



**Extract from the minutes of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 21  
March 2024**

**JAGC/0xx/23-24          Creating a positive complaints culture: a new code for  
complaints**

Members asked for some clarification on what role within the JAGC the Complaints Lead Member champions would have and where complaints regarding Adur & Worthing's partners would be directed. Members were informed that the Complaints Lead Member Champions would report to the JAGC but not sit as members of it and that complaints regarding partners would go to those partners.

Members discussed how much of the new requirements were already in place and adjusting the recommendations to ensure the Monitoring Officer would recommend the correct Members to be appointed as the Complaint Lead Member Champions.

**Resolved:**

**The Joint Audit and Governance Committee recommended to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council to**

- **Adopt the new (Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (HOCHC))**
- **Highlight that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code (LG&SC Code) was launched in February 2024. And that work is underway to ensure compliance with this, which will be required by April 2026.**
- **Note the Monitoring Officer will recommend two councillors to be complaint handling Members to the Joint Chairs of the JAGC for approval and recommendation to Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council meetings**
- **Note that the senior responsible person for complaints will be the Head of Resident Services.**

(Link to the report on the website - [Joint Audit & Governance Committee on 21 March 2024](#))



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**JAGC/0xx/23-24          Amendments to the Constitution**

Members asked about the potential of any amendments fettering future governments and were informed that no, none of the recommended amendments should result in that.

Members debated the scheduling of ordinary council meetings during the pre-election period, the order of agenda at those council meetings, the merits of reducing the threshold on officer decisions from 100k to 75k and the budget recommendations.

**Resolved:**

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee

- Noted the use of the Monitoring Officer's delegation to make minor and inconsequential amendments.
- **Endorsed the remaining amendments to the Constitutions proposed by the Working Group and the Monitoring Officer and recommended the revised Constitutions to both Full Councils for their approval with the following additional recommendations from the committee to full council:-**
  - a) **That no ordinary meeting of Full Council should be scheduled during the pre-election period, without the approval of the Proper Officer, who will take into account whether the forthcoming election was in respect of the Borough or District elections, or other election, and the level of political sensitivity around each election which should impact on Council business;**
  - b) **That the value of a Key Decision under the Council's Financial Regulations and Article 12.03 of the Constitution remains at £100,000 on the basis that Officers will publish Decision Notices and Consult in writing with the relevant Cabinet Members**

- c) That the proposed amendments to Paragraph 6.1 of the Budget Procedure Rules presented to the Committee be postponed pending a review by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee of its involvement in budget strategy and review.**

(Link to the report on the website - [Joint Audit & Governance Committee on 21 March 2024](#))



## **Extract from the minutes of the Licensing and Control Committee - 25 March 2024**

### **WBC - LC/19/23-24 Licensing Act 2003 - Worthing Fees and Charges Consultation Committee Report 2024 / 25**

The Officer clarified for Committee Members how the licence fee system had altered from issuing one year licences to three/five year licences and this accounted for some of the figures differing year to year. He explained that the proposed fee increases would allow the licensing department to become a self-funding service although this may take more than one year.

During debate members were concerned that the proposed fee increases may be an additional financial burden on the taxi drivers, taking into account the current cost of living crisis and fuel price increases. It was also considered that administration for this service needed to be paid for and it was noted that, although the Licensing department was a non profit making service, it was important that it be self funding.

Members debated the possibility of encouraging the use of electric vehicles amongst the taxi trade by reducing fees in those cases. However the Officer clarified that the administration of all licences cost an equal amount regardless of whether or not they were for EV's. The Committee acknowledged this but remained keen to investigate more innovative ways of applying licensing charges to encourage greener choices and the Officer agreed to initiate discussions regarding this.

A proposal was made to accept the Officers recommendation. This was seconded and voted on with a result of 10 votes in favour and 1 vote against. There were no abstentions.

#### **Decision -**

The Committee noted that one response was received following the Council placing a notice in a local newspaper setting out the changes to the vehicle and operator fees and inviting representations on those changes within 28 days. Having

considered the response and the current financial situation of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire summary account, the Licensing and Control Committee agreed to continue with the proposed fees.

**The Licensing and Control Committee also agreed to recommend to Council that it formally ratifies the Licensing Fees in Appendix 3 and that they shall come into effect on 1 April 2024.**

(Link to the report on the website - [Worthing Licensing and Control Committee on 25 March 2024](#))