

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

QEII Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

19 September 2019

Councillor Stephen Chipp (Chairman)
Councillor Joss Loader (Vice-Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Carol Albury
Catherine Arnold
Kevin Boram
Paul Mansfield
Andy McGregor
Lavinia O'Connor

Worthing Borough Council:

Charles James
Jane Sim
Bob Smytherman
Carl Walker

Absent

Councillor Roy Barraclough, Councillor Keith Bickers, Councillor Paul Baker and Councillor Margaret Howard

JOSC/17/19-20 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made

JOSC/18/19-20 Substitute Members

There were no substitutions

JOSC/19/19-20 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the 3 September 2019 be signed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

JOSC/20/19-20 Public Question Time

A resident asked the following question *Information available on sites such as uk.trustpilot.com/review/www.hyde-housing.co.uk for homes built and managed by Hyde Homes and a television program and press releases about homes built by Persimmons give rise to great concerns about the proposed building programmes in Adur by these two companies. The information available on these two companies raised issues about the poor levels of construction and management. In the August 23 edition of kentonline.co.uk you can read about a home in a newly built estate in Canterbury, built by*

Persimmon where part of the frontage fell down, 40 other things were found to be wrong and other homes on the estate were also at risk. Houses built by Persimmon in Deal and Aylesham were found to be missing vital fire safety barriers. How many building control officers does the council have and is this an adequate number to inspect the homes on a regular basis during the building process to ensure that building standards are being followed? Will you be relying on the developers doing their own inspection and if so, given this history of Persimmon in particular, do you believe that this will be adequate?

The Chairman stated that to date the Committee has not been involved in awarding of the contract referred to in your question. The Joint Strategic Committee considered the proposal to sell land at Adur Civic Centre to Hyde Housing Group on 9 July 2019. The report the Committee looked at is on the Councils' website and outlines how the recommended preferred bidder was arrived at. I understand this refers to the selection criteria which included due diligence and track record of delivery. On a more general note, residents could submit requests for the Committee to scrutinise specific issues. The Council had seven building control staff and was sufficient staff to deal with the number of building regulation applications submitted to the Council. The staff were very experienced and had an excellent track record of ensuring that developments comply with the building regulations. However, the Council was in competition with the private sector and a number of national house builders choose not to use Local Authority Building Control but use Approved Inspectors to oversee their projects. It should also be noted that Building Control checks compliance with the Building Control regulations but would not address issues regarding quality of finish and general issues relating to quality of build (unless this contravenes the regulations). The National House Building Council (NHBC) provides protection for homebuyers of new properties in the form of warranty and insurance schemes and can be used where building defects are identified. As a supplementary it was asked if the Building Control team could carry out supplementary inspections in addition to those of a private firm and was told the question would be referred to the appropriate body

A resident asked the following question: *The Annual Status Report published in June 2019 has data for 2018. It states that the highest level of No2 recorded was 33ugm3 which reduced by calculation to 27.1ugm3.*

The readings for the monitoring machine in Shoreham High Street, as per Sussex Air, show for August 2019 the following:

19 days over 40ugm3

9 days over 50 ugm3

1 day (22/8) 76.8 uvm3

Accepting there will be calculated reductions it would appear from these readings there is clearly an increase in what was reported in the June report.

With the increase in developments that will take place and thus increase traffic movements along the High Street what proposals and action is the council taking to address the traffic flow in this part of the town? The Chairman relayed that In assessing individual planning applications the traffic impact of the developments are assessed and every opportunity is taken to reduce traffic movements by encouraging more sustainable modes of transport. Major developments proposed at the Western Harbour Arm are accompanied by Transport assessments and Travel Plans which include a number of measures to reduce future vehicle movements including car clubs, reduced parking provision and contributions towards improving public transport and off site highway improvements. The Local Plan and the recently adopted Joint Area Action Plan are

supported by a Transport Plan and all new major developments make financial contributions towards securing highway improvements to mitigate the impact of congestion. In dealing with all major development proposals the Council requires an Air Quality Emissions Assessment and this provides a calculation for assessing and mitigating any adverse impact on air quality. Where an impact is identified the developer is required to provide either a financial contribution to implement mitigation measures. The County Council is currently working with Adur District and other stakeholders to develop a new Sustainable Transport Improvement Plan (STiP) for the District which will look at a wide range of measures to encourage more sustainable transport across the District. This work is being undertaken in parallel with a Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan (LCWIP). As a point of clarification and for information for the Committee we have also received advice about air quality, that: the national air quality objectives state the hourly objective (1 hour mean) of 200ug/m³ shall not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year.

