

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

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

Councillor Martin McCabe  
Councillor Emma Taylor

Councillor John Turley  
Councillor Vicki Wells

Councillor Rita Garner, Councillor Helen Silman and Councillor Rosey Whorlow

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

There were no declarations of interest made.

**JSS-C(W)/24/22-23 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes from the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee meeting held on 11th October 2022, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**JSS-C(W)/25/22-23 Public Question Time**

There were no questions from the public.

**JSS-C(W)/26/22-23 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

**JSS-C(W)/27/22-23 Corporate Debt Policy and Supporting the Most Vulnerable**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for Citizen Services, 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 presented the results of the first stage of work by the ethical debt working group, a group established as part of the Councils' response to the Cost of Living crisis, outlined in the report to the sub-committee in September 2022.

A Corporate Debt Policy for the Council was proposed, providing the framework to build further on our ethical approach to debt recovery - identifying the vulnerable early on, and helping those in financial hardship, particularly in these times.

The report sought to drive alignment of debt recovery methods to Proactive ways of working, a model which has been piloted and is expected to be increasingly

mainstreamed, through embedding multidisciplinary teamwork and joined up, more personalised support.

A Member asked how the shared prosperity funding would be used and given that the work proposed was to be funded through the shared prosperity fund, how would this work progress if the bid for funding was unsuccessful. It was noted that a maximum of £1m was available from the shared prosperity fund and consideration was being given to how this funding could best be spent. It was anticipated that the cost of living emergency plan was the area where this funding could have the greatest effect. There was confidence in the bid but Officers were also working on contingency plans should the bid not be successful. The Council was awaiting a response from the national government in relation to the outcome of the bid and would share the details when it was able to do so.

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

## **Decision**

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

1. approved the Corporate Debt Policy and supported the proposed ethical approach to debt recovery;
2. requested an update report in six months, outlining the changes that had been made to practices, processes and systems in support of a more proactive and holistic way of working.

### **JSS-C(W)/28/22-23 Reconsideration of the locally-determined 100% one-month Council Tax discount in respect of unoccupied & substantially unfurnished properties**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for Citizen Services, 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 Worthing JSC Sub-Committee was informed that since 1 April 2013, local authorities had been able to amend the period when no Council Tax was payable in respect of properties that were unoccupied and substantially unfurnished.

In September 2019 and January 2020, the Joint Strategic Committee considered reports about a number of Council Tax discounts and additional charges. From 1 April 2020, Adur District Council decided to abolish the 100% discount for a maximum period of one month whilst Worthing Borough Council decided to retain the discount.

The report invited Worthing Members to reconsider the decision with the aim of maximising the availability of housing in the local community and reducing periods of vacancy and, on this basis, to undertake a public consultation.

The Sub-Committee thanked officers for the report whilst also acknowledging and thanking Councillor Margaret Howard for her work on this issue.

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

## **Decision**

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

1. requested that a public consultation be conducted in respect of the local discount for unoccupied & unfurnished properties, with a view to amending the period when no Council Tax is payable;
2. delegated authority to the Head of Revenues & Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Citizen Services, to finalise the consultation content, with the results and any recommendations to be reported back to a future meeting of the Joint Strategic Sub-Committee.

## **JSS-C(W)/29/22-23 Carbon Emissions for 2021/22**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, presented by the Cabinet Member for the Environment (in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency), 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.

It was noted that on 9 July 2019, the Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) declared a 'Climate Emergency'. As part of the declaration, Members committed to work towards Adur & Worthing Councils becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The report presented the third annual update on progress towards this target.

Since the previous report, the Council had continued to improve the accuracy of its monitoring (particularly of gas consumption) and the easing of Covid-19 restrictions also saw office use increase as more staff returned to offices. As a result, reported emissions for 21-22 increased by 2% when compared with the previous year.

The report provided an update on current carbon reduction projects and a trajectory of future carbon emissions to 2030. This used indicative pipeline projects to map a potential route to meeting the 2030 target, subject to viable business cases being developed.

A question was asked in relation to when the Council would start to measure Scope 3 emissions. It was noted that Scope 3 was very much in development for next year. However, it was important to recognise that establishing this programme over a 10 year period, the Council had made a conscious decision to start where it knew it could place as much emphasis as possible on the key emission areas that the Council had direct control over and could leverage funding to make a difference. Insulation, solar panels, replacing heating systems in the buildings the Council controlled were the initial areas of focus. Whilst the 2030 target could and should be expanded to include Scope 3, it was a very conscious decision to start with Scopes 1 and 2. Scope 3 would be a significantly different challenge which took the Council into more of an influencing rather than direct control role.

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

## **Decision**

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee noted

- the councils' current carbon emissions and carbon reduction work programme;
- the trajectory of future emissions reductions which aimed to ensure the Councils met their carbon neutral 2030 target; and
- that further funding bids may be made, in consultation with the relevant cabinet member, and that if required, further reports would brief members on the outcome of the bidding process.

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee approved the publication of the carbon emissions report on the council website and the submission of these figures to external bodies where required by membership (e.g. UK100).

### **JSS-C(W)/30/22-23 Delivering an alternative bike share network**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, presented by the 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 8.

The Sub-Committee was informed that due to the financial pressures being faced, the Council's Officers had been tasked with developing an alternative to joining the BTN Bikeshare scheme.

In partnership with Adur District Council, an extended active travel network of 75 bikes and 19 hubs had been developed which would run East to West through town centres and along the seafront in Adur and Worthing, improving sustainable and active travel, reducing car use, and improving the health and wellbeing of scheme users.

Both the capital and operating costs for the Donkeybikes extension were significantly lower than those for BTN Bikeshare.

The report provided detail of the extended scheme, and funding strategy that had been produced and requested approval to progress to the procurement stage to seek an operator for an Adur and Worthing extended Donkeybikes scheme.

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

## **Decision**

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

1. Agreed to work in partnership with Adur District Council and proceed with the Donkey Bikes extension rather than join the BTN Bikeshare Scheme.
2. Delegated authority to the Director of Digital, Sustainability and Resources to run an appropriate procurement exercise to secure an operator.

3. Delegated authority to the Director of Digital, Sustainability and Resources to enter into all relevant contracts and purchases associated with the alternative scheme providing they are within the approved budget.
4. Noted that the monitoring of this scheme would be carried out under the active and sustainable travel mission in Our Plan.

### **JSS-C(W)/31/22-23 Worthing Local Plan**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for the Economy, presented by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, 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 Sub-Committee noted that Worthing Borough Council had to prepare a Local Plan to establish local planning policies for the Borough. After a number of years of preparation the Worthing Local Plan was entering the final stages towards adoption.

The Local Plan was Submitted for Examination in June 2021, the Hearing Sessions were held in November 2021 and a Schedule of Modifications was consulted on earlier this year

The Local Plan Inspector had now issued his Report to the Council.

The report to the Worthing Joint strategic Sub-Committee summarised the Inspector's key findings and his conclusion that the Plan, as modified, was sound and legally compliant. It also set out the steps required to formally adopt the Local Plan.

The Sub-Committee wished to place on record its thanks to former Regeneration Portfolio holders Nicky Waight and Kevin Jenkins, former Planning Committee Chairman Paul High and Planning Officers James Appleton and Ian Moody for all of their associated work in preparing and progressing the plan.

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

### **Decision**

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

- a) noted the Inspector's Report containing the Inspector's main modifications to be made to the submitted Worthing Local Plan in order for it to be found sound;
- b) noted the process of Sustainability Appraisal that had been followed and the likely significant effects of the Local Plan (together with Main Modifications);
- c) noted the schedule of Main Modifications to the Worthing Local Plan;
- d) recommended to Full Council the adoption of the Worthing Local Plan and Policies Map including main modifications and additional modifications relating to presentational improvements, factual updates, grammatical and typographical corrections;

- e) noted that if the Local Plan was adopted, a copy of the Final Sustainability Appraisal report, including a Sustainability Appraisal Post-Adoption Statement, would be made available for inspection alongside the Local Plan; and
- f) approved use of the Capacity Issues reserve to fund the additional £15,000 cost of the examination.

### **JSS-C(W)/32/22-23 Referral of Motion on Notice from Worthing Borough Council**

Before the Committee was a motion presented by Councillor Jon Roser, 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.

Following consideration of the motion, Councillor John Turley proposed that it be supported and that a report be brought back to the Sub-Committee setting out the substantive issues for consideration. The motion was seconded by Councillor Emma Taylor and unanimously supported.

### **Decision**

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee supported the motion and requested that a report be brought back to the Sub-Committee setting out the substantive issues for consideration.

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The meeting ended at 7.20 pm