

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

**Remote Meeting**

**28 May 2020**

Councillor Kevin Boram (Chairman)

**Adur District Council:**

Catherine Arnold  
George Barton  
Ann Bridges  
Liz Haywood  
Paul Mansfield  
Debs Stainforth

**Worthing Borough Council:**

Roy Barraclough  
Mike Barrett  
Rebecca Cooper  
Louise Murphy  
Hazel Thorpe  
Steve Waight  
Steve Wills  
Tim Wills

**Absent**

Councillor Brian Coomber

**JGC/1/20-21          Chairman's Announcement**

The Committee wished to place on record it's thanks to Officers for all of the work to enable remote meetings to take place.

**JGC/2/20-21          Substitute Members**

The Committee noted that Councillor Andy McGregor was substituting for Councillor Brian Coomber.

**JGC/3/20-21          Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Louise Murphy and Steve Wills declared personal interests as Non-Executive Directors of Worthing Homes.

Councillor Steve Waight declared an interest in item 7 as a member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Kevin Boram declared a personal interest as a trustee of Impulse Leisure.

## **JGC/4/20-21            Minutes**

The minutes of the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 28 January 2020, were agreed as a correct record.

## **JGC/5/20-21            Public Question Time**

There were no questions from the public.

## **JGC/6/20-21            Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

There were no urgent items raised.

## **JGC/7/20-21            Internal Audit Progress Report**

Before the Committee was a report by the Acting Head of Internal Audit, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 6.

The report updated the Joint Governance Committee in relation to:

- the current performance of the Internal Audit Section;
- summary information on the key issues raised in final audit reports issued since the last report to the Committee;
- the current status on the implementation of agreed audit recommendations;
- an update on Priority 1 recommendations outstanding past their agreed implementation date;
- fraud work conducted by the Councils' Corporate Investigations Team;

The report also provided the Members of the Joint Governance Committee with the Acting Head of Internal Audit's opinion reports on the system of internal control at Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council during 2019/20.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the number of outstanding priority 1 recommendations and sought clarity regarding one concerning the need for an Asset Management Plan. Officers advised that this had been due to go to the Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) meeting in late March but would now be considered by the JSC on 9 June 2020.

Having highlighted that there were a number of outstanding priority recommendations, the Committee sought clarification regarding how Adur and Worthing Councils performance compared with that of other local authorities. Offices advised that the Councils implementation rates were better than average.

The Chairman of the Committee proposed amending the recommendation in the report to read 'that the Joint Governance Committee notes the contents of the report and requests a presentation from the Housing Services Manager on control measures in that service'. The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Louise Murphy and unanimously supported.

## **Resolved**

That the Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that the Housing Services Manager attend the next meeting of the Committee to present an update on the control measures being applied in that service area.

### **JGC/8/20-21            Revised 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan**

Before the Committee was a report by the Acting Head of Internal Audit, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The report asked Members to consider and approve the revised 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan.

A Member questioned whether the 10 days allocated for testing the IT Recovery Plan would be sufficient. Officers advised that the 10 days allocated would be sufficient time to conduct the audit and it was noted that 'risks associated with hacking' would be the subject of an audit in its own right.

Members also discussed the resilience of systems to home working and the need for this to be included in the existing audit plan. Officers advised that these issues would be addressed as part of the Network and Architecture Resilience audit, outlined in Q4 of the 2019/20 internal audit plan, which had yet to be completed.

The Committee considered a number of potential audit topics, including:-

- Joint working between Adur and Worthing Councils and West Sussex County Council;
- Worthing Homes, resources allocated and the return on investment - it was suggested that this would not be a good use of the audit resources;
- A comparison study in relation to the outsourcing of Worthing Theatres - it was noted that 'Theatres Contract Procurement' was already in the audit plan.

A Member sought clarification as to whether the audit planned for street numbering and naming was required. Officers advised that this was a gold award winning service which had been considered to be low risk and had been removed (and not replaced) from the Internal Audit Plan.

It was noted by the Committee that the Treasury Management (TM) audit had been removed from the Internal Audit Plan. Members sought clarification as to why this had been deemed to be only medium risk and why it had been removed from the plan. Officers advised that TM was generally audited every year, had a good track record and would still be audited by External Audit. It was also noted that it hadn't been completely dropped by Internal Audit, they would still be looking at some key controls compliance.

The Committee was notified that the audit work relating to the Covid 19 response and the procurement of Worthing Theatres would be conducted sooner rather than later as both were deemed to be high risk and high priority.

The Chairman, Councillor Kevin Boram, proposed that the following additional audits be included in the Audit Plan for 2020/21:-

- procurement of the Worthing Theatres solution;

- audit of the Covid 19 response to consider the working relationship between A&W Councils and WSCC on this issue;
- use of the Councils budgets to support the delivery of homes in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs); and

suggested that the Joint Governance Committee recommend that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the wider relationship between WSCC and A&W Councils.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Beccy Cooper and unanimously supported.

## **Resolved**

That the Joint Governance Committee:-

- considered the proposed plan for 2020/21 and identified the following additional audits to be included;
  - procurement of the Worthing Theatres solution;
  - audit of the Covid 19 response to consider the working relationship between A&W Councils and WSCC on this issue;
  - use of the Councils budgets to support the delivery of homes in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs);
- approved the 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan as amended above; and
- recommended that the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee considers the wider working relationship between West Sussex County Council and Adur & Worthing Councils.

