



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

# **Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20**



## **Message from the Chairmen**

On behalf of the Adur & Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) we are pleased to present the Annual report for 2019/20. This report sets out the JOSC's purpose and function in Adur and Worthing in 2019/20 and some details of the Committee's key work.

This year much of the Committee's work has been driven by the Councils' wider strategic objectives and priorities set out in 'Platforms for our Places' strategic vision. The challenges facing the Councils require joined up thinking and effective partnership working. The Joint Overview and Scrutiny function can help support this by ensuring that activities and opportunities are maximised for the benefit of Adur and Worthing residents.

At the time of writing this Annual report and reflecting on the year behind us, the United Kingdom is still suffering the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. These will have an extreme impact on the health and wellbeing of residents and long term will have an impact on local and national economies. It may take a long time for the economy to 'bounce back' but the Councils will be continually working with our local communities to help with the recovery process. The JOSC will also be able to help in this process by providing oversight and scrutiny of the recovery work taking place and the delivery of the Council services for the benefit of local residents and communities during this difficult time.

The Committee's work will help ensure ensure that the Council Executives (Joint Strategic Committee) and other partners are scrutinised for the actions taken.

In 2019/20 JOSC has played its part in scrutinising a number of important issues and the Leaders of the Councils, relevant Executive Members, the Chief Executive and local stakeholders have all attended meetings to answer questions on relevant issues within their areas of responsibility including:-

- Interviewing and 'holding to account' the Adur and Worthing Council Leaders in October 2019 to ensure that the Councils' priorities are being delivered.

**Outcomes** - The Members of the Committee were able to question the Leaders on issues within their remits and to find out what they and the Councils were doing to address key policy issues for the benefit of the Adur and Worthing communities. This has helped ensure that their decision making on service and policy provision has been transparent and provides value for money for Adur and Worthing residents' benefit.

- There have also been regular reviews of financial information by the Committee this year. Financial Scrutiny takes place year round and in 2019/20 the Committee undertook a review of the Revenue Outturn for 2018/19 and savings proposals for 2019/20. There was also Scrutiny of the Worthing Budget for 2019/20 and the setting of Council Tax.

**Outcomes** - Financial Scrutiny is vital to ensure that the Council Executives are held to account and making decisions in the best interests of the communities. This regular check on the Councils' financial position has enabled the Committee to

question Council Officers and the Executive Members on the status of the current financial position and for an explanation on current and future expenditure. Members have also looked at risk management.

- The Committee also interviewed the Adur and Worthing Councils' Chief Executive in October 2019 and January 2020 to assess progress made in delivering the commitments in the strategic vision 'Platforms for our Places' and the proposals contained in the new Strategic vision 'Platforms for our Places: Going further 2020/22.

**Outcomes** - This in-depth Scrutiny has enabled the Committee to investigate the status and delivery of the activities and commitments for the three year Strategic vision to check that this is progressing in a timely manner. Speaking with the Chief Executive gave the Committee the opportunity to question him regarding the make up of the aims and commitments in the strategic vision. The Chief Executive was also questioned on those projects which were at risk and what was being done to address the risks. This scrutiny will continue during 2020/21.

- The Committee also interviewed Southern Water representatives this year to discuss the Bathing Water quality results released during 2019. Excellent bathing water quality is important to improve the areas' reputation and encourage people to visit, enjoy watersports and swim.

**Outcomes** - The Committee agreed to write to the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Water to request that extra

resources be given to their Misconnections Team to increase the size of the team so that more misconnections could be identified. As a result of this request, further work is now taking place between Council Officers and Southern Water to help with collaboration on this issue. The Committee has requested that the 2021 results be reported to it in due course and will, therefore, continue to monitor the improvements to the bathing water quality with the aim for it to be classified as 'Excellent'.

- The Committee also considered a 'Call-In' against a decision of the Executive Members for Customer Services relating to the release of funds from the affordable housing budget to secure additional affordable housing. The decision was challenged on the basis that the Executive Members had not considered consultation responses when making the decision.

**Outcomes** - The Committee agreed that the decision should be referred back and reconsidered by the Executive Members because there was a lack of documented evidence as part of the decision making process. The Executive Members have subsequently reconsidered the decision taking into account the Committee's views. This highlighted the Committee's important role in holding to account the Executive Members for the decisions which they make and JOSC's ability to ask for decisions to be reconsidered.

- In September 2019 the Committee received a detailed briefing from representatives of West Sussex County Council on the West Sussex Air Quality Plan.

**Outcomes** - The Committee was able to question the

representatives on how the Plan impacts on Adur and Worthing. This included questioning on future assessment of air quality, anti-idling signs and enforcement and the promotion of car share schemes to improve air quality.

- The Committee has kept up to date with the progress on housing issues and scrutinised the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.

**Outcomes** - This has given the Committee the opportunity to ensure the Councils are making progress in delivering the important Housing commitments and question the Director for Communities and Head of Housing on this progress. The Committee has requested that further scrutiny will be maintained during 2020/21.

- The Committee has also undertaken a review of the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny process to see if improvements need to be made.

**Outcomes** - The Committee has supported the recommendations from this review which it will seek to implement where possible to help improve the scrutiny process and working practice such as scrutiny of the Forward Plan of Key decisions at each meeting, better communication on the work of Working Groups and better working with the Executives.

- The Committee has scrutinised the Councils' new approach to engaging with communities which had been updated following a previous review on consultations by the Committee.

**Outcomes** - The Committee was consulted by the Joint Strategic Committee on a draft guide and engagement toolkit. Comments were made at the meeting which were referred to the Joint Strategic Committee when considering the new engagement strategy and this included the need to explain engagement in more detail.

- The findings from a JOSC Working Group review of the provision of transport infrastructure - Public, car and sustainable and current proposals for improvement was also considered by the Committee.

**Outcomes** - The findings from the review were submitted to the Joint Strategic Committee for comment and a detailed response will be made in due course. The Working Group identified issues which it recognised as key points which needed to be addressed as part of the overall transport strategy implementation.

- The Committee has also undertaken a review of the Adur and Worthing Gypsy and Traveller encampments for 2018 by a small Working Group.

**Outcomes** - This Working Group reviewed the unauthorised gypsy and traveller encampments which had occurred in Adur and Worthing during 2018 because of the local tensions that had been caused due to these encampments. The Working Group wanted to find out more about the West Sussex Gypsy and Traveller Transit site agreement which the Councils had entered into in 2015, the processes applied when dealing with

the local encampments and to look at ways to improve the process and relationships between Councillors, local residents and the Gypsies and Travellers. Findings from this review and suggested improvements have been referred to the Joint Strategic Committee for comment and these include suggestions for Councillors to undertake Gypsy and Traveller awareness training, that the Councils' review sites to see if they need to be 'hardened' to prevent further encampments and the welcoming of Sussex Police decisions to consider 'Partial evictions' to help speed up the process of removing unauthorised encampments.

- During 2019/20 separate Member Task and Finish Working Groups of the Committee have also been reviewing the following issues:-
  - The new Refuse and Recycling collection arrangements;
  - The Adur Homes' Repairs and Maintenance service; and
  - Climate Change issues.

**Outcomes** - The findings from these Working Groups will be reported to the Committee during 2020/21 and any relevant recommendations for change will be made to the Councils' Executives and other outside stakeholders as considered appropriate. This highlights the ongoing work of the Committee to help develop and influence service improvements and policy changes.

The Committee has Procedure Rules which assist members in providing strong scrutiny, transparency and also to ensure that all local decision makers are held to account for their decisions.



## **Councillors Stephen Chipp and Roy Barraclough Joint Chairmen of the Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2019/20**

### **What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

The Local Government Act 2000 first introduced the requirement for every local authority to include provision for at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Subsequent amendments to the Act have further developed the role of Overview and Scrutiny within local authorities.

Although not a decision making body, effective Overview and Scrutiny has enormous potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Councils and partner bodies connected with the areas.

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee can review and scrutinise any matters which affect the Councils, the areas or residents from those areas, in order to provide greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of local services.

**The following key roles have been identified as areas which**

## **Overview and Scrutiny should be concerned with in Adur and Worthing:-**

- **Representing the views and wishes of Adur and Worthing residents about the services which they receive;**
- **Holding the Joint Executives (Joint Strategic Committee) to account and reviewing the decisions made;**
- **Monitoring Council performance;**
- **Reviewing Policy;**
- **Developing Policy; and**
- **Scrutinising external issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Councils.**

There is one Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee made up of sixteen Councillors (eight Adur and eight Worthing) representing wards across the areas. The Committee as a whole meets usually at least seven times a year and the meetings are open to the public.

Detailed procedure rules regarding the operation of overview and scrutiny can be found in the Council's Constitution at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/media,140002,en.pdf>

### **Membership of the Committee in 2019/20:**

Adur District Council – Councillors Stephen Chipp (Co-Chairman), Carol Albury, Catherine Arnold, Kevin Boram, Joss Loader (Co Vice-Chairman) Paul Mansfield, Andy McGregor, and Lavinia O'Connor

Worthing Borough Council Councillors Roy Barraclough (Co-Chairman), Keith Bickers (Co-Vice-Chairman), Margaret Howard, Charles James, Richard Nowak (Part year), Jane Sim, Bob Smytherman and Carl Walker

Councillor Paul Baker was also a member of the Committee for part year)

### **Have your say...**

You can find out more about our work on the internet at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/meetings-and-decisions/committees/joint/overview-and-scrutiny/> where you can look at the reports we have received, our recommendations and the minutes of our meetings.

Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council are committed to being more responsive to the way in which they provide services. They want more people to feel that they have the opportunity to influence matters that affect them. The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee can look at these issues and the Committee would like to give more people the chance to contribute to its work.

### **Suggest a topic for scrutiny**

Each year the Joint Committee sets a Work Programme of issues that it would like to review. A copy of the Work Programme for 2019/20 is attached to this Annual report and one for 2020/21 will be agreed in Summer 2020. The Joint Committee reviews its Work

Programme regularly throughout the year to make sure that it is working on topics that it can make a major impact on. The Work Programme is, therefore, subject to change in agreement with the Committee. The Committee would like local residents and stakeholders to get more involved in the scrutiny process so if there is an issue or service which you think that Councillors should review, please make a 'scrutiny request' using the online Scrutiny request form which is accessible at <http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/scrutiny>

The Committee will consider your request and when considering items for the Work Programme will be guided by the Council's Strategic Objectives set out in the strategic vision 'Platforms for our Places', the ability of the Committee to have influence and/or add value on the subject and the PAPER criteria (Public Interest (P), Ability to change (A), Performance (P), Extent (E) and Replication (R). Requests are then considered initially by the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and reported to the next available meeting of the Committee.

### **Come along to a meeting**

The Committee would also like more public engagement in its meetings and would encourage you to attend the public meetings when this is possible and safe to do so but in the meantime the public can access meetings remotely via the remote link on the Councils' website. Meetings are held at least seven times a year. Public questions relating to Council meetings can be put to the remote meetings if submitted in advance.

To find out more you can contact Mark Lowe, Scrutiny and Risk Officer at Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing on 01903 221009 or on [mark.lowe@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:mark.lowe@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

**Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20**

<u>Date of meeting</u>	<u>Items for discussion</u>	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Executive Members to be invited</u>	<u>Change to original Work Programme?</u>
20 June 2019	Annual JOSC report for 2018/19  Report from the Transport issues Working Group	Joint Chairmen of JOSC  Chairman of the Working Group	N/A  N/A	No  Yes. Item was on pending list.
25 July 2019	Joint Revenue Outturn report 2018/19  Outline Budget Strategy 2019/20	Director for Digital & Resources/Chief Financial Officer  Director for Digital & Resources/Chief Financial Officer	Executive Members for Resources  II	No  No

19 September 2019	West Sussex Air quality Strategy  Update on the delivery of the Housing Strategy - Review of progress	Director for Communities/ West Sussex County Council  Director for Communities/Head of Housing	Executive Members for Wellbeing  Executive Members for Customer Services	No  No
17 October 2019	Annual interviews with Council Leaders  Review of the Progress in delivering the activities in Platforms for our Places - Questioning Chief Executive  Report from the Working Group on the review of the procedures for dealing with Gypsy and Traveller encampments in Adur and Worthing and use of the transit site.	Director for Digital & Resources  Chief Executive  Chairman of the Working Group	Leaders  Adur & Worthing Executive Members  N/A	No  Yes. Item put back to October meeting from September because Chief Executive was unable to attend.  Yes. Item was on pending list.
21 November 2019	Adur and Worthing and Joint Outline 5 year forecast and savings proposals - Executive Member interviews.  Engaging Adur & Worthing - How we engage with our communities  Report from the Working Group that has reviewed the effectiveness of Overview and	Director for Digital & Resources/Chief Financial Officer  Director for Communities  Chairman of the Working Group	Adur and Worthing Executive Members  N/A	No  Yes. Item was on pending list.  Yes. Item was on the pending list.

	Scrutiny Committees			
30 January 2020	<p>Worthing Budget Estimates 20/21 and setting of 2020/21 Council Tax</p> <p>Presentation from Southern Water on bathing water quality issues</p> <p>Review of the Progress in delivering the activities in Platforms for our Places - Questioning Chief Executive</p>	<p>Director for Digital &amp; Resources/Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Worthing Executives</p> <p>Adur Executive Member for the Environment, Worthing Executive Member for Regeneration, Executive Members for Wellbeing</p> <p>Adur and Worthing Executives</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes. Item brought forward to January meeting from March because Platforms update was considered earlier in December 2019 at the JSC meeting.</p> <p>New item. Added following a scrutiny request.</p>
19 March 2020 - Meeting cancelled	<p>Leader interviews</p> <p>Annual Work Programme setting 2019/20</p> <p>Report on the consultation processes undertaken for the disposal of publicly owned Council land and assets.</p> <p>Report from the JOSC Working Group on evening and Night Time economy</p>	<p>Director for Digital &amp; Resources</p> <p>Director for Digital &amp; Resources</p> <p>Director for the Economy</p> <p>Chairman of the Working Group</p>	<p>Leaders</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>New item. Added following a scrutiny request.</p> <p>No</p>

Date to be confirmed	Major Projects being undertaken in partnership with West Sussex County Council - Update	Director for the Economy	Executive Members for Regeneration and relevant West Sussex County Council Cabinet Members
	Review of Corporate Assets	Head of Major Projects & Investment/Director for Economy	Relevant Executive Members
	Worthing Theatres - Review of the operation of the new contract	Director for the Economy	N/A
	Report from the Working Group reviewing recycling	Chairman of the Working Group	N/A
	Report from the Working Group reviewing the Cultural Services	Chairman of the Working Group	N/A
	Report from the Climate Change Working Group	Chairman of the Working Group	N/A
	Update on the delivery of the Housing Strategy - Review of progress	Director for Communities	Executive Members for Customer Services
	Report from JOSOC Working Group on Adur Homes repairs & maintenance service	Chairman of the Working Group	N/A

**Note** - A progress report on the delivery of the work contained in the Work Programme will be presented to each meeting.

All timings are provisional and subject to change in agreement with the Joint Chairmen and the Committee.

