told that the police and crime commission confidentially shared data with social workers and other organisations to try and better understand crimes and worked with schools to help educate students.

JOSC/57/22/23 2023/24 Budget update

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 12, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes.

A Member asked “This isn't so much a question about the content of this report but about why Adur does not bring its budget to this committee for scrutiny?.”

Response - The Chief Financial Officer stated the Adur Cabinet had previously opted not to take the budget through scrutiny as it was viewed as a matter for full debate at Council (Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 22 March 2018 Work Programme 2018/19). However, in previous years the budget update report which supported the delivery of the Worthing budget, seen by JOSC, would have included both sets of information as it was a combined report.

With the move to separate sub-committees, there were now three separate reports which broadly included much of the same information. The report to be considered by members at Committee that evening included all of the savings and growth proposals relating both to the Joint Committee and Worthing Borough Council.

Obviously there was the opportunity for members to pre-submit questions to the JSC and the sub-committees directly on budget matters when these items were considered.

If members wished to see both budgets moving forwards, this should be detailed in the JOSC work programme which would be agreed by the respective Councils.

Further questions were asked about changes to council projected incomes and savings, the corporate landlord programme, new charges in car parks and consultation on budget programmes and increasing council tax. Members were told that many of the changes in the budget had been down to the change in interest rates and other global factors. Any increase in charges was still being looked at and that the consultation work programme was still being worked on, with an aim to run from December to January.

JOSC/58/22/23 Interview with Adur Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

The Committee had a report before it, attached as item 13, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, this item was deferred to a later meeting

JOSC/59/22/23 Interview with Worthing Cabinet Member for Resources

The Committee had a report before it, attached as item 14, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

A Member asked, "*It is important that the budget is aligned with the council's strategy and key priorities. Can you explain how your budget strategy aligns with the Administration's key priorities?*"

Response - The Worthing Cabinet Member for Resources stated since the election in May 2022, there had been some significant changes to the economic outlook, inflation was at a 40 year high and interest rates had increased significantly. Those macro economic forces had impacted significantly on the Council's financial prospects and the Council had adjusted its plans accordingly.

Despite this the Council expected to be able to remove the £5.00 minimum payment, supporting our poorest residents.

The Council had also retained some capacity within the budget to deliver on other aspirations, although given their financial circumstances this would be focussed on initiatives which provided the best value for money or where they could lever in partnership funding from elsewhere.

However much depended on local government settlement and the impact it had on the final position.

A Member asked, "*In your cabinet member Q&A in the summer you said that you had organised a Business Forum and that you planned to take forward the best ideas that emerged at the event. Could you tell us which of the ideas that emerged at the event you are taking forward.*"

Response - The Council did run a business forum but as well as this they had also been receiving additional feedback from the Big Listen Campaign. A number of themes emerged from the feedback and whilst the Council did not have the capacity to deliver all of them in one go, they were reviewing where they were with each area:

Consultation; businesses wanted to be heard - the business forum and Big Listen were good examples of this, whilst Members had also been visiting businesses in their outer parades, as well as the town centre, promoting their Small Business Growth Grant

Interest in green issues - there was real support for 'greening' of the Borough but also an appetite from businesses to get involved to support their own green journeys. The Council was heavily promoting opportunities such as LoCASE (green business support), whilst they continued to deliver new EV charging points and provided an effective commercial waste service.

The town needs promoting - they were reaching out to a number of partners to re-engage under the Time for Worthing banner. Colleagues had been re-gearing the brand to ensure there was value for businesses to get involved whilst there was still a great emphasis on outward promotion (regional and national). But, the Council couldn't do this by themselves, so they were encouraging collaboration through the new partners they were finding.

Public transport needs to be improved - this was not only for customers but also for staff. They were starting fresh conversations with WSCC about prioritising actions around bus transport, whilst they had just approved the expansion of bike share. They knew more could be done around this agenda and hoped that WSCC would support them in improving this provision.

Further to the above, they were also extremely concerned about how the Cost of Living crisis was affecting businesses and those that work within them. You would have seen they had committed to a Cost of Living Roadmap, with one of those actions looking at further information from businesses about how they had been affected and explored if there was anything the Council could do to further support. The survey, which was 'live' from then until the end of January, would provide them with vital information which, in turn, would lead to other realistic interventions.

A Member asked, 'At the full council meeting in October I asked a question about the council's Council Tax Support scheme and the leader told me that there was a cost saving to the council due to the changes that you have proposed to make to the scheme (the abolition of the £5 restriction). Can you elaborate on the leader's comments please and explain where the cost saving that she claimed exists will come from?'

Response - At the time, the estimate of the cost of the removal of the £5.00 restriction was around £720,520. This would be split across the precepting authorities as follows:

Worthing Borough Council - £89,440
West Sussex County Council - £551,370
Sussex Police Authority - £79,710

With the introduction of a new scheme, the current hardship scheme could be ended which would produce a net saving of £33,900 to offset the loss of income for the Council. Consequently, the net cost was likely to be in the region of £55,540.

The proposed removal of the 1 month discount would partially offset this cost if approved. This change would generate an overall gain to the Collection Fund of £60,000 of which Worthing would benefit by approximately £7,500

This change would also support the proposed reductions in the revenues and benefits team, identified within the budget report. Overall resources within the team were expected to reduce by £74,730 however this was due to a range of factors including digital improvements, reduced administrative costs from changes to Council Tax and falling benefits workload. This change would support the delivery of these savings.

Savings come in many shapes and forms. Taking money away from the poorest residents would in the long run cost money. Helping residents in this way would reduce their need to use services so the council would see financial savings there.

The true bottom line is that there was a moral justification in making this change. The Leader would be happy to debate this further at a future Full Council.

Further questions were raised about The Big Clean project, the ending of the hardship fund and council financial reserves. Members were told The Big Clean was a cheap and cost effective event to run, that the hardship fund had effectively been replaced by the Cost of Living Strategy and that council reserves were varied but usable reserves were facing a significant reduction.

The Committee had a report before it, attached as item 15, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members and is attached to the signed copy of these minutes. The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report to the Committee and set out changes and matters for determination.

Members noted the report and in particular discussed how missed Cabinet interviews should be considered. They also discussed how to manage the potential effect of changes to the constitution.

Resolved - The Committee

1. Noted the status of the work programme and agreed to refer the work programme to the council meetings in December
2. Noted the changes that have been made to the Work Programme since it was agreed by both Councils in April.
3. Agreed to defer the interview with the Worthing Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing to the JOSC meeting in February
4. Agreed to defer the interview with the Adur Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to the meeting in March.
5. Considered if any amendments were required to the Work Programme
6. To monitor the effect on its work programme arising from the changes to the Constitution as set out at Paragraph 4.5

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.58 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman