

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

**Gordon Room, Worthing Town Hall, Worthing**

**3 December 2024**

Councillor Joss Loader (Chair)  
Councillor Nigel Jenner (Vice-Chair)

**Adur District Council:**

Councillor Robina Baine  
Councillor Dan Flower

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies  
Councillor Dan Hermitage  
Councillor Samuel Theodoridi

**Absent**

Councillors Carson Albury, Emma Evans, Pauline Higgins, Heather Mercer, Elizabeth Sparkes, Jon Roser, Carl Walker

**Substitutes**

Councillors Carol Albury, Andy McGregor, Hilary Schan

**JOSC/30/24-25 Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Glynn-Davies declared an interest as the chair of the Worthing Licensing committee and having family members in the licensing trade.

**JOSC/32/24-25 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 7th November were approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**JOSC/33/24-25 Public Question Time**

A resident asked, "In the report it names a company called flowbird who installed the ANPR system at a significant cost in 2014. and the council have quoted a figure of £198,241 to upgrade the ANPR system.

Can I ask that during this period of scrutiny how many different, if indeed any, ANPR operators have the council engaged with for differing cost quotes to see if this can be done at a lower cost and have they extensively investigated costings of any other ways of pay as you leave technology which is available to cover our fear as business owners of loss of dwell time and ease of customer parking?"

The resident was informed that officers had undertaken market testing exercises prior to the decision being made. They had not made further contact with suppliers during the scrutiny.

The procurement for the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system was in excess of £300k back in 2014 and additional machines were subsequently purchased under the framework. The Council's maintenance contract with Flowbird (the incumbent supplier) was extended under the procurement rules a number of times (now expired September 2024).

In 2017 the council undertook a 'soft market test' with 8 suppliers in relation to the provision of ANPR across the three Multi-Storey Car Parks (Buckingham, Grafton and High Street). This was in conjunction with Procurement in 2017. As part of this exercise suppliers were invited in to present their technology and subsequently submitted costings.

The result from the soft market test was that the suppliers would not take on the existing equipment and would in effect want to remove the existing equipment and replace it with their own, all would cost over £300k.

For competitiveness and without in effect writing off the monies previously spent, the conclusion was to have a new contract with Flowbird (formerly known as Parkeon). This meant no new equipment would be required and the contract would only need to cover maintenance of the existing equipment and the server hosting.

The Council made additional enquiries in 2024 with suppliers to replace the ANPR system and although the costs had reduced slightly from 2017, the costs were still ranging from £260k to £300k. The costs for ANPR remained expensive as did the maintenance contracts costs.

The costs for the ANPR system and maintenance remained high as well as the fact it did not address the staff resource time being spent in the office to resolve the misreads.

The council had been monitoring the costs over a number of years and as members of The British Parking Association regularly discussed parking technology within the industry and spoke to suppliers, the costs for ANPR even in 2020 had not reduced since the 2017 soft market testing.

Due to the issues experienced with the ANPR system of number plates being misread, barriers not raising, customers being overcharged as well as the expensive maintenance costs the council considered alternative options to a new ANPR system which included a pay on arrival system.

The new pay on arrival system was simpler to use, cheaper to maintain and purchase; as well as being able to utilise staff resources in a more efficient way providing a better customer experience, giving greater flexibility to customers by also being afforded the option to pay by phone/app if they wished to do so.

The council had also been informed apart from those listed in the JOSCO report that Chichester Council were also moving away from barrier ANPR system and would be reverting back to pay and display. This was now increasingly commonplace with councils reverting back to pay and display with the offering of pay by phone/app technology. It was cheaper, more convenient, more reliable and gave more flexibility to its users whilst still maintaining payment machines for those who did not have a mobile phone or did not wish to pay by app.

A Resident asked, "We have been informed by officer Jan Jonker that Parking is down at Grafton road since re-opening. What % of parking visits is Grafton Road car park down on since the changeover from ANPR /pay as you leave parking to Pay as you park / pay on app technology?"

The resident was informed the number of transactions at Buckingham Road (not Grafton) was lower than before it closed.

This was believed to be due to a number of factors:

Buckingham Road car park had been closed since March 2022 and all the previous customers had migrated to different car parks and had not changed back at the time of reporting.

Parking numbers were down across carparks in Worthing following the pandemic due to changes in working patterns and consumer behaviour

The Council had also not reintroduced town centre workers permits at Buckingham at this stage to provide opportunity to encourage higher footfall in this part of town.

The promotion of the re-opening of Buckingham Road had been limited, pending this review. Buckingham Road was more difficult to find than Grafton and High Street, particularly for visitors to the town. The Council would promote the site more heavily going forward.

The below table shows the number of weekly transactions which were growing since the car park had been reopened which showed that people were becoming aware that the car park was open.

| Date Range  | Number of Transactions | % increase since opening |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15-22.10.24 | 576                    |                          |
| 23-29.10.24 | 701                    | 22%                      |
| 30-5.11.24  | 681                    | 18%                      |
| 6-12.11.24  | 690                    | 20%                      |
| 13-19.11.24 | 808                    | 40%                      |
| 20-26.11.24 | 839                    |                          |

The monthly number of transactions in October and November 2021 were much higher than current levels, (8612 in October 2024 and 8363 in November 2024) but for the above reasons they did not believe this was attributable to the change in technology. The increase in usage of the site, in the absence of promotion of the site suggests drivers liked parking there.

Members of the public also asked questions about tackling the sale of drugs and drug use in Victoria and Amelia Parks in Worthing and what training was given to officers with regards to hate crime and hate speech. With their agreement, the Chair invited the Chief Inspector and Superintendent from Sussex police to answer. They said that it was important for people to keep reporting crime when they saw it and that some new funding had been acquired for this particular area of policing; they also informed the resident that a lot of work had been done over the summer to provide officers with the training required to identify and correctly tackle both anti social behaviour and hate crime.

#### **JOSC/34/24-25      Members Questions**

There were no questions from Members

#### **JOSC/35/24-25      Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items

#### **JOSC/36/24-25      Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision**

There were no call-ins

**JOSC/37/24-25      Crime and Disorder Scrutiny - Interview with Local Police  
Commander and Superintendent and Scrutiny of the Adur &  
Worthing Safer Communities Partnership**

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

Members asked about how the police worked with external partners to combat drink spiking, community engagement with the Adur & Worthing Safer Communities Partnership (AWSCP), current concerns about community safety, shoplifting, proactive initiatives to work with young people, PCSO numbers, successes working with young people, strategies to reduce violent and sexual crimes, public confidence in the police, police responses to reported crimes, the online reporting system, working with licensed premises, public knowledge of PCSOs, night marshals and communication/information sharing between the Councils and the police.

Members were informed that spiking was currently dealt with under OP Halifax, designed to deliver a consistent approach; that the AWSCP used a range of methods to consult with the public including online consultation and engagement events; that the police division priorities focused on knife crime and youth antisocial behaviour; that the police were trying to identify shoplifting hotspots and the people causing the issues as well as helping premises with security measures; that the police worked with a youth forum, worked in schools with both children and parents, that while many PCSOs go on to become police officers, Sussex has been able to maintain their PCSO numbers; that engaging with children in primary school and new engagement plans that included young people were viewed as successes; that while there was a decrease in the numbers of violent crime, tactical meetings were held as well as partnership meetings each month to review data and spikes in serious crime; that every incident reported to the police is assessed and evaluated and while not every report can be acted on, people still needed to keep reporting so the police could identify hotspots and where they needed to be; that the online reporting system is a national service and while Sussex police had no direct control over it, they could feedback; that they had refreshed a lot of the work being done around licensed premises; that the work of PCSOs was very important and they would continue to look at how they promoted the role; that night marshals were provided by a contractor but the police ensured they were properly trained; that the Police recognised certain areas of engagement could be and needed to be more effective and that having more joined up comms with the Councils would help.

**JOSC/38/24-25      Post Decision Review of Officer Decision on Replacement of  
Multi-Storey Car Park Equipment**

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

Members asked about the timings of the contract signing, what the Council had learned from the process, the difference in staff requirements between the different systems, £0 fines, restoring trust between the Council and local businesses and time window to pay for parking.

Members were informed that there were lessons to be learnt for the Council from this process, that the process for Buckingham car park had been slightly rushed following some delays, that the older system required staff in a control room while the new system would make better use of staff with a smaller team; the £0 fines were a practice used

when opening a car park to draw people's attention to the new rules; that the Council realised it needed a structured proposal on how it communicated with the Worthing Bid on issues like this and to the wider public. Whilst a window of time did exist between people entering the car park and paying for their parking, no issues had been reported so far of people missing that window of time.

**Resolved:**

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report as requested by Worthing Full Council on 15th October 2024.

**JOSC/39/24-25      Review of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2024/25**

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

**Resolved:**

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council note the changes made to the JOSC Work Programme since it was agreed by both Councils in July 2024.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.35 pm, it having commenced at 6.40 pm

**Chairman**