

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Audit and Governance Committee
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

QEII Room, Shoreham-Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

30 May 2023

Councillor Andy McGregor (Chair)
Councillor Kevin Boram (Vice Chair)

Adur District Council:

Councillor Catherine Arnold
Councillor Tony Bellasis
Councillor Ann Bridges
Councillor Julian Shinn
Councillor Debs Stainforth

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Dan Hermitage (Chair)
Councillor Mike Barrett (Vice Chair)
Councillor Ödül Bozkurt
Councillor Ibsha Choudhury
Councillor Nigel Morgan
Councillor John Turley
Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Hazel Thorpe

Absent

Councillor Jim Funnell

JGC/1/23-24 Substitute Members

There were no substitutions

JGC/2/23-24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made

JGC/3/23-24 Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee meeting held on 23 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

JGC/4/23-24 Public Question Time

There were no public questions

JGC/5/23-24 Members Questions

There were no Member questions

JGC/6/23-24 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised

JGC/7/23-24 Internal Audit Planning Report

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. The report before members summarised the status of the internal auditors audit for the Joint Governance Committee. The Committee was updated on progress and the remaining steps to the issue of the Auditors final opinion.

Members asked questions about audit recommendations, how long audits can be delayed without risk, resource limitations, comparisons to other authorities, directing specific queries to the right officers and the different or separate audits between Adur and Worthing.

Members were told that full audit recommendations would be coming to the next meeting of the Committee. Audits were delayed when it was felt that it would not add value at the time and that getting the right team in place was a big priority. Comparisons to other authorities were difficult due to factors such a size and issues faced. An email address existed for Members to use to raise individual issues relating to Adur residents and that audit functions looked at all the major services which were shared by both authorities but the differences that do exist were examined.

Resolved: The committee noted the contents of the report

JGC/8/23-24 Annual Governance Statements 2022/23

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.

The purpose of the report before the Committee was to review and agree the Annual Governance Statements for 2022/23.

Members asked about which third party bodies were consulted in partnership as a source of assurance in regards to audit and governance. What was learned from the outcomes from a staff survey, what were the parameters for monitoring Members and Officers behaving with integrity as detailed in the report and what training would be coming for Members on Audit and Governance.

Members were told that third parties included key stakeholders such as external auditors and partnerships with a direct impact on Worthing and Adur arrangements. The survey indicated that there was inconsistency with Staff one to ones. The Code of Conduct report would be a key document to establish best practice, setting out expectations in line with the constitution. This would be coming in due course. Training was being arranged imminently, to be provided on an annual basis as it was for elected Members.

Members also debated the recent impact of the Capita Breach, the respective roles of the Joint Governance Committee and Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on such

issues and submitting questions, through the chairs, in advance of the report due to come to the next meeting.

Resolved: That the Committee

- I. Noted evidence of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and the Progress Report produced to deal with any issues arising from these requirements as set out in Appendix A
- II. Approved the Annual Governance Statements for each Council as set out in Appendix B and C to this report

JGC/9/23-24 Joint Audit & Governance Committee Appointments: Parish Councillors

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 the signed copy of these minutes.

This report advised Members of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee of the nominations from Lancing Parish Council and Sompting Parish Council for Parish representatives to be appointed to the Joint Audit & Governance Committee as co-opted Members in accordance with the Constitution.

Resolved:

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee:-

1. Noted the nomination from Lancing Parish Council of the appointment of Cllr Mike Mendoza as a Co-Opted Member of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee for 23/24 and recommended the appointment to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council;
2. Noted the nomination from Sompting Parish Council of the appointment of Cllr Paul Mansfield as a Co-opted Member of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee for 23/24 and recommended the appointment to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.

JGC/10/23-24 Member Complaints Annual Report

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 the signed copy of these minutes.

This report advised Members of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee of the complaints received by the Monitoring Officer, that Elected Members had breached the Code of Conduct. Complaints received related to Elected Members of Adur District Council, Worthing Borough Council, Sompting Parish Council and Lancing Parish Council. The report advised of all complaints received during the municipal year 2022/23 from the date of the last annual report dated 31/05/2022, and the action taken by the Monitoring Officer, and/or the Council.

Members asked about the reasons behind the fall in complaints and the existence of early intervention to stop complaints from escalating. Members were told that it was difficult to pin down an exact reason and that officers did take a proactive approach to problem solving.

Resolved: The committee noted the report.

JGC/11/23-24 Regulatory Compliance Notice for Adur Homes

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 the signed copy of these minutes. As an item that primarily concerned the Adur Members, this item was moved to the end of the agenda to allow the majority of Worthing Members to be excused.

This report updated Members about the Regulatory Compliance Notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to Adur Homes. This Notice followed the self-referral to the Regulator reported to the Committee on 23rd of March 2023. Adur Homes had been found to be non-compliant with the 'Homes Standard' in relation to the provision of decent homes and in meeting building health and safety requirements. Adur Council had accepted the findings of the notice issued by the Regulator on the 26th April 2023. This report set out how the Council would comprehensively respond to the issues to bring the Council back into regulatory compliance and to deliver quality services to the tenants and leaseholders of Adur Homes.

Members asked about the representatives of tenants boards, the number of void agents and comparisons with Runnymede council. Members were told Tenant board memberships were being extended and they were reviewing the terms of reference. Members were also told that staffing resources were currently a challenge but a new void surveyor had been in place since April and that Runnymede was now at the end of the process Adur had just started but were being very generous with their time and advice.

Members went on to discuss issues that had previously been identified by the Council, were the same as a number of issues that had been raised by the independent housing regulator. The scope of the task and the need for a tenant officer and the current recruitment for that position.

Resolved: The committee noted the report

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.18pm, it having commenced at 6.30pm

Chairman