After reviewing the hourly data we can advise there are no exceedances of the hourly mean objective which is 200ug/m³. However the highest value for August 2019 is certainly higher than that for 2018.

According to the Sussex-air website's 24 hour mean readings for August the highest reading was 30ug/m³. Comparing the means for August 2018 with August 2019 shows a decrease in 2019 of almost 3ug/m³ - 24.1 in 2018 and 21.6 in 2019.

The resident was told that an officer would be in contact regarding the figures as there was some dispute over what the figures related to.

A resident asked the following question: *The resident referenced the 'report air quality annual status worthing 2019. It was stated that the author admitted a number of large developments in Worthing and Adur would impact air quality and would bring challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. It was what are these opportunities given an increase in the number of vehicles.* The resident was told that a response would be sent within three working days

A resident asked the following question: *in relation to housing for the elderly it was stated that there would be an increase in the need for housing for those over 55. Inappropriate housing could cause health conditions, new housing along the A259 was primarily flats without communal areas which was thought to be inappropriate. Arun District Council had undertaken a consultation on provision of housing for elderly and people with disabilities, did Adur District Council have any plans to carry out a study on the provision for housing for the elderly or had a study been carried out? What were the plans for homes for the elderly, when would they be executed and would information be publicly available? What percentage of the housing stock was currently suitable for elderly people* The Chairman stated that a response would be provided within three days.

JOSC/21/19-20 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items

JOSC/22/19-20 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 5, 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 set out the rejection of a call-in request and the reasons for it.

Resolved: that the report be noted

JOSC/23/19-20 West Sussex County Council Air Quality Plan

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 6, 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 explained that a West Sussex Air Quality Plan had been developed and the report outlined the plan and its role in assisting Adur and Worthing to improve air quality across the area

Representatives from West Sussex County Council were present to answer questions.

A member asked the following question: In light of the recent British Lung Foundation report that highlighted PM2.5 levels above the WHO limit, suggesting Worthing is experiencing unsafe levels, could there be a recommendation for the air quality plan to assess air quality in sites where people may be particularly vulnerable to its impacts (The hospital, local Schools) and develop further action depending on findings? Members were told that areas within 10km of readings were likely to have similar readings. Worthing did have an AQMA and systems had a cost and officer time to manage. Cheaper technology would be available in the future. Discussions could be had with the NHS about future detection.

A member asked the following question: The AQMA for Shoreham High Street was designated in 2005 and Nox levels have escalated in this time as well as feed in roads. Are you working to an objective avoiding DEFRA's breach of over 40ugm annually or another objective, if so what is it? Member were told that levels had decreased over the last few years (from 40ugm in 2016 to 33 in 2018). The Council had a statutory duty to work to legal limits.

A member asked the following question: Due to the equivocal evidence that anti-idling signs are effective, have fixed penalty idling charges been considered in light of our behaviour change strategy? Members were told that evidence needed to introduce fixed penalty notices was not robust enough. There were plans to focus on education and there were plans to focus on an anti idling behaviour change campaign.

A member asked the following question: Page 13 - The doubling of 3 to 6% of students cycling to school. How are you working to increase this further? West Sussex County Council were working with schools to increase rates and pointed to successes of the living streets project, the walk and cycling strategy for the county. There was also a widespread bikeability scheme offered to all year six pupils.

A member asked the following question: What work have you done to promote car share schemes? Members were told that an answer would be provided as the information was not to hand

A member asked the following question: I have been told that a WSCC road space audit will tackle traffic easing, is this your understanding and how does it fit with your work? Members were told about the process of the road space audit and how a number of factors could promote the easing of traffic

A member asked about the receipt of section 106 monies and how this money was spent on environmental issues and whether figures could be given for over the previous five to six years. A representative from West Sussex told the Committee that he would look into getting the information supplied to the Committee

A member asked why there was a small number of schools participating in the school air quality projects and was told that the scheme was voluntary and that schools had a number of competing priorities. Initially there had been limited funding for a number of schools to join the scheme and it had been voluntary from there after.