*\*The meeting was adjourned at 7.58pm and reconvened at 8.05pm.*

## **JGC/9/20-21                      Annual Governance Statements 2019/20**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The Joint Governance Committee was asked to review and agree the Annual Governance Statements for 2019/20.

A member raised concerns in relation to the 'significant governance issue' regarding the governance requirements as detailed in the 'Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Services' raised in the WBC Annual Governance Statement on pages 120-121 of the report. It was noted that the Chief Financial Officer was not part of the Council Leadership Team but did have good access to the Chief Executive and the Council Leadership Team.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that the Chief Executive be invited to the next meeting of the Joint Governance Committee to explain why the Councils had adopted the existing governance model.

Consideration was given to the formal development of Councillors, including the provision of Code of Conduct Training, and the performance management of members of the Council Leadership Team.

A proposal, to include the Leaders of the Opposition in the reference group of Councillors used to give feedback on the preparation of the draft statement, was not supported.

### **Resolved**

The Joint Governance Committee

- I. noted the evidence of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and the Progress Report produced to deal with any issues arising from these requirements as set out in Appendix A;
- II. approved the Annual Governance Statements for each Council, as set out in Appendices B and C to the report;
- III. requested the Chief Executive attend the next meeting of the Committee to explain why the Councils had adopted the existing governance model.

### **JGC/10/20-21            Audit enquiries to those charged with Governance**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 9.

Adur and Worthing Councils external auditors, Ernst and Young, had asked that the Committee consider a letter about how the Joint Governance Committee gained assurance from management regarding the financial governance arrangements of the Councils. The Chairmen of the Committee had received two letters, one for Adur District Council, and one the Worthing Borough Council. The letter to Adur District Council was attached as Appendix 1 and, it was noted, was identical to the letter to Worthing Borough Council.

In order to assist the Committee in its deliberation of the letter, proposed responses to each of the questions raised, were attached at Appendix 2. It was noted that the proposed responses could form the basis of a formal letter.

During discussion of the report, Members considered the levels of reserves, including the impact of the Covid 19 response on them and the viability of the Councils moving forward.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Louise Murphy, seconded by Councillor Roy Barraclough and unanimously approved.

### **Resolved**

That the Joint Governance Committee considered and agreed the proposed response to the audit letter.

## **JGC/11/20-21                      Risks and Opportunities Update Report**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

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

The Committee considered risks where the assessment score had increased since the last report in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic. The risk attached to the operational viability of Shoreham Airport had been increased to High Risk. Officers outlined the direct business support being provided through the dissemination of public monies alongside other measures designed to reduce uncertainty.

A Member sought clarification regarding the definition of a 'moderate' risk likelihood. Officers advised that the Risks and Opportunities Strategy provided detailed explanations for the terms of risk. A 'Moderate' risk likelihood identified a situation that could happen, in certain circumstances. Officers agreed to provide further detail following the meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that risks associated with major projects be reported in more detail in future, with risks being set out in relation to each project.

### **Resolved**

That the Joint Governance Committee

- noted the progress in managing risks and opportunities;
- requested that further analysis on Major Project Risks be provided in future reports (outlining the risks associated with each project);
- requested that the risk and updates report be formally presented to both the Adur and Worthing Executives; and
- agreed to receive a further progress report in September 2020.

## **JGC/12/20-21                      Local Government Ombudsman Monitoring Report**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 11.

The report considered the Annual Review letters of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) relating to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Members sought updates in relation to the two housing complaints highlighted in the report. Officers agreed to provide updates following the meeting.

The recommendations set out in the report were proposed by Councillor George Barton, seconded by Councillor Louise Murphy and unanimously approved.

## **Resolved**

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the letters.

### **JGC/13/20-21            Update of the CCTV Policy**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 12.

The report updated the Joint Governance Committee on how Adur & Worthing Councils' CCTV Policy had been updated to make it compliant with current legislation and guidance.

The report and revised policy sought to ensure Adur and Worthing Councils compliance with data protection legislation and to ensure that good operational arrangements were in place.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor George Barton, seconded by Councillor Ann Bridges and unanimously agreed.

## **Resolved**

The Joint Governance Committee, on behalf of the Councils, reviewed and approved the CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) Policy.

### **JGC/14/20-21            2019/20 Review of Petitions Scheme**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and copies are attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 13.

The Committee noted that both Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council had a Petition Scheme and welcomed petitions from their communities.

The Joint Governance Committee had requested an annual report to update on the use of the Petition Scheme through the municipal year.

The recommendation in the report was proposed by Councillor Louise Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ann Bridges and unanimously agreed.

## **Resolved**

The Joint Governance Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **JGC/15/20-21            Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Whilst the Committee considered whether to exclude the press and public for the consideration of item 15 on the agenda, 'Annual Review of Complaints about Member Conduct - 2019/20', it was noted that some of the Committee's membership had been unable to consider the contents of the exempt report (item 15).

It was proposed by Councillor Steve Waight that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Roy Barraclough and unanimously supported by the Committee.

**Resolved**

The Joint Governance Committee agreed to defer consideration of item 15 until it's next meeting.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.58 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

**Chairman**