

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

**The Gordon Room, Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing**

**18 January 2024**

Councillor Dan Hermitage (Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Barrett (Vice-Chair)

**Adur District Council:**

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

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Councillor Ibsha Choudhury  
Councillor Nigel Morgan  
Councillor Hazel Thorpe  
Councillor John Turley  
Councillor Steve Waight  
Councillor Henna Chowdhury

**Absent**

Councillor Kevin Boram and Councillor Jim Funnell & Councillor Ödül Bozkurt  
**JGC/45/23-24            Substitute Members**

Councillor Henna Chowdhury substituted for Councillor Ödül Bozkurt

**JGC/46/23-24            Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nigel Morgan declared an interest in item 9 - Disaster Recovery Plan as someone who worked within the Digital industry.

Councillor Andy McGregor declared an interest in relation to item 10 - Risks and Opportunities, as a member of the Sussex Yacht Club.

**JGC/47/23-24            Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 21 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

**JGC/48/23-24            Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**JGC/49/23-24            Members Questions**

There were no questions from Members under CPR 12.

**JGC/50/23-24            Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items

### **JGC/51/23-24            Joint Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25 to 2026-27**

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

The report asked Members to approve and adopt the contents of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 for Adur and Worthing Councils, as required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Members asked about the movement of capital funding; investment returns strategy; the councils borrowing history; a published league table of local authority debt; council investments and plans for provisional debt repayment.

Members were informed there had been significant spend on the Worthing Integrated Care Centre and the acquisition of Southern House; that the investment strategy was to allow them to mature; that advice previously had been not to borrow due to government grants; that there was no concern of debt and published data included historical debt and that taken on as part of investing; that anytime money was placed with a bank or similar that the activities of those organisations were monitored closely and that when the capital expenditure was put on a business case, the finances would be looked at in how to fund it.

Members also discussed a desire to see a debt to income ratio of property investment strategy and the value of political oversight, with regards to counterparties that the Council's do business with.

#### **Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee

- Noted the report (including the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements) for 2024/25 to 2026/27. Including the addition of State Street Global Advisors MMF as an approved counterparty, to be governed within the same limits as other Money Market Funds and proposed changes to specified investment limits as detailed in 6.1.3.
- Requested within all treasury reporting for the specific needs of property income generating investments, a debt to income ratios across Adur and Worthing Councils.

### **JGC/52/23-24            Disaster Recovery Plan**

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

The report outlined the comprehensive journey undertaken to develop and implement the Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for the council's systems. The process involved assessing

the existing systems, their contracts and collaborating with system owners to establish robust recovery procedures.

Members asked whether a new information management system would be renewed after its two year period and how officers would score the key areas of the disaster recovery plan.

Members were informed that the new information management system would not be renewed beyond its current two year period as it would not be cost effective and that the officer would score the vast majority of key areas as 9/10.

**Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee noted and acknowledged the completion and launch of the new IT Disaster Recovery Plan

**JGC/53/23-24 Risk and Opportunities**

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 10, which had been circulated to all Members, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes. This report provided the latest updates on the management of the Councils' Risks and Opportunities.

Members asked about the flood defences at the Sussex Yacht club; proposed cctv contracts with sussex police; the general risk of not finding significant budget savings from both Councils; the priority of health and wellbeing of tenants and leaseholders; how equalities were addressed in both councils and preparation for the central government Bill that could see the disbanding of the role of surveillance commissioner.

Members were informed that officers were facing a host of issues relating to technology, maintenance, governance, data protection etc in regards to CCTV; that there was an ongoing risk for the Councils if they did not find sufficient funding, they would not be able to set a balanced budget; that the safety of tenants and leaseholders was the number one priority, that new legislation called for every part of the Council, Members and Officers, make equalities a central part of the day to day and that consultation was taking place with legal in preparation of the Bill.

Members also discussed seeing equality impact assessments and receiving a further report on the Sussex Yacht Club flood defences.

**Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee

- Noted the progress in managing the Risks and Opportunities
- Agreed to receive a further progress report in July 2024.
- Requested that in further progress reports, the Joint Audit and Governance Committee see updates regarding equality impact assessments update reports and how they can be better embedded in the reports provided to committees
- Requested a report on the current risk and plans to address that risk, with a timeline. In particular, with further information relating to the line on page 87, "Challenges remain regarding extinguishments of rights of way as well as Sussex

Yacht Club being difficult and uncooperative in protecting homes and businesses.” That report should be delivered for consideration at the JAGC committee meeting scheduled for 21 March 2024.

#### **JGC/54/23-24            Adur Homes**

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

This report provided the latest progress review of the Housing Improvement Plan for Adur Homes, following the self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing. It updated Members on the specific progress being made to improve performance and meet the required standards.

Members asked about the number of voids; involvement of the regulator; further breakdown of data sets; the complaints action plan; Member involvement in regards to helping officers and grants from Homes England.

Members were informed that new contractors had been tasked with bringing remaining voids down; that the regulator was speaking to officers and asking for evidence; that further breakdowns could be provided; that work was happening to get through the backlog of complaints; that officers did want to work with Members to see how concerns could be addressed and that due to the self referral, it was possible to lose the grant from Homes England.

Members discussed how the reduction in voids was emblematic of how well the department was running, public perception and how self referral to the housing ombudsman was a positive action.

#### **Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee noted the good progress being made to ensure that Adur Homes became fully compliant with regulatory standards and the wider programme of transformation to create safe, secure and sustainable homes for residents.

#### **JGC/55/23-24            Worthing Theatres**

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

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee (JAGC) was asked to review the findings and recommendations of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) and JOSC Working Group which reviewed the Worthing Cultural Services procurement process that was undertaken in 2019. JAGC had previously asked to see the JOSC Working Group report before considering the need for any further audit work on Theatres as part of the Internal Audit work programme.

The Working Group had considered the evidence and other information presented to it and considered that the externalisation process, including the procurement aspects, were robust and in accordance with the legal requirements of such processes. These findings were approved by JOSC at its meeting on 30 November 2023 and the report and findings

will be referred to the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on 6 February 2024 for its consideration.

**Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee noted the report and agreed that no further audit work on Theatres was required at this time by the Committee.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.23pm, it having commenced at 6.30pm

**Chairman**