A member asked how early in the planning process developers contacted public transport companies in the early phases of large developments and was told that the matter would be referred to the West Sussex director for Highways and transport. Members were informed about the work being undertaken with colleagues from Brighton and Hove bus company to try to encourage the use of low emission vehicles on Shoreham high street.

A question was asked about the costs of bikeability and the committee was told that a charge was introduced but that more information on this would be clarified later.

A member noted that there existed a quality bus partnership that he was a member of and it was agreed that a recommendation go forward to West sussex that the Quality Bus Partnership is rejuvenated and that it encompasses both Adur and Worthing

Resolved: that West Sussex be recommended to rejuvenate the quality bus partnership and that both Adur and Worthing representatives be invited to attend

JOSC/24/19-20 Delivering our Housing Strategy - Review of Progress 2019/20

The Committee had a report before it attached as item 7, 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 updated members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on what had been achieved in delivering on the commitments in "Housing Matters", the Adur and Worthing Councils' Housing Strategy 2017-2020.

The director for communities and the housing services manager were present to answer questions

A member asked the following question: I Like much of the innovative work being done around local homelessness, the Opening Doors private sector lettings service is an excellent development. Could there be clarification of the average length of tenancies for those landlords already on the scheme. Members were told that the average length was six months although a guarantee was offered for two years. The scheme was in place to support landlords to take on who they would not normally take on.

A member asked the following question: Agenda item 7 page 19 bottom. 78% increase in homeless applications. Some attributed to better recording, can you give a % please and explain what the recording changes were and why the recording is better? Members were told that a new system was introduced following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Staff had been trained over time to use the system better.

A member asked the following question: Is data available on the number of section 21 notices in the previous 3 financial years and how the Council is supporting those with notices? Members were given the following figures:

Adur:

2016 - 18
2017 - 14
2018 - 10

Worthing:

2016 - 26
2017 - 25
2018 - 20

Members were told that the residents in difficulty were encouraged to come to the council as early as possible as this was the best way to deal with rent arrears. In some cases assurances would be provided to landlords and in some cases it would be necessary to attend court where section 21 notices had been issued.

A member asked about the provision of temporary accommodation, lauding a recent planning application to this effect it was asked if there were plans to purchase other vacant sites and develop more accommodation to this effect. Members were told that the strategy was to provide a mix of different types of accommodation including leased properties. The Council was not complacent and would assess sites if they became available.

A member asked what happened to residents taking part in the Opening Doors scheme after the two years of guarantee were up. The committee was told that the scheme was in place to encourage landlords to take on people that they would not normally take on and it was hoped that after the end of the period landlords would maintain residents who could prove that they were reliable tenants. Other questions about the Opening Doors scheme elicited responses that there were currently 18 premises taking up the scheme with a further 3 prospective properties. The scheme was currently being piloted and work was being undergone with the communications team to look at the strategy for promoting the scheme.

A member asked if there had been an increase in section 21 notices since the rollout of universal credit. The committee was told that it was not something that had been experienced. There was a good relationship with the DWP (department of work and pensions) as well as having staff located at the job centre. Colleagues from other organisations were encouraged to contact the council as soon as possible should a resident begin to experience problems.

Resolved: that the report be noted and that the committee receive a further report once the report had been seen by the Joint strategic Committee

JOSC/25/19-20 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

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 set out motions received from full council as well as petitions received from full council on the issue of climate change. Councillor Helen Silman was given an opportunity to present her motion that had been referred from full council. Members debated the matter and agreed that the committee consider the report of the Joint Strategic Committee on the climate change strategy once determined by the Joint Strategic Committee. In addition the committee agreed to set up a working group so as to educate committee members on the issue of climate change in order that members be prepared to fully scrutinise the issue. The working Group should consist of Councillor Albury, Councillor Arnold, cllr Walker and one other Worthing member.

The report set out a number of scrutiny requests relating to the process undertaken for the disposal of a piece of public land. The Committee agreed to accept two of the requests but refused two on the basis that they referred to the planning process of a specific application. Consequently the committee requested a report from officers to explain the consultation processes undertaken for the disposal of publicly owned council land and assets.

Resolved: that the work programme be noted as amended

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.45 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman