

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

Councillor Neil Parkin (Chairman)
Councillor Angus Dunn (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Carson Albury
Councillor Kevin Boram

Councillor Emma Evans
Councillor Steve Neocleous

*=absent

JSS-C(A)/14/22-23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

JSS-C(A)/15/22-23 Minutes

The minutes of the Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee meeting held on 29 September 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

JSS-C(A)/16/22-23 Public Question Time

There were 2 questions received from the public in advance of the meeting. In the absence of Mr Bronkhorst and Mr Longbaugh, the Leader of the Council read out the questions which were responded to during discussion of the item.

1. Question submitted by Mr Adam Bronkhorst, on behalf of Shoreham-By-Cycle

Has a professional consultancy with expertise in bike share implementation been asked to advise on the feasibility of the council's revised approach to a bike share scheme, contributing to a detailed business case (including use of the Department for Transport's Active Mode Appraisal Tool) that compares the two options on a true value-for-money basis? If not, how can an informed decision be made?

Response:

The Council have considered previous JSC reports regarding bike share and the alternative scheme has been assessed against those reports, which includes the external consultancy advice that was provided by Steer - for example the anticipated hub locations were provided as part of the original report. The alternative scheme has been reviewed in terms of affordability, based on the Council's current financial capacity, as well as deliverability.

The alternative scheme provides a realistic option to establish bike share in Adur where there is currently no provision, however this doesn't restrict the Council from expanding the alternative scheme or re-evaluating working in partnership with BHCC regarding their scheme in the future.

2. Question submitted by Mr Harry Longbaugh, an Adur Resident

Has Adur council opened negotiations or spoken with the new BTN (Brighton and Hove) bike hire scheme provider, to see if a compromise could be reached at a lower cost / quantity for the existing option. Rather than just dismissing it completely in favour of the inferior and vastly reduced in size and quality of bike, Donkey Bike Hire option?

Response:

The Council hasn't spoken with the new BTN bike share provider as this hasn't been announced by BHCC. The work surrounding the scheme has been undertaken on the likelihood that the capital and revenue implications will remain the same (as it has the same number of bikes / hub etc) regardless of the new operator.

JSS-C(A)/17/22-23 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

JSS-C(A)/18/22-23 Corporate Debt Policy and Supporting the Most Vulnerable

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & 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 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 the Council's ethical approach to debt recovery - identifying the vulnerable early on, and helping those in financial hardship, particularly in recent times.

The proposal sought to drive alignment of debt recovery methods to Proactive ways of working, a model which had been piloted and was expected to be increasingly mainstreamed, through embedding multidisciplinary teamwork and joined up, more personalised support.

A Member asked how the Council would reach residents that were not digitally connected. Officers advised that as a general principle, the Council sought to ensure that those residents who were digitally connected could access decent tools and could self-serve. The TellJo service also provided actual people to deliver debt advice, so if residents needed help, they could speak to somebody. Through the Proactive Project, the Council's contact centre can identify residents requiring assistance and contact them either by telephone or through face to face meetings to provide advice.

In response to a question from a Member, Officers advised that a significant piece of work had been undertaken on the Proactive project, led by the Director for Communities, and the ethical debt approach was very much part of the bigger system change. The Council's systems and databases didn't help to join the dots between the circumstances of the most vulnerable residents. The LIFT tool had transformationally helped the Council to see the bigger picture with casework meetings enabling staff to discuss individual cases in a more rounded way and to think differently about the work that they do.

The recommendations in the report were unanimously supported.

Decision

The Adur 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.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

JSS-C(A)/19/22-23 Carbon Emissions for 2021/22

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & 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 Sub-Committee 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 becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The report presented the third annual update on progress towards this target and it was noted that 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 to the previous year.

An update on current carbon reduction projects was presented at Section 4 and a trajectory of future carbon emissions to 2030 was also presented in Section 8. This used indicative pipeline projects to map a potential route to meeting the 2030 target, subject to viable business cases being developed.

Members welcomed the report, acknowledging the importance of accurate reporting.

The recommendations in the report were unanimously supported.

Decision

The Adur 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.

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

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

JSS-C(A)/20/22-23 Delivering an alternative bike share network

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & 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 Sub-Committee was informed that due to the financial pressures being faced at the Councils, Officers had been tasked with developing an alternative to joining the BTN Bikeshare framework.

In partnership with Worthing Borough Council, an extended active travel network of 75 bikes and 18 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 brought 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.

A Member asked questions in relation to funding / sponsorship options for increasing the size of the scheme. Officers advised that the originally proposed scheme did still require significant capital investment from the Council, in the region of £850k. The sponsorship applied to the revenue operating costs of the scheme. In that scheme, the sponsorship was established at the Greater Brighton level. The newly proposed scheme would have its own local sponsor. In both cases, the revenue implications are where the sponsorship money comes in. It was also noted that the Council sought to mitigate the impact on its own budgets and capital borrowing by seeking funds from elsewhere and would continue to do that as part of developing options moving forwards. The newly proposed scheme did rely on a small amount of externally funded money that was available and therefore allowed the Council to buy the bikes without additional capital borrowing.

A Member questioned what would happen with bikes that are used to travel into Brighton & Hove. Officers advised that the proposed joint scheme with Worthing would allow for bikes to be left in Worthing with the operator rebalancing the stock. However, bikes used to travel to Brighton would need to be returned to the donkey bike hubs in Adur and Worthing. Officers agreed to provide a written answer regarding the issues and / or penalties that would be imposed in regards to bikes that were left in Brighton.

Councillor Angus Dunn proposed the following amendment to the recommendations:- that the Council enter into a 2 year contract initially rather than a 5 year contract. The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Kevin Boram and unanimously supported.

The recommendations, as amended, were unanimously approved.

Decision

The Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee:-

1. Agreed to work in partnership with Worthing Borough Council and proceed with the Donkey Bikes extension over 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 purchase associated with the alternative scheme.
4. Noted that the monitoring of this scheme would be carried out under the active and sustainable travel mission in Our Plan.
5. Agreed to an initial contract for a 2 year period.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

JSS-C(A)/21/22-23 Southwick Square Funding Release

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 purpose of this report is to outline to Members the opportunity to formally work in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) through a recognised Growth Deal with Adur District Council (ADC), focusing on mutually agreed regeneration and infrastructure projects.

To ensure Members are aware of the previous arrangements and how this Growth Deal differs to ensure Adur has dedicated pooled resources, including supportive WSSCC capital funding, to prioritise and invest into places across the District. It should also be noted that the Growth Deal can be adapted to ensure the 'deal' is reacting and responding to the ongoing requirements across the District.

To outline how the Growth Deal can have an immediate impact with the prioritisation of the refurbishment of Southwick Square. This project has previously been identified as an area for improvement through local traders and stakeholders.

To present the rationale for ADC delivering the project and the parallel approach being undertaken by WSCC in order for allocated WSCC capital monies to be used by ADC for the purposes of Southwick Square.

Members welcomed the proposals and thanked West Sussex County Council for working quickly with Adur District Council on this matter.

The recommendations were unanimously approved.

Decision

The Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

1. agreed to ADC taking on the project management and delivery responsibility of Southwick Square Public Realm work, supported by WSCC (both financially and by its officer time) and to enter into a Delivery Agreement with WSCC.
2. noted that ADC had already contributed £87k towards the scheme, which included the appointment of a design team through an Officer Decision Notice (DforE/010/22-23) to enable the scheme to be appropriately designed in readiness to tender for the construction works.
3. delegated authority to the Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WSCC, the authority to approve and award a contract for the construction work required to deliver the public realm project subject to the development of a procurement strategy, the outcome of a compliant procurement process and the award being within the available budget.
4. approved the creation of an additional budget of £600k within the capital programme, primarily funded by WSCC as part of the Growth Deal. This was subject to WSCC releasing funds from their capital programme as part of their governance process.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

JSS-C(A)/22/22-23 Referral of Motion on Notice from Adur District Council

Before the Committee was a motion presented by Councillor Catherine Arnold, 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.

Following consideration of the motion, the Sub-Committee unanimously agreed that the motion be rejected as the Council was already doing as much of the work that it could.

Decision

The Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee rejected the motion.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

JSS-C(A)/23/22-23 Referral of Motion on Notice from Adur District Council

Before the Committee was a motion presented by Councillor Debs Stainforth, 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.

Members thanked Officers for the additional work already being done to support residents through the processing of the £150 energy rebates through Council Tax, setting up a cost of living hub on the Council's website and the money mentor work.

Whilst presenting the motion, Cllr Stainforth withdrew one of the requests set out in the motion which had asked the Council to write to West Sussex County Council to urgently clarify the new criteria for the Household Support Fund, and to broaden its reach.

Following consideration of the motion, the Sub-Committee unanimously agreed that the motion be rejected, as the Council was already doing as much of the work that it could, whilst noting the importance of the issues raised.

Decision

The Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee rejected the motion.

Call-in

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 22nd November 2022.

The meeting ended at 7.47 pm