

**Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by Executive Members and the Joint Strategic Committee since the last meeting of Council**

**A Decisions Taken by Individual Executive Members**

Listed below is a summary of decisions taken by the individual Executive Members since the dispatch of the agenda for the last Ordinary Council Meeting. Full details can be found on the Executive Members Decisions webpage

**Leader**

None

**Executive Member for Regeneration**

W/REG/008/21-22 CIL Neighbourhood Fund

JAW/018/21-22 Letting of contract for groundworks and footpath at Teville Gate

**Executive Member for Resources**

W/RES/007/21-22 Irrecoverable Debts - Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates

JAW/017/21-22 Housing Services Transformation specialist HR Resource

**Executive Member for Customer Services**

None

**Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services**

JAW/015/21-22 Award of Contract for disposal of commercial waste

JAW/016/21-22 Procurement of Contract for the supply of tyres for Council Fleet

**Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing**

None

## **B. Decisions taken by the Joint Strategic Committee on 11 January 2022**

*Items related to Adur District Council are not reproduced on this agenda.*

Full details can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

The matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda:-

### **JSC/075/21-22      Platforms for our Places: Going Further 6 Month Progress Report for July to December 2021**

“Platforms for our Places: Going Further” was the Council’s ambitious strategic programme designed to help create the healthy, prosperous and well connected communities Worthing residents and businesses had told the Council they wanted to see.

The report updated the Joint Strategic Committee, describing the ongoing strong progress made by the Council in achieving these commitments over the past 6 months.

The report reflected the Council’s shift from pandemic ‘response’ to ‘Autumn and Winter recovery’ and described the continuing impact of the pandemic on local communities. Whilst progress against some of the commitments had slowed because of the pandemic, most were on track and some had accelerated.

The Council continued to embed the lessons it had learned from the pandemic, using these to better support local communities and advance the Council’s strategic ambitions.

Moving forward, the Council would be gathering learning from the Platforms activity in order to feed into the next strategy cycle.

A Member asked the following questions in relation to Platform 3. Officers agreed to provide written responses following the meeting which would also be shared with the Committee membership:-

- Solar Together :- during the second round over 400 households in Adur and Worthing registered an interest to have PV and/or battery storage installed in their homes. How many households had taken it up?
- LAD Grant Programme :- 900 homes across the South East had benefited. How many of these were in Worthing?
- Nature Restoration and Protection :- The bullet point at the bottom of page 37 of the agenda pack stated ‘The Councils were also part of a wider project across West and East Sussex. The locations selected to be a part of this project includes Steyne Gardens, Kingston Beach and Buckingham Park with links to the Local Nature Partnership and Health objectives across the region.

All aspects of these projects are connected with the local communities and key stakeholders and will define a baseline assessment of the natural conditions of these locations and then work alongside the local community to create a set of recommendations that will include how to fund them'. What was this project and was the Council going to fund it?

Officers agreed to provide written responses to the questions following the meeting. The Leader of Adur District Council requested that the responses also be shared with the Committee membership.

Another Member asked the following questions in relation to the report;

- Paragraph 6.25 of the report considered recycling rates across Adur and Worthing. What were the actual figures and how did the Councils compare with other authorities?
- Paragraph 6.28 of the report considered leadership support for senior managers. Was there any information on the outcomes for those managers in terms of progression, promotion etc?

Officers agreed to provide written responses to the questions following the meeting. The Leader of Adur District Council requested that the responses also be shared with the Committee membership.

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated Officers for all of the work undertaken over the last 18 months in particularly difficult circumstances.

The recommendation, as set out in the report, was unanimously supported by the Committee.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee noted and considered the "Platforms for our Places: Going Further" 6 months progress report (July to December 2021) and agreed to refer the report to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

## **JSC/076/21-22      Proactive interventions to support low income residents**

This report updated the Committee, describing changes in the national and local context since the last report; the Proactive team's progress since then; the ways in which this work has been connected to other pandemic related support and outlined next steps. It also included the financial impacts that residents had experienced over the months this work had been underway.

A Member asked questions in relation to the cost of the 'Lift' tool, the contact methods used to reach residents, plans for ongoing support when Covid funding ended and which partner organisations cases were being referred to. Officers advised that the cost of the system was £35k per annum which included the Lift tool and benefits calculators for residents and staff. There wasn't a timeline for the

dataset's inclusion of Universal Credit information, however, there was a lot of work being undertaken by Policy in Practice to include this and the situation would be monitored closely over the coming 6 to 12 months. In regards to Covid funding, the Councils had been working on the basis that the funding was available until the end of March 2022. The Councils had recently been advised that part of it could be carried forward to the summer but were awaiting a response in regards to the remainder of this funding. It was also noted that cases were referred onto a range of other organisations and Officers would provide additional data following the meeting.

During discussion, Members sought clarification in regards to the inclusion of St Nicholas and Buckingham Wards in the 'top 5' wards with the highest percentage of households who were 'not coping'. Officers agreed to arrange a briefing session for Members with a deeper dive into the Lift Programme Tool and for Policy in Practice to come and answer some of the more in depth questions.

The Committee also considered the tracking of costs per intervention, tracking of gender engagement figures, the importance of data analysis and requested that an update be brought back to the Committee in 6 months rather than 12 months as proposed in the report.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that the Interim Director for Communities report back in 6 months on progress with the roadmap / next steps outlined.

### **JSC/0077/21-22      Council Tax Support Schemes for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2022/23 & 2023/24**

The report related to the Council Tax Support schemes for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2022/23 and 2023/24. It had been produced following the decision made by the Joint Strategic Committee on 7 December 2021 that officers should provide further details about options for:-

Enhancing the budget for discretionary awards during 2022/23; and  
Removing the £5.00 weekly restriction from 1 April 2023 and the associated timescales.

A Member queried the timeline for consultation with precept bodies, suggesting that this commence sooner than May 2022. Officers advised that the consultation was in respect of the 2023/24 scheme and that it could commence sooner, if requested by Members.

Clarification was sought in relation to the number of households that would be supported by the additional discretionary awards totalling £100k. It was noted that an additional investment of £100k into the hardship fund would support between 760 households (at £260) and 1,300 households (at £150). This would provide support to

all customers identified in the ‘struggling’, ‘at risk’ and ‘in crisis’ categories whilst also providing a safety net for those currently coping but whose circumstances may change. It was noted that the cost of providing support (at £260) to all Working Age Council Tax Support customers, of which there were currently 3,328, would require a budget of around £870k which would equate to an 8.7% increase in Council Tax. The Council was limited to an increase in Council Tax of 2% due to the referendum criteria.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the content of the report;
2. approved an accelerated commencement of the consultation with the precepting bodies for the development of the 2023/24 Council Tax Support scheme;
3. noted that a further report would be presented to Committee in June outlining the options for a new scheme and the public consultation approach; and
4. approved the release of £100,000 from the Capacity Issues Reserve to increase the hardship fund for 2022/23.

## **JSC/078/21-22      Worthing Pier - Emergency Works**

The report provided an update to the Committee on the direct award of a contract for emergency works to the Pier and landing stage sub-structure under Standing Orders 8.3 Special Circumstances and Emergencies - 8.3.3 for Emergency Works, and updated the Committee on the ongoing situation.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the award of the contract for emergency works to the Pier and landing stage sub-structure under Standing Orders 8.3 Special Circumstances and Emergencies - 8.3.3 for Emergency Works; and
2. noted the ongoing emergency works in available tidal windows to the Pier and landing stage sub-structures.

## **JSC/079/21-22      Referral of Motion on Notice from Worthing Borough Council**

The report set out a motion (attached as Appendix 1) referred from the meeting of Worthing Borough Council on the 14th December 2021. Members of the Joint Strategic committee were asked to consider and determine the Motion. The Committee was advised that it could either support the motion and ask for further

work to be carried out in this regard, or, it could reject the motion.

Councillor Emma Taylor attended the meeting to present the motion to the Committee.

Members thanked Cllr Taylor for her motion, acknowledging that its sentiment was well meaning. However, Members highlighted that the motion requested a number of things that the Council and existing legislation already did and the Committee paid tribute to the Council's Housing Staff who were providing excellent support and advice through initiatives such as the Opening Doors Project.

Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Ed Crouch that the motion be rejected.

### **Decision**

That the Joint Strategic Committee rejected the motion.

## **C. Decisions taken by the Joint Strategic Committee on 8 February 2022**

*Items related to Adur District Council are not reproduced on this agenda.*

Full details can be found by clicking on this [link](#)

The matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda:-

### **JSC/084/21-22      Chief Executive's use of Urgency Powers during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The report updated the Committee on the latest wave of Coronavirus (Omicron) which necessitated the Government taking urgent action in the pre-christmas period. In late December, the Council was informed of a new business grant scheme targeted at those businesses who were most severely affected by this new variant.

To ensure the swift distribution of funds, the Chief Executive had been called upon to use her urgency powers to approve a budget virement and this report advised Members of the Executive of the executive decision made, and asked for their endorsement of those decisions.

A Member asked whether it was possible to find out how the process of grant allocation had been experienced by local businesses in Worthing. Officers advised that the deadline had been extended until the 18th March 2022 and that informal feedback suggested that both the grants and the process for allocation had been well received. The Councils had been able to design their own process, as they had the right technology in place to do so, which enabled an application process that was

user centred and applicable for businesses. The Councils would seek more structured feedback at a later date.

Members congratulated officers for getting the grants out to businesses and the recommendation, as set out in the report, was unanimously supported by the Committee.

## **Decision**

That the Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the content of the report and endorsed the decision made by the Chief Executive;
2. delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to adjust the budget for any future fully funded government covid relief schemes.

## **JSC/085/21-22      Final Revenue Budget Estimates for 2022/23**

The report was the final budget report of the year, the culmination of the annual budgeting exercise, and asked members to consider:

- The final revenue estimates for 2022/23 including any adjustments arising from settlement; and
- An updated outline 5-year forecast.

The budgets reflected the decisions taken by members to date in relation to agreed savings proposals and any committed growth. The budgets were still to be adjusted for the proposals to invest in services detailed in Appendix 2 which were considered by the Adur and Worthing Executives the previous week.

The budget was analysed by Executive member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2022/23 had been prepared, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension cost adjustments that did not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The respective Adur and Worthing 2022/23 Estimates and Council Tax setting reports had already been considered by the Worthing Executive on 31st January 2022 and the Adur Executive on 1st February 2022. Both the estimates for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council included their respective share of the cost of the Joint Strategic Committee.

Officers advised that since writing the report, the Councils had received full settlement which had resulted in the following marginal changes:-

- Adur District Council was better off by £570; and
- Worthing Borough Council was better off by £2,400.

As a result, Officers were not proposing to amend the budget papers going before the Full Council meetings later in the month.

A Member questioned whether Officers were satisfied that an inflation figure of 2% was sufficient. The Committee was informed that it was difficult to be absolutely certain. The biggest element of inflation that the Councils experienced was with pay. Settlement was still awaited for the 2021/22 pay award by the negotiating body and that pay award was expected to be 1.75%. Officers advised that looking ahead to next year, it was likely that most Councils would struggle to offer more than 2% but the Councils would have to wait and see how the negotiations went. There was some risk to the Councils energy budgets going forward, but the Councils had to a certain extent mitigated that risk by committing to short fixed term contracts, so weren't expecting to experience those inflationary pressures until the latter part of 2022/23. In addition, there were inflation provisions within the budget to help mitigate against those increases.

The Committee acknowledged that these were financially challenging times and these financial pressures were unlikely to ease in the near future when the outcome of the pandemic was better understood. The reports mapped out where the 2 Councils were in paragraph 3.3 of the report, setting out the strategic programmes the Councils had established to deliver new income and savings for the next 5 years. These included the Major Projects programme which would lead on delivering regeneration projects to increase employment space and additional housing and the Strategic Asset Management programme which would lead on delivering the income growth associated with the Strategic Property Investment Fund.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. noted the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 2 which were considered at the Executive meetings in early February; and
2. noted the proposed 2022/23 budget detailed in Appendix 3. The respective Council shares had been approved by the Adur and Worthing Executives. The budget would be adjusted for any changes to the Investment in Service proposals.

## **JSC/087/21-22      Celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The report updated members on the proposed programme of activities to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and to release funding to support the proposed programme of events.

