

Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Strategic Sub-Committee (Worthing)
6 September 2022
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Dr Beccy Cooper (Chair)
Councillor Carl Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Rita Garner
Councillor Martin McCabe
Councillor Helen Silman
Councillor Emma Taylor

Councillor John Turley
Councillor Vicki Wells
Councillor Rosey Whorlow

*= absent

JSS-C(W)/8/22-23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

JSS-C(W)/9/22-23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes from the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee meeting held on 5th July 2022, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

JSS-C(W)/10/22-23 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

JSS-C(W)/11/22-23 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There was an urgent matter for consideration at the meeting. A copy had previously been circulated to members of the Committee.

The Chair agreed to take the item in accordance with the appropriate Section of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 15.2 of the Council's Access to Information Rules by reason of special circumstances namely, to enable the Council to consider matters arising under the cost of living emergency which have arisen since the publication of the agenda.

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, presented by the Deputy Leader, 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 4.

In July Worthing Borough Council declared a cost of living emergency in recognition of the growing evidence of extreme pressures that rising costs and inflation were having on communities. Whilst all households are impacted by increases in energy, food and fuel prices, there is a disproportionate effect on significant parts of the Worthing population:

lower income families, lone parents, couples without children, those with disabilities, single income households, and those on fixed incomes.

Assessment of Proactive data (Proactive interventions to support low income residents - July 2022), showed significant numbers of households that were in food, fuel, water and overall relative poverty and who were struggling now. Some of the community food groups were reporting unprecedented demand which was outstripping their ability to help. The cumulative impact of inflation was now affecting a growing number of households, including new households that had not had to access financial support to date. Whilst the picture was bleak, there was growing evidence that more severe, and wider, effects of cost of living increases would only grow over the winter months and into 2023.

The Council had been working to alleviate the pressures of firstly the pandemic and then the emerging cost of living issues, over the last few years. Supported through the Council's own budget and COMF funding, this work had included working with and supporting local community food groups, establishing the Proactive response for those that were struggling, providing health and wellbeing support, and housing and homelessness initiatives.

Given the unprecedented scale of these issues now and moving into the Autumn/Winter, the declaration of the cost of living emergency made a commitment to identify an additional £100,000 budget to enable the Council to work on this agenda and to request officers to develop and deliver a Worthing Cost of Living Roadmap. The Roadmap was designed as a framework for a range of partners to work together to support and enable as many people as possible to be able to cope with the cost of living pressures over the next two years. The new Cost of Living Partnership aimed to respond to both immediate and urgent need, whilst building a longer and more sustainable approach by:

- supporting households to be as financially resilient as possible
- supporting communities to help each other and those in most need
- helping to reduce cost impacts on people
- developing sustainable approaches to address income inequalities

There were four major areas of focus for the Roadmap:

- Coordinating an urgent response to the cost of living emergency through helping to meet short term need
- Developing a sustained and co-ordinated community response to ensure that residents who are vulnerable and most at risk of experiencing financial exclusion are able to achieve better financial wellbeing and resilience
- That Worthing Council considers its own organisational culture, policy and practice to ensure it addresses the cost of living crisis
- That partners in Worthing work collaboratively to better utilise our resources to meet community needs and promote financial wellbeing and resilience

Critical to tackling cost of living impacts would be the need to balance the provision of immediate support for households with longer term sustainable measures that supported better financial resilience, increased independence and community infrastructure.

The report outlined why a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to tackling cost of living impacts was needed, and how Worthing Council, through the Cost of Living Roadmap

and supporting Action Plan would work with partners across the government, non government and private sector to collaboratively support residents. It described the purpose of the Cost of Living Roadmap and Action Plan and the partnership arrangements that had been set up to support delivery of the Plan over the next two years.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Carl Walker, seconded by Councillor Emma Taylor and supported unanimously.

Decision

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

1. endorsed the Worthing Cost of Living Roadmap (set out as Appendix 1 to the report) setting out what Worthing Borough Council would do to support residents through the cost of living emergency;
2. noted the funding of the £100,000 commitment made at Council as set out in section 5 of the report.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

JSS-C(W)/12/22-23 1st Quarter Revenue Monitoring Report 2022/23

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for 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 updated the Joint Strategic Sub-Committees for Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils with the latest expenditure and income projections for each Council for the current financial year 2022/23, compared to the Revenue Budget approved by both Councils in February. Whilst the 'spend to date' was the position as at the 30th June 2022, the forecast outturn position reflected the latest information available to ensure an up-to-date forecast was presented. As at quarter 1, the current projection for the 2022/23 financial year General Fund outturn were net overspends after reserve transfers of £239k in Adur and £2.345m in Worthing. A breakdown was set out in section 4.4 of the report.

A Member questioned how realistic the estimates were and sought clarification regarding the savings identified. Officers advised that the view on finances was extremely fluid at present with the cost of fuel being one of the most significant pressures. The proposed pay award for staff was higher than had been expected but was yet to be agreed and the Council was yet to have certainty about its energy costs (this was expected the week after the meeting). Overall, there were significant risks but it was anticipated that the cost of fuel would come back and that the government was likely to step in regarding energy and homelessness. If it didn't address these issues, the impact would be significant. Officers also highlighted the reprofiling of the capital programme and staffing costs as possible areas for savings.

