



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
9 July 2019  
Agenda Item 5

Key Decision: No  
Ward(s) Affected: All

***Platforms for our Places Progress Report (January to June 2019)***

**Report by the Chief Executive**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To provide Joint Strategic Committee an update on the Councils' progress in delivering the ambitions and commitments set out in *Platforms for our Places* for the period January to June 2019, and highlights certain areas of strategic importance.
- 1.2. The Councils continue to implement the commitments adopted in January 2018 (and refreshed in July 2018). 8% are now complete (blue), 67% of activities are on track (green) and 25% are at potential risk (amber).
- 1.3. The report provides the opportunity for JSC to report to both Full Councils and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Note the progress made and challenges experienced in the implementation of *Platforms for our Places* over the period January to July 2019.
- 2.2. Request the final update in December 2019 concluding the *Platforms for our Places* programme.
- 2.3. Agree to refer this report to Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

### 3. Context

- 3.1. In December 2016 Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils adopted *Platforms for our Places* as the Councils' direction of travel for the next 3 years. In July 2018 (18 months into that programme) both Councils adopted a revised set of commitments and activities to reflect the progress that had been made and the issues that had emerged over the first half of the programme.
- 3.2. *Platforms for our Places* builds on the need to explore and reset our relationship with our residents, recognising as Councils we cannot and should not do everything for everyone. Our role as Councils (as well as providing great services and vital safety nets) is to create and maintain five essential platforms upon which our communities can build happy, healthy, prosperous and connected places.
- 3.3. *Platforms for our Places* identifies five platforms underpinned by a series of commitments namely:
- a) Our Financial Economies
  - b) Our Social Economies
  - c) Stewarding our Natural Resources
  - d) Services and Solutions for our Places
  - e) Leadership of our Places

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Activities and Projects</b>
<b>Our Financial Economies</b>	11	47
<b>Our Social Economies</b>	8	31
<b>Stewarding our Natural Resources</b>	7	21
<b>Services and Solutions</b>	5	18
<b>Leadership of our Places</b>	7	30

**Table 3.1: Five Platforms and associated commitments, activities and projects**

- 3.4. Progress reporting draws on the progress of the 147 projects and activities and the Councils broader activities to provide a snapshot of how the Councils are contributing to the development of the five identified platforms. Table 3.2 shows how the status of projects and activities are determined

Status Indicators	Status Definition
Blue	Completed
Green	In progress: on track and on time
Amber	In progress: but delays anticipated or minor issues to be resolved (no apparent 'show stoppers' identified)
Red	Significant difficulties in implementation
Grey	Yet to start

Table 3.2 Status Indicators and definitions

3.5. All previous 6-monthly update reports to Joint Strategic Committee have also been considered by Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC). JOSC has commented in the past that the analysis by platform was helpful and asked for particular commentary on any “red” commitments.

#### 4. Issues for consideration and update

4.1. The progress report ([Attachment A](#)) provides an overview of the main highlights, challenges and future focus in the development of the five platforms over the last six months. The Attachment also provides an overview of the current status of Platform Commitments in pie chart form. Table 4.1 provides a further breakdown of these activities and projects progress. In evaluating the progress of these activities and projects a reasonably objective analysis has been employed, and while there may be debate on ‘how green’ or ‘how amber’ a particular project may be, the overall assessment gives a reasonably robust view of our progress.

Platform	On Track	Potential Risk	Complete
Our Financial Economies	25 (53.2%)	16 (34%)	6 (12.8%)
Our Social Economies	18 (58.1%)	11 (35.5%)	2 (6.5%)
Stewarding our Natural Resources	17 (81%)	4 (19%)	0
Services and Solutions	14 (77.8%)	3 (16.7%)	1 (5.6%)
Leadership of our Places	25 (83.3%)	3 (10%)	2 (6.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>99 (67.3%)</b>	<b>37 (25.2%)</b>	<b>11 (7.5%)</b>

Table 4.1 Status of Commitments by Platforms

4.2. It is also perhaps worth remembering that these 140 or so commitments are not 'everything we do', far from it. Whilst progressing our Platforms agenda we have continued to provide a full portfolio of universal services to the communities we serve. At times this has been challenging, particularly in some of those demand led areas where we have seen an increase in need, without a consequent increase in supply of resources either in terms of finance or assets (e.g. new housing).

4.3. It is not intended in this covering report to comment on each and every issue flagged in Attachment A. There are, however, certain strategic themes that can be drawn from the past 6 months that are probably worthy of drawing to the attention of the Committee. These are:-

#### **4.4. Responding to our changing town centres**

4.4.1. The changing nature of town centres has increased in national prominence over the past six months. The pressures faced by the retail sector in particular has created greater uncertainty over the traditional (retail led) role of our town centres. While our town centres remain vibrant commercial, social and cultural focal points for our communities, as previously reported to JSC, the Councils have sought to take proactive actions to support and convey confidence in our town centres.

4.4.2. Over the last 6 months this has included:-

- (a) Continuing to provide quality cultural experiences for our residents, with over 800 new memberships for our Worthing Theatres audiences (adding to the over 40,000 existing audience members)
- (b) Continued maintenance, design and development of our public realm,
- (c) Recognition for the Councils maintenance of Worthing Pier (named 2019 Pier of the Year) and management of Shoreham Farmers Markets (named the best Farmers Market in Sussex)
- (d) Working with partners across Worthing's town centre to successfully gain purple flag status for our night-time economy (at first time of applying)

- (e) Delivering and supporting a vibrant calendar of events, including a new Street Food & Drink Festival in Worthing and the Southwick Spring Fair
- (f) Pursuing innovative approaches to providing employment spaces in our town centres, Colonnade House, has reached 100% tenancy occupancy and the completion of Focus House on the old Adur Civic car park site in Shoreham (on time and on budget).
- (g) Organising the Waves Ahead Conference - *Streets Ahead: pathways to thriving town centres* to engage partners across the commercial sectors on the future of Town Centres and to hear from Bill Grimsey (UK national expert on thriving town centres)

4.4.3. The Councils intend to continue to develop this critical work over the coming months:

- (a) Reaching milestones on key development sites providing employment and housing opportunities in our town centre, including Union Place, Adur Civic Centre Phase II and both the Teville Gate projects.
- (b) continuing to offer attractions that will draw people into our town centres such as the Worthing Observation Wheel and 'SpinOut' programme of outdoor cultural activities, and
- (c) Identifying distinctive propositions for our town centres and seek to position those appropriately for investment opportunities.

#### **4.5. Digital place-making**

- 4.5.1. Phase one of the Ultrafast Full Fibre rollout is almost complete, connecting all main council buildings with gigabit-capable optical fibre.
- 4.5.2. The contract for phase two has been agreed, which will connect a further 83 council assets across Adur and Worthing. These include CCTV, leisure facilities, and seafront and parks assets. Further projects are in development for delivery of widespread public WiFi and implementation of an internet of things (IoT network).

#### **4.6. Housing (supply and demand)**

- 4.6.1. As with previous reports the provision of housing remains a critical area of focus for the Councils.

##### *Housing Supply*

- 4.6.2. Adur District Council have received confirmation that the Secretary of State will not be calling in the decision to grant permission for 600 homes at New Monks Farm. Applications for the development of further sizable provision for housing are expected to be brought and/or determined shortly, include Teville Gate, West Sompting and Kingston Wharf.
- 4.6.3. The Councils are also overseeing 11 housing development sites and (ADC) received planning permission for development at Albion street and 17 units at Cecil Norris House, whilst (WBC) submitted an application for 15 units at Rowlands Road in Worthing. The first phase of Albion street, is about to go out to competitive tender, and will involve the delivery of 44 units of affordable social housing. A further two units of accommodation have been completed at North Lancing Road and will be available to let as social rented accommodation. In total a schedule of around 150 units is currently in our project pipeline across both Council areas.
- 4.6.4. Worthing Borough Council has worked with Boklok UK to agree a proposition for approximately 150 units at Fulbeck Avenue (and an overarching agreement to collaborate on delivering up to a further 500 homes on other sites).
- 4.6.5. Possible infill sites have been identified within Adur Homes which could be used for housing development. Plans for the first phase, which involves four sites are being drawn up.
- 4.6.6. Our housing team has supported improvements to the value of £2.24 million in 237 homes through the Disability Facilities Grant, whilst ensuring that private tenants are living in safe accommodation; (handling nearly 400 complaints, which have lead to 62 enforcement notices, 2 civil penalty notices and 2 prosecutions).

### *Housing demand - Homelessness*

- 4.6.7. In the first three months of 2019 the Councils Housing Needs Team were contacted by 281 individuals or families seeking assistance as they were threatened with homelessness. In the same period 83 households homelessness was either prevented or relieved bringing the total number for homelessness prevented or relieved for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 to 229.
- 4.6.8. We continue to pursue strategies to identify residents at risk of homelessness as early as possible. Over the past six months our focus has been on GPs as part of 'making homelessness everyone's business'. A training session has been delivered and GPs are looking at introducing prompts into their IT systems to flag up the triggers that could lead to homelessness. The Councils Housing and Wellbeing teams are also working closely to identify better synergies to increase good housing and wellbeing outcomes for residents.
- 4.6.9. The Councils are pursuing innovative strategies to provide stable housing to those experiencing homelessness. *Opening Doors* is a scheme that offers a package to private landlords to let properties to people we have a duty to house. A reduction in the supply of private rented accommodation (as risk/reward ratios have changed for landlords) can create real problems for people seeking private rented property. *Opening Doors* seeks to partially 'de-risk' renting by offering a free service to landlords that includes tenancy sign-up, guaranteed rent and assistance to evict if the tenancy fails. The *Opening Doors* pilot has seen 14 properties/landlords successfully trialed, with no bad debts accrued to date. It has also reduced the Councils' temporary accommodation costs by around £141,000. Our housing teams are now preparing for a full launch of the service. In addition property for temporary accommodation is being bought to reduce costs and increase locally available accommodation.
- 4.6.10. The Councils' efforts to support rough sleepers continues, between January and May more than 40 rough sleepers have been supported into accommodation. In winter 2017 there were an estimated 34 rough sleepers in Worthing and two in Adur, currently there are 12 rough sleepers in Worthing and none in Adur. The Councils and our partners efforts were boosted

recently by further Government funding, in addition to the Rough Sleeping Initiative, a Cold Weather Fund of up to £35,000 was made available to support rough sleepers excluded from other services. 27 rough sleepers were assisted, with only one case returning to rough sleeping (the others were reconnected to family, four to their EU country of origin, employment and private sector accommodation or provided short-term accommodation to give stability and access to longer term accommodation).

- 4.6.11. This winter there will be a second night shelter for our more complex rough sleepers and the team are working to try and ensure that no-one needs to rough sleeper this winter. Further Government funding is supporting work with partners across West Sussex, with a Rapid Rehousing pilot to support rough sleepers into accommodation. The pilot will be supported by trialing a 'Housing First' model with Turning Tides leasing a total of four properties from Worthing Homes, Saxon Weald and Adur Homes. The Rough Sleepers Team membership has increased and now includes Adult Social Care, WORTH, Pause and Drive Project improving our multidisciplinary approach further, our Rough Sleeper Coordinator is also improving links with our local hospitals, improving outcomes for our rough sleepers – the work being used as part of a current bid that is being formulated between all West Sussex Districts and Boroughs, West Sussex County Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, Hospital Trust and our partners in the third sector to improve health outcomes for rough sleepers.

#### **4.7. Environmental Sustainability, Stewarding our Natural Resources**

- 4.7.1. Over the past six months we have stepped up our focus on response to a changing climate, and to responsible stewardship of our natural resources. The Councils have a good recent history of taking action, including the installation of solar panels on corporate buildings, reducing emissions in corporate travel, plastic waste reduction and the adoption of the 'SustainabilityAW' framework. The Councils have also signed the UK 100 Cities Network Pledge to work towards clean energy by 2050. And we are not complacent, more needs to be done.



- 4.7.2. The Councils have seen a reduction in our Carbon Dioxide emissions of 30% from a 2012-13 baseline (this reflects national carbon reduction in the energy sector and how the Council manages its energy contracts and energy projects). This includes the successful installation of a 20 kilowatt Solar PV system at the Shoreham Centre. The new system comprises of 72 Solar Panels and is expected to save about 11 tonnes of CO2 a year by producing 1,000 kilowatts of renewable energy.
- 4.7.3. In Waste and Recycling the move to alternate weekly collections is designed to enable and encourage our residents to think about the amount of waste produced and increase the amount of waste they recycled. The Councils are becoming a 'Plastic Free Council' and supporting initiatives like 'Plastic Free Worthing' and 'Refill Shoreham' and 'Refill Worthing'.
- 4.7.4. Elsewhere on this agenda the Councils are considering gearing up our response to Climate Change with a move towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

#### **4.8. Supporting our ambitions**

- 4.8.1. Our digital programme continues to make strong progress with new digital services receiving high customer satisfaction ratings and helping reduce demand in our contact centre. Financial savings continue to be made each year through the programme which was shortlisted for two national digital awards this year.
- 4.8.2. An improvement programme in financial services is progressing well, with a new financial management system launching in the autumn, alongside new budget management training, strategic procurement support through Orbis and ongoing development of the medium term financial strategy.
- 4.8.3. The '*Effortless*' customer services programme is well underway gathering in depth feedback directly from customers with a range of improvements planned including a new website, and expansion of customer contact channels such as live chat. A significant programme to transform the Revenues & Benefits

service is also well underway.

- 4.8.4. Adur & Worthing Councils are leading nationally on the development of a Service Design Apprenticeship, bringing together the Institute of Apprenticeships, Cabinet Office, HMRC, Department for Education, Cancer Research UK, London Borough of Hackney, University of the Arts London and others.
- 4.8.5. The HR policy review is well advanced, creating fewer, more accessible policies along with a very well received new Staff Handbook for new starters and all staff.

#### **4.9. Positioning our Places for Prosperity**

- 4.9.1. A degree of economic uncertainty has had an impact on appetites for inward investment across the UK. To date, and by careful management of relationships, Adur and Worthing appear to be retaining the interest of investors across sectors. If macro-economic indicators for the economy start to turn the wrong way this may become more difficult. It is essential, therefore, that the Councils continue to position themselves and their places as an attractive opportunity for investment and talent to come, set up business and put down roots.
- 4.9.2. Worthing Borough Council are looking to develop a form of place branding that can ignite interest from investors and attract people to work, live and play in the town. This work is underway (using small local agencies) and complements the need to continue to develop the Discover Worthing brand to its fullest potential.
- 4.9.3. As Government and private sector capital investment is squeezed it is ever more important that we promote our places on national and regional agendas. The Councils continue to be actively involved in the development by the Coast to Capital LEP of the Local Industrial Strategy seeking to ensure it picks up the needs of our places. The Councils are also likely to become more active players in the Greater Brighton Economic Board ensuring that investment in our City Region meets the needs of all of that large (and growing) region and that Adur and Worthing play their part and receive an appropriate share of dividend.

#### 4.10. **Looking to the future**

- 4.10.1. This is the penultimate 6 monthly report against the *Platforms for our Places* programme of activities. The programme as currently framed will conclude at the end of December 2019 and work will shortly begin on identifying themes, priorities and activities to guide our strategic direction over the period 2020-2023.

### **5. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1. As outlined in the progress report (Attachment A) engagement with our communities and partners is critical to conveying and realising our objectives and delivering the individual activities and projects outlined in *Platforms for our Places*. It remains an important area of focus for officers in the final six months of implementation.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. There are no unbudgeted financial implications in this report. Specific commitments that have capital or revenue consequences are individually assessed as part of the decision making process. The setting of a draft budget for both Councils for 2020/21 has been undertaken with the *Platforms for our Places* commitments in mind, as will be seen from a variety of reports to JSC in the near future and are consistent with the revenue budget and capital strategies.

### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. There are no specific legal implications relevant to this report. The legal implications relevant to any individual commitment are reported in the usual decision making process.

## Background Papers

- [Platforms for our Places Progress Report \(July to December 2018\)](#) - Joint Strategic Committee (Item 5) - 31 January 2019
- [Mid-Term Review and Refresh of Platforms for our Places Commitments](#) - adopted by Adur District Council - 19 July 2018; adopted by Worthing Borough Council - 17 July 2018
- [Platforms for our Places: 6 month Progress Report \(January to June 2018\)](#) - Joint Strategic Committee (Item 5) - 10 July 2018
- [Delivering Platforms for our Places: Progress Report June - December 2017](#) - Joint Strategic Committee (Item 5) - 9th January 2018
- [Delivering Platforms for our Places: Mid-Year Report 2017](#) and [Appendix](#) - Joint Strategic Report - 11 July 2017 (Item 5)
- ["Platforms for our Places" unlocking the power of people, communities and our local geographies](#) - adopted by Adur District Council - 15 December 2016; adopted by Worthing Borough Council - 20 December 2016

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- 1.1. Delivering our financial economies is one of 5 Platforms for development in *Platforms for our Places*. The progress report (Attachment A) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this Platform.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1. Social Value**

- 2.1.1. Developing our Social Economies is one of five Platforms for development in *Platforms for our Places*. The progress report (Attachment A) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this Platform.

- 2.1.2. A particular focus on several elements of *Platforms for our Places* is how to build capacity within our communities and community partners to enable them to shape and lead our places, while at the same time ensuring the Councils provide a robust 'safety net' for vulnerable members of our communities.

#### **2.2. Equality Issues**

- 2.2.1. *Platforms for our Places* objectives include building the capacity of our communities, engaging with them to find solutions that ensure that our services (and interventions) are designed to meet specific needs and address areas and issues of historic disadvantage.

#### **2.3. Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- 2.3.1. There are specific commitments in *Platforms for our Places* which relate to the promotion of communities as safe places. Delivery of these commitments are in progress.

#### **2.4. Human Rights Issues**

- 2.4.1. Through the implementation of *Platforms for our Places* the Councils are seeking solutions with other partners to enable our residents, communities and places to thrive.

### **3. Environmental**

- 3.1. Developing the Councils and communities role in stewarding our natural resources is one of five platforms for development in *Platform for our Places*. The progress report (Attachment A) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this platform.

#### **4. Governance**

- 4.1. This report provides Joint Strategic Committee an overview of the progress being made to implement *Platforms for our Places*, the Councils' three-year plan to enable our places to thrive.
- 4.2. The presentation of this report and proposed recommendations to refer it to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee ensure that officers are accountable in delivering elected members' ambitions for our places.
- 4.3. Working with local and sub-regional partners is a critical element in delivering *Platforms for our Places*. It will remain an important area of focus for Officers.