A Member questioned whether the local programme of events, designed by the Councils, was in keeping with how local residents would like to celebrate the platinum jubilee. Officers advised that there were some activities that the Councils would be coordinating, at the behest of the palace or the national programme. Otherwise, the approach is to create a toolkit that enables residents to organise what they want to do.

It was noted that road closure fees had been waived on all four days of the celebrations, to enable residents to hold street parties and that a significant number of applications had already been forthcoming.

In regards to tree planting, it was suggested that in Adur, residents would like to see this spread wider across the District rather than just being in Buckingham Park. Officers advised that this work dovetailed with work around a community tree planting scheme which was wider.

It was suggested that the Councils arrange another media release to promote the celebrations and remind residents that the closure date for applications was the 15th April.

## **Decision**

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. endorsed the proposed programme of celebrations; and
2. approved the release of funding to allow for the delivery of the programme from the Capacity Issues Reserve of each Council as follows:
  - i. Adur District Council £20,000
  - ii. Worthing Borough Council £28,500

## **JSC/088/21-22      Union Place - selection of preferred developer**

The report advised the Committee on the outcome of a successful marketing exercise for the Union Place site and sought the Committee's approval to progress negotiations with Roffey Homes regarding the development of the site for the purpose of delivering new homes, cinema, parking and employment space.

The report recommended that members approved Roffey Homes Ltd as the preferred development partner and that the scheme should be progressed by way of a Joint Venture Partnership between the organisations.

The report also outlined the key areas of negotiation, business case development and financial implications of the proposal that needed to be resolved in a further report to the Committee.

A Member questioned whether there was evidence to support the suggestion that

residents wanted extended cinema provision at Union Place. Officers advised that there was strong support for a cinema on the site. A study had identified there was demand for a further 3 to 5 additional screens in the town and that there were 100,000 trips taken by Worthing residents, out of the town, to access similar cinema provision in Brighton and Chichester. It was noted that the average spend of a cinema goer was £35 per trip, so it had been estimated that for the number of trips identified, £3.5m was leaving the Worthing economy. The option put forward enabled the Council to keep the cinema option on the table whilst providing an opportunity to review the demand for cinema post pandemic.

It was also noted that Worthing Theatres and Museum strongly supported the provision of a cinema at Union Place.

Clarification was sought in relation to the impact of not taking back the NCP car park and the lack of hotel provision in the plans. Officers advised that the scheme was deliberately phased in two parts. It was recognised that getting hold of the NCP part was a costly challenge for the Council. It required NCP to come to the table and negotiate, as an organisation, NCP were known to be difficult to negotiate with. As a result, the Council had undertaken two viability appraisals, both of which had been shown to stack up. The hotel was a strong aspiration for the site, however, a number of hotel operators had been approached and there was no real strong interest in the site. It was felt that demand was taken up by existing hotels in the town.

The Committee also gave consideration to LCRs role in the proposals, the length of NCPs lease and the number of affordable units delivered through the proposals.

It was noted that the site had been vacant for a considerable period of time and that Roffey Homes had a strong record of delivery in the town. Support was expressed for the Joint Venture approach proposed and the Committee requested that an update be brought back to the next meeting of the Joint Strategic Committee on the 1st March 2022.

## **Decision**

That the Joint Strategic Committee:-

1. noted the progress made in developing and enabling the site since the most recent update to the Joint Strategic Committee in November 2018 including the successful grant of planning permission and marketing of the site for a delivery partner;
2. agreed that Roffey Homes be the Council's preferred development partner for Union Place;
3. delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects & Investment to negotiate with Roffey Homes the most appropriate way to bring forward any potential

development, noting that the current preferred option by Roffey Homes was for a Joint Venture; and

4. noted that a report would be brought back to the Joint Strategic Committee for consideration detailing the final proposed documents, and to seek any required authorisations to continue with the proposed Joint Venture arrangement, with an update to be provided on the 1st March 2022.

**Local Government Act 1972**

**Background papers**

*(Reports and decisions are available on the Council's website or as indicated in each of the paragraphs above)*

**Councillor Kevin Jenkins**  
**Leader of the Council**