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

Decision

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee noted the report and projected outturn position for the Joint Committee and Worthing Borough Council against the approved revenue budgets and proposed use of reserves (Appendix 2b).

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

JSS-C(W)/13/22-23 1st Quarter Capital Investment Programme & Projects Monitoring 2022/23

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for 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 updated the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on the progress made on the delivery of the 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme for Worthing Borough Council. The programmes included schemes which supported the delivery of services by the Joint Services Committee.

A Member questioned why the refurbishment of public conveniences was being deferred. It was noted that not all the budget for this work had been reprofiled, there was still a budget of £135k for refurbishment works. The Member asked whether a list could be provided of the toilets to be refurbished this year. The Cabinet Member for the Environment agreed to provide a list when the information was available.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Vicki Wells, seconded by Councillor John Turley and unanimously supported.

Decision

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee:-

i) noted the reprofiling of the Worthing Borough Council capital schemes as advised in paragraph 6.2.1 and appendix 2;

ii) noted the conditional grant received from Rampion Community Benefit Fund towards the cafe in Brooklands Park as detailed in paragraph 6.2.3;

iii) approved the addition of the Northbrook Recreation Ground Fitness Facility to the 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme funded from S106 receipts as detailed in paragraph 6.2.4.

iv) approved the addition of the £100,000 Changing Places Facilities Grant to the 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme as detailed in paragraph 6.2.5.

v) approved the addition of the Broadwater Pavilion roof recovering to the 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme as detailed in paragraph 6.2.6.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

JSS-C(W)/14/22-23 Council Tax Support Scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2023/24 - public consultation questions

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for 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.

At the meeting of the Joint Strategic Committee held on 11 January 2022 it was determined that a public consultation should be undertaken by Worthing Borough Council with a view to removing the £5.00 weekly restriction from the scheme with effect from 1 April 2023. The report provided recommended quotations to be asked in the consultation.

The following amendment to recommendation 2.1(b) was proposed by Councillor Emma Taylor, seconded by Councillor Helen Silman and unanimously supported:-

‘That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee be asked to agree to delegate authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Citizen Services, the finalisation of the consultation questions detailed in appendix b’.

The recommendations in the report, as amended, were proposed by Councillor Vicki Wells, seconded by Councillor Rosey Whorlow and unanimously supported.

Decision

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee:-

- a. noted the content of the report; and
- b. delegated authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Citizen Services, to finalise the consultation questions detailed in appendix b.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

JSS-C(W)/15/22-23 Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan - consultation response

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 8.

The report provided information in relation to the publication of the Transport for the South East (TfSE) Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and an opportunity for members

of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee to respond to the current consultation on the SIP.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Rita Garner, seconded by Councillor Vicki Wells and unanimously supported.

Decision

That Members of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee approved the Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) in the following terms:-

- welcomed the potential environmental, social and economic benefits that could be delivered from the SIP's emphasis on integrating transport, digital and energy networks, together with a high-quality, reliable, safe, and accessible transport network;
- recognition in the SIP that achieving the scale of investment needed to reduce carbon emissions in line with national policy would require fundamental changes to existing funding mechanisms for transport infrastructure;
- the SIP's emphasis on linking regional policy with local initiatives such as those set out in Worthing's Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP).

2.1.2 That members of the Sub-Committee supported:

- the SIP's emphasis on transforming east – west connectivity and enhancing east – west corridors to the same level as radial links to and from London;
- the package of place based 'Solent and the Sussex Coast' interventions that would benefit Worthing, including Sussex Coast Rail; Sussex Coast Bus Mass Transit; and Sussex Coast Active Travel packages;
- the specific inclusion in the SIP of a long term highways proposal to resolve the challenges presented by the A27 road in Worthing as part of an integrated approach to planning for transport in the region.

2.1.3 That members of the Sub-Committee:

- recognised that statutory status for Transport for the South East would help to drive delivery of the SIP and empower TfSE to explore funding solutions; procurement options and work with constituent local authorities to leverage funding of the scale needed to deliver major infrastructure projects;
- would welcome the inclusion of additional references in the SIP to Worthing as a strategically significant contributor to the business case for rail and mass transit interventions;
- recognised that whilst the SIP's inclusion of a long term solution to the A27 was welcome, the impact of congestion in Worthing remained a major problem that had

an adverse impact on local quality of life and was of regional significance. The SIP's long term proposal should not therefore preclude other bodies such as National Highways, making short and medium term interventions to improve local quality of life that were consistent with the SIP's decarbonisation objectives.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

JSS-C(W)/16/22-23 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Committee was advised that in the opinion of the Proper Officer, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the remaining item of business.

Resolved:-

'that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act indicated against the item'

** The meeting was adjourned at 7.35pm and reconvened at 7.43pm.*

JSS-C(W)/17/22-23 Purchase of Property for Strategic Property Investment Fund

Before the Committee was an exempt report by the Director for the Economy, copies of which had been circulated to all Members as Item 10.

The exempt report provided information in relation to a proposed property purchase to be funded from the Strategic Property Investment Fund.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Martin McCabe, seconded by Councillor Rite Garner and unanimously supported.

Decision

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 16th September 2022.

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm