

**Minutes of the Simultaneous Executive Meeting between the  
Policy and Strategy Committee of Adur District Council  
and the Cabinet of Worthing Borough Council**

**Worthing Town Hall**

**15 March 2007**

Councillor Neil Parkin (Chairperson)  
Councillor Julie Searle (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillor Keith Dollemore  
Councillor Robert Dunn  
Councillor Debbie Kennard

Councillor Liza McKinney  
Councillor Angie Mills

Absent\*

In attendance and taking part in the discussions representing Worthing Borough Council were Councillors Keith Mercer (Leader), Ann Barlow, Paul High, Nick, Johns, John Rogers and Bryan Turner.

**SEM/589/06-07      Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members**

Councillor Dunn declared an interest as a member of West Sussex County Council.

Mr Lowrie, Chief Executive made a general declaration of interest on behalf of the Directors and Heads of Service and a personal declaration in the position of chief executive. Should detail of the position of Chief Executive come to be discussed Mr Lowrie indicated he would leave the meeting at that point.

**SEM/560/06-07      Questions and Statements by the Public**

Members of the public were invited to ask questions or make statements about any matter for which the Council had a responsibility or which affected the district. No questions were asked.

Mr Peter Berry of Shoreham was concerned that Adur and Worthing residents knew little of the proposals being considered and had no opportunity to express their views especially with no elections in May 2007. Mr Berry further commented on the costs involved, the situation of Adur's tenants and contingency plans to untie the partnership.

Mr Bob Cranmore, chairman of the Shoreham Society had two questions for the meeting – if there was to be a joint council where would the new offices be sited – a business park where local people could not reach? What would happen the work undertaken in the Adur Development Plan?

The Leader of the Council assured Mr Cranmore that the comment regarding the new site for joint offices arose from his personal comments and was not being discussed. However should a central location for the back office work be considered in due course, it would be accompanied by customer friendly shops in the high streets - the public's view would be taken into account.

**SEM/561/06-07 Confirmation of Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Committee held on 27 February 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**SEM/562/06-07 Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

None.

**SEM/563/06-07 Adur and Worthing Partnership Strategy – High Level Business Case and Possible single Officer Structure**

Before the Committee was a report of the Adur and Worthing Partnership Management Board, 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 report had been prepared by the Adur and Worthing Partnership Management Board, in connection with the possible development of a Single Officer Structure to serve both councils in the future. It focused upon the High Level Business Case that had been prepared by the Partnership Management Board and reported to Members the evaluation undertaken by Capita on behalf of the two Councils.

It drew to the attention of Members the comments that had been received during the staff consultation exercise, and to other observations made by external bodies who have commented on the High Level Business Case.

On the basis of the work undertaken so far, the report concluded that there was a case for taking the work forward on a phased basis. During the first phase, more detailed consideration needed to be given as to how a single structure should be developed across eleven service areas. Further work also needed to be undertaken on possible financial arrangements and issues relating to corporate governance. The report also identified certain actions that need to be taken by each of the Councils.

The report before the Meeting recommended that both Councils in March, be recommended to approve the revised High level Business case and the supporting Implementation Strategy, so that further work could be undertaken by officers between April and July 2007. It also recommended a number of Key actions to be approved and brought back to members in July 2007 when both councils would need to consider moving to the next phase of implementation.

It was also recommended to the Committee that the Council should consider moving to a cabinet and leader form of political management structure.

The Chief Executive circulated a set of power point slides as a visual aid to his presentation of the report to the meeting. These papers are attached to the signed copy of the minutes and the presentation details not repeated in these minutes.

The meeting was challenged to explain the benefits and beneficiaries of the proposal before the meeting, the issue of who employed the staff and the decision taken to become leader

and cabinet form of decision making structure which left many councillors without a role. It was explained that in Worthing the Cabinet system had increased the speed of decision making and call-in's challenged the decisions made; all members had a role to play either in making the decision or scrutinising it. The Chief Executive explained the Governance issues of single employer and the employment issues, which was working well for AWS (Adur and Worthing Services). Concerns expressed would be part of the fine detail considered between March and July, prior to the final decision being taken. The question for the meeting was to consider whether it was worth exploring these issues.

Members felt that the Council had to move on from the old ideas, the Cabinet system was working well at County and whilst there was some disadvantage in that not all members did feel engaged in the process there was adequate opportunity to do so through Scrutiny. As to the single officer structure, staffing costs were high to deliver services but as the services were important it was necessary to look to streamlining costs, this could only be achieved by addressing senior management costs including merging across authorities. Further investigation was necessary to look at where the gains could be achieved and where they were unrealistic.

It was felt that Adur was not financially viable in the longer terms so innovative ways had to be found to provide services to the local council tax payers – reducing costs, redundancies or service cuts.

#### **Resolved that**

- I. Capita be thanked for its evaluation, which was delivered in a timely and constructive manner and staff, Unison, Members, the Audit Commission, the IDeA and SECE be thanked for their help with and contributions to the work;
- II. Officers be authorised, in conjunction with both Leaders, to make minor changes and additions to the High Level Business Case and the Implementation Strategy, once feedback on the further work has been received from Capita, before both council meetings in March 2007;
- III. The following be **recommended** to Council on 29 March 2007:

That Officers be authorised to progress immediately with implementation of Phase 1 of the Partnership Strategy and both councils:

- a. Adopt the Vision and Objectives of the Partnership Strategy and to adequately resource it in consultation with the Section 151 Officers and the Leaders of Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council and each to seek external funding ;
- b. the recommended officer structure as the basis for the way forward be agreed;
- c. the current shared arrangements for the Interim Chief Executive be extended until 31 December 2007;
- d. In the event of the Partnership Strategy being taken forward a Joint Appointments Committee (for