

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

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

13 July 2023

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

Adur District Council:

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

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Dan Hermitage
Councillor Ibsha Choudhury
Councillor Nigel Morgan
Councillor John Turley

Absent

Councillor Jim Funnell and Councillor Julian Shinn

Councillor Ödül Bozkurt, Councillor Hazel Thorpe and Councillor Steve Waight

JGC/12/23-24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

JGC/13/23-24 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members

JGC/14/23-24 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the 30th May 2023 were approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

JGC/15/23-24 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

JGC/16/23-24 Members Questions

There were no questions from Members.

JGC/17/23-24 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

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

Members asked for clarification on some terms and acronyms and whether the audit process matched up with government requirements. Members were told that REFCUS stood for revenue funded from capital under statute; the Beacon approach applied to housing valuation and whilst the government non-statute deadline had passed, there was currently no penalty.

Resolved: the committee noted the contents of the report.

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

The external auditors, Ernst and Young, had asked that the Committee consider a letter about how the Joint Audit and Governance Committee gained assurance from management regarding the financial governance arrangements of the Councils.

The Chairs of the Committee had received two letters, one for Adur District Council and one for Worthing Borough Council. The letter to Adur District Council was attached as Appendix 1, which was identical to the letter to Worthing Borough Council.

To assist the Committee in its deliberation of the letter, attached at Appendix 2 was the proposed response to each of the questions raised. This would form the basis of a formal letter if approved.

Resolved:

That the Joint Audit and Governance Committee

- I. Noted the contents of the report; and
- II. Agreed the proposed responses to the assurance letters.

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

The report provided the latest updates on the management of the Councils' Risks and Opportunities.

Members asked questions about plans for the Orchard Housing system; plans to create solutions to job vacancies by talking with neighbouring authorities; the cost of living crisis as a risk; timeframe to start bringing risks down; what measures existed to protect staff from stress; staff retention and measuring savings.

Members were advised that the Councils were looking at how to upgrade and improve Orchard but could look at procuring a new, more comprehensive system. Discussions with other authorities had an aim of creating career pathways, creating specialist hubs

within authorities and an ability to share resources. Members were informed that the cost of Living Crisis could indeed be considered a risk with the Councils having a duty to protect the vulnerable, while people's inability to pay had a knock on effect on the Councils' budgets. That the People and Change team had been working hard on staff engagement and open communication, the potential for solving issues varied across departments so establishing a timeframe would be difficult. Members were also advised that CLT regularly looked at the savings performances vs the expectations.

Resolved:

That the Joint Audit & Governance Committee

- I. Noted the progress in managing the Risks and Opportunities
- II. Agreed to receive a further progress report in January 2024

JGC/21/23-24 Capita Data Breach

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

The report provided the Committee with a comprehensive overview of the Capita data breach incident that occurred in April 2023. The report presented an analysis of the incidents, the implications, and the investigatory actions taken by Adur and Worthing Councils. Additionally, it outlined the measures implemented by the supplier to address the breaches and mitigate the risk of similar incidents in the future.

Members asked about the resources available to review all current digital contracts; contact with Capita; any potential impact on Adur & Worthing Residents; Member access to agreements; contracts and procedures; the ability to assist other councils; future auditing and monitoring of suppliers and the Movelt data breach.

Members were informed that a lot of resources had been used in the past six months looking at all the existing policies and procedures, examining what was used and required, that the council was still in contact with Capita and other systems also in use but the relationship needed to improve. Members were assured that the impact on Adur and Worthing residents was minimal and only one, out of date, information record had been accessed. Members were invited to attend the town hall with the Data protection officer to review all agreements, contracts and procedures.

Members were advised that there was an opportunity to assist and form lasting relationships with other authorities to share best practice and alerts. The incident had given sharper focus to all future auditing and monitoring of suppliers and a report would come to a later meeting regarding the Movelt data breach.

Resolved: the committee noted the report

JGC/22/23-24 Amendments to the Constitution

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

The report updated Members of the Committee with recent amendments made to Adur District Council's and Worthing Borough Council's Constitutions by the Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer had a duty to maintain an up-to-date version of the Council's Constitutions and to ensure that they were publicly available. The Monitoring Officer had the authority, as set out in Article 11, paragraph 11.03, of each Constitution, to "make minor and inconsequential amendments to the Constitution at any time".

Members asked about changes to roles and responsibilities of portfolio holders, details on the parental leave scheme and the Working Group. Members were advised that a meeting was to be held shortly to discuss the proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities; that the parental leave policy would be a discussion for the working group and that the working group would reconvene and possibly be reconstituted in September.

Resolved: That the Joint Audit & Governance Committee noted the use of the Monitoring Officer's delegation to make minor and inconsequential amendments.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.41 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman