

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Policy and Strategy Committee
4 April 2006**

*Councillor Robert Dunn (Chairperson)
Councillor Neil Parkin (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillor Melanie Blunden
Councillor Keith Dollemore
Councillor Liza McKinney

Councillor Julie Searle
Councillor Christine Turner

Absent*

PSC/826/05-06 Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members

Councillor Debbie Kennard declared her substitution for Councillor Robert Dunn.

The Chief Executive declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 11.

PSC/827/05-06 Questions and Statements by the Public

There were no members of the public present.

PSC/828/05-06 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 2 February 2006 and 16 March 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

PSC/829/05-06 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions

None.

PSC/830/05-06 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 5.

The Head of Financial Services introduced Mr Richard Smith and Mrs Sian Adam from the District Auditors. Mr Smith outlined the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter noting the improvements that the Council had made. He thanked the Council's officers for their co-operation with District Audit and invited questions from the Committee.

Members were pleased to note the areas in which the Council had made improvements and asked what action was being taken to progress this further.

The Chief Executive explained that, as a small Authority, the Council is limited by capacity issues but noted that progress had been made through partnership working to address these. He added that the recently formed Corporate Performance Team would be monitoring performance management matters.

Members asked that the wording of paragraph 34 on page 14 of the Letter be amended to read ‘...from year to year and 75% of these receipts...’. Members queried which year the figure of £20 million in paragraph 36 referred to. Mr Smith clarified that this figure related to 2005.

The Committee had before it a minute extract from the Constitutional and Audit Panel setting out three recommendations regarding the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. Recommendation (i) asked the Committee to consider the pensions fund deficit referred to in the Letter.

The Head of Financial Services clarified that the pensions fund deficit was being addressed through stepped increases in employers contributions incorporated in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan. He added that current forecasts estimated that this remedial action would balance the pensions fund within 20 years.

The Committee agreed that this recommendation from the Constitutional and Audit Panel be noted and agreed that the matter was already being addressed. They also agreed recommendation (ii) from the Panel and approved the Annual Audit and Inspection letter as per the recommendation in the report.

Resolved

- (i) that the Committee notes the pensions fund deficit and endorses the action set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan to address the deficit;
- (ii) that the positive comments made by the auditors in the report be noted and that officers be congratulated on the improvements made in these areas;
- (iii) that the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/05 be approved and that Officers be authorised to publish the Letter in accordance with regulations.

PSC/831/05-06 Improving Call Handling at Adur District Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Business Transformation Manager, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 6.

The Head of Business Transformation introduced the report which asked the Committee to agree the transfer of the Council’s switchboard to West Sussex County Council’s (WSSC) Contact Centre. He outlined the background to the proposal noting issues with the current switchboard which needed to be addressed and the potential improvements to service that could be achieved.

Members noted the high level of service provided by the current switchboard and expressed some concerns regarding the proposed changes. Members felt it was important that, if the proposal was agreed, the switchboard service should continue to operate from its current location in West Sussex rather than any further afield. They also felt that any changes in call handling practices, such as the introduction of an automated menu system, should be avoided.

The Committee discussed the potential benefits of the proposal and agreed that the Contact Centre at WSSC was very professionally run and provided a high level of service. It was noted that the training given and the number of staff available to answer calls should improve the service and reduce the number of lost calls. Members also noted the cost benefits of the proposal.

The Chief Executive asked Members to note the importance of the future sustainability of the proposal, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

The Committee agreed that the transfer of the switchboard be approved subject to assurance that the contract be reviewed at the end of the term and that a break clause be included to allow the Council to withdraw should any change in the third party service provider or the location arise in the future.

Resolved

- (i) that the transfer of ADC's switchboard to the WSCC Contact Centre at a cost of a one off start up fee of £30,000 and £38,000 per annum thereafter be approved subject to:
 - (a) review of the contract at the end of the term, and
 - (b) the inclusion of a break clause to allow the Council to withdraw should any change in the third party service provider or the location arise in the future;
- (ii) that it be noted that 1.5 FTE Switchboard posts will be made redundant and the that the Council will seek to find suitable redeployment opportunities in line with the Council's Employment Stability Policy;
- (iii) that the cost increase of approx. £8,000 pa (£4,000 in the first year) be met from the CRM project revenue budget in the short term and savings in the in the telephony upgrade project in the longer term;
- (iv) that the long term plan to improve call handling at ADC by examining working practices section by section and building on the handling capacity at the WSCC Contact Centre be noted and that any proposals on this be presented for approval in a subsequent paper to Policy and Strategy Committee.

PSC/832/05-06 Adur Transport Plan – Transport Schemes

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

The Planning Officer introduced the report which asked members to consider recent, current and planned transport schemes for the District and make comments. He explained that Annex 3 (the 'Blue Book') included schemes which would be progressed only if developer funding becomes available.

The Committee discussed the transport schemes included in the three annexes to the report and asked for several matters to be raised:

- that works to Shoreham Tollbridge be referred to as restoration not renovation;
- that the location of the proposed Shoreham Parkway railway station be clarified and that further information on the benefits and implications of the proposal be provided;
- that the proposed works to Gardner's footbridge, Southwick be clarified and that a request be forwarded to West Sussex County Council for this footbridge to be adapted for use by wheelchair users and prams;
- that further information be provided regarding proposed works to the cycle route at Kingston Lane, Shoreham which currently ends at Park Lane not Church Lane as listed;

- that it be clarified that the scheme listed under Botolphs as 'South Horsham Dial a Ride' does not fall within Adur District;
- that further information be provided regarding whether the 'Local Safety Scheme' works at Brighton Road / The Broadway, Lancing will be progressed;
- that further information be provided on the final scheme for the Ropetackle roundabout, Shoreham including a timetable for these works;
- that the closure of Victoria Road, Shoreham be reviewed and consultation with local residents be undertaken on reopening the road as a one way street for South bound traffic;
- that further information be provided on the scheme for 'Public Transport Waiting Facility Improvements';
- that that further information be provided on the proposed scheme for 'Additional peak hour services between Lancing and Ford'.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the amendments and queries discussed.

Resolved

- (i) that the recent and current improvements related to transport within Adur and the Highways Work Programme 2006/07 be noted;
- (ii) that the identified opportunities for further improvements within the Forward Programme and the 'Blue Book' be noted, subject to the amendments and queries discussed.

PSC/833/05-06 Economic Regeneration

Before the Committee was a report by the Head of Planning and Community, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 8.

The Economic Regeneration Manager introduced the report which updated Members on the regeneration initiatives currently underway and proposed that a Task Group be established to focus on the implementation of the Shoreham Renaissance strategy.

The Committee thanked the officers for a useful and interesting report. Members requested that nomination of a member to the task group be deferred until after the election period. It was agreed that the appointment be considered at the annual meeting of Council.

Members asked to see the full study on the proposed East Worthing Access Road (EWAR) when completed. It was noted that the study would be made public and that a report would be going before a Simultaneous Executive Meeting on this matter.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report, other than the nomination of a Member to the Task Group, as discussed.

Resolved

- (i) that the arrangements for managing the implementation of Shoreham Renaissance be agreed;
- (ii) that the annual meeting of Council be asked to appoint a Member to join the Task Group;
- (iii) that the Task Group will report back at the next meeting of Policy and Strategy Committee with:
 - a proposed funding bid to the West Sussex Coastal AIF's 5 Town Network project to support the implementation of the Strategy for Shoreham Renaissance;
 - a proposal for a mechanism to 'pool' the capital receipts generated by the development of council owned sites in order to 'recycle' the money back into new community facilities at Pond Road;
 - a proposal for improving the engagement of businesses in the implementation of the Strategy for Shoreham Renaissance;
- (iv) that the Council will continue hosting and managing the 5 Town Network project for a further three years and to acting as the lead partner for the AIF capital funding;
- (v) that the current *Business & Local Economy* chapter of the Community Strategy 2004-2009 be used as the *Economic Regeneration* Strategy for Adur instead of producing a separate document to replace the council's economic development strategy 2000-2005.

PSC/834/05-06 Adur District Council Corporate Risk Register

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 9.

The Chief Executive introduced the report which set out a comprehensive register of identified risks for the Authority and actions to address them. He briefly explained the scoring matrix used in the process and noted that any 'red' risks were routinely addressed by the Council's Corporate Performance Team.

The Committee asked for further information on the actions plans to address the identified 'red' risks set out in the report as numbers 211 and 243. The Chief Executive agreed that he would ask the Corporate Performance Team to look at these items and brief Members.

The Committee had no modifications to make to the risk register and agreed the recommendations in the report.

Resolved

- (i) that the work undertaken to date in the compilation of the risk register be noted;
- (ii) that the risk register, as attached to the report, be endorsed.

PSC/835/05-06 Local Government Act 2003 – Prudential Indicators

Before the Committee was a report by the Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 10.

The Head of Financial Services introduced the report which set out a number of statutory prudential indicators measuring the Council's performance.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the recommendation.

Resolved that the Prudential Indicators, attached to the report as Annex A, be approved.

PSC/836/05-06 Interim Chief Executive, Worthing Borough Council – Request to Extend Current Arrangements

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

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which asked members to agree an extension to the current arrangements for the Chief Executive post. He reported that Worthing Borough Council would be recruiting a replacement Chief Executive but that the successful candidate would not be likely to be in post until December 2006. He noted that recommendation 2.1 should be amended to read '*...through to the end of December 2006 and note that the interim management of the Chief Executive's Department will be shared by the Chief Executive and the Director of Services, the latter in his role as the Deputy Chief Executive.*'

The Committee noted the details of the arrangements and agreed that it be extended, as per the amended recommendations. Members agreed that the matter did not need to go before Housing and Central Services Committee.

Resolved

- (i) that Worthing Borough Council's request to extend the current interim Chief Executive arrangement with Adur District Council's Chief Executive through until the end of December 2006 be agreed and that it be noted that the interim management of the Chief Executive's Department will be shared by the Chief Executive and the Director of Services, the latter in his role as the Deputy Chief Executive;
- (ii) that the use of the income from Worthing Borough Council for the continued role of the Adur Chief Executive as Interim Chief Executive of Worthing Borough, to fund some additional support for Divisional Managers and some backfilling resource for Human Resources in the pay and grading review tasks be agreed;
- (iii) that the detailed proposals as set out in section 4.0 of this report be agreed including the proposal to manage the organisation towards a handover of these arrangements with effect from 1 July 2006 and that from that date the Director of Resources (Andrew Gardiner) be the Corporate Property Officer.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9:30pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

Chairman