

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

QEI Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

17 October 2019

Councillor Stephen Chipp (Chairman)

Adur District Council:

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

Worthing Borough Council:

Roy Barraclough
Keith Bickers
Margaret Howard
Charles James
Jane Sim
Bob Smytherman
Carl Walker

Absent

Councillor Paul Baker, Councillor Joss Loader and Councillor Paul Mansfield

JOSC/36/19-20 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made

JOSC/37/19-20 Substitute Members

Councillor Brian Coomber declared his substitution for Councillor Paul Mansfield.

JOSC/38/19-20 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the 19 September 2019 be signed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

JOSC/39/19-20 Public Question Time

A resident asked the following question;

The question was about the outsourcing of Theatres and Museums. Which i notice that the Leader of Worthing Borough Council has been fulsome in his praise of the Theatres and Museums and all would agree with the sentiment. In view of that, Ms Fraser asked why the Council was continuing with the determination to outsource the Theatres and Museum to a Trust, which little was known about it was requested that a pause in the

process be instituted so that it didn't have to rolled out by the end of the month and that the working party can look into it before it is outsourced.

The Chairman told the Resident that a reply would be sent within three working days. A supplementary was asked as to why the Councils were continuing with the outsourcing whilst it was generally recognised that the Theatres and museums were doing wonderfully well. It was understood there was some view that trusts could have access to arts council funding although there had been evidence that this might not necessarily be the case. The Chairman told the Resident that a reply would be sent within three working days.

JOSC/40/19-20 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items

JOSC/41/19-20 Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There had been no call-in at the time of the publication of the agenda

JOSC/42/19-20 Delivering Platforms for our Places - Progress report - January to June 2019

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 provided the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of progress on the delivery of the commitments set out in 'Platforms for our Places' for the period January to June 2019.

The Chief Executive was present to answer questions from the Committee and provided an introduction to the report.

A member asked the following question. Future Focuses : Workforce Strategy. Whilst it is a welcome development that work is underway for Workforce Strategy to equip us for the challenges of the future; Can you please confirm that: Priority will be given to ensuring a full staffing compliment; That staff are placed at the most appropriate locations to ensure the best service delivery and the least inconvenience to staff and public. The Chief Executive told the committee offered reassurance that he had never sought a policy of blanket freezes on recruitment and that there were other ways to make the books balance. With regards to the workforce strategy it was related that the future was about how the Councils could be more flexible and making sure that staff had the right skills. The accommodation strategy had been under review recently, a result of which was that the contact centre moved into the same building as other customer services staff. Generally, The intention was that working be flexible and that staff work from where they needed to.

A member asked the following question: In terms of current projects, 67% appear to be on track and 25% considered as potential risks. Of the 25% of projects considered potential risks, which projects are considered to be most concerning and what is being done to address these? The committee was told that the report before them represented the period of time ending June 2019 and some of the 'amber' commitments had turned

green since. Some major projects had been slower because of the need to await input or action by other partners or agencies.

A member asked the following question *I agree that one of the challenges as mentioned on page 26 Platform for Places is a series of interventions to ensure an evolving town centre, ie a year round programme of events and activities - yet 4.4 is focused on new activities mainly for Worthing. Shoreham does indeed have an award winning market, what other new beach to town/tourism incentive projects are planned for Shoreham, post the Streets Ahead conference.* Members were told that retail models were not as they once were. The strategy put, was to focus on a range of issues to promote Town Centres. Dark fibre would provide a number of opportunities including the potential for tech companies coming in and taking up shop space for offices. Town Centres needed to be more 'sticky' as people needed to stay once they visited. Members were told that the ropetackle was an example of something that was helping shoreham to thrive. There was an events agenda and exciting new venues such as Boxpark. Shoreham was becoming an interesting place to come and stay.

A member asked the following question: *Assuming a successful pilot of Housing First, to what extent is it envisaged that this will be scalable given the constraints in the town on properties and land?* The committee was told that the scheme was locally in its infancy. It was thought to be reasonably successful, data and evidence needed to be collected to measure its efficacy. The challenge was the availability of housing units and money to provide services.

A member asked how the problem of rent arrears was being alleviated. The committee was told that Adur Homes faced major challenges. A 1% reduction over a number of years in rent meant that it would take eight years to where the authorities started from. The last couple of months had seen the authority focus its attention on the matter and as a result there had been a significant reduction in the amount. The committee was told that the council sat down with residents who were in arrears to set a suitable payment plan. There was an overall strategy of intervention and the councils sought to tackle issues early to avoid problems later down the line.

A member asked how existing residents and communities could benefit from the development of brownfield sites such as those earmarked in the Joint Area Action Plan. Members were told that along with housing came infrastructure benefits such as new housing, roads and community facilities.

A member asked about planning for Brexit and was told that the Councils had been undertaking contingency planning for the previous twelve months.

A member asked about the change to fortnightly bin collections and how the change was being managed. The committee was told that the process would be kept under review but the significant change had been well planned and carried out.

The committee asked questions about both theatres and the use of social enterprise.

Resolved: that the report be noted and that the committee receive a further update at its meeting in January

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 the committee set out background of the portfolios of the Leaders. Members were asked to interview the Leaders on their portfolios and the high level strategic issues for which the Leaders were involved.

The Leaders of Adur and Worthing were present to answer questions.

A member asked a question relating to reduction in emissions and whether the council was planning to have a performance dashboard. Members were told that the issue was being investigated and that the authority hoped to see a dashboard accessible on its website.

A member asked about the current gap in flood defences in Shoreham and when the flood defences would be completed. Members were informed that the new yacht club building needed to be completed and members were told that more detailed timeline could be circulated to members after the meeting.

A member asked the following question: *The recent news about the interest rate increase from the Public Works Loan Board has been reported as sending a 'hand grenade into local authority borrowing plans'. What, if any, impact is it likely to have on strategic decision making around risk in Adur and Worthing Council?* The Leader told the committee that the phrase being used was hyperbolic and that a 1% rise was far from a hand grenade. Funding would be accessed for future needs and would be done in a prudential manner.

A Member asked the following question: *There is concern around the challenge of anti-social behaviour as an increasing problem in our town centre and parks. What strategic work is being undertaken in order to address this?* Members were told that there had been a worrying recent spike in levels of crime. The news that PCSOs were returning and that Police numbers were increasing was welcomed. The safer communities team were addressing complex and difficult issues. There had been some great stories and outcomes of partnership working with Turning Tides and Roffey Homes. Members were told that CCTV could also help to monitor what was going on.

A Member noted that there had been an apparent rise in peer associated violence at a local school and asked if the council was taking an early preventative approach to the issue. Members were told about early intervention in families initiatives.

A Member asked about the award of the Theatre contract to a trust and asked if there could be a pause in proceeding due to alleged irregularities with the award. The Leader told members that the award had been done with legal opinion. Members could find information about the decision from papers of the Joint Strategic Committee.

The Leaders were also asked about Union Place and about challenges concerning Housing.

Resolved: that the Leaders' interview be noted.

JOSC/44/19-20

Adur and Worthing review of Gypsy and Traveller encampments in 2018

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 the committee set out the findings of the scrutiny working group. Members were asked to consider the report and recommendations and refer them to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration in due course.

The Chairman of the working group answered questions in relation to the report including the nature of discussions with the police and officers from West Sussex County Council.

On the advice of a working group member, the committee discussed the addition of a recommendation in relation to the access of health services. Members debated the amendment and its inclusion was agreed given on the understanding that the recommendation would be made to the correct Authority. The amendment was passed as follows: 'that a recommendation be made to the West Sussex County Council Director of Public Health to research public health funds to support Gypsy and Travellers particularly how to access funds public health services.'

Resolved: that the recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller encampments Working Group be referred to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration.

JOSC/45/19-20 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 - Update

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. The report before the committee outlined the progress with the work programme to date.

The committee discussed the work programme and noted that there had been no review requests submitted since the last meeting of the committee. A member of the carbon reduction working group told the committee that he was keen to meet as soon as possible.

Resolved: that the progress of the work programme be noted

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.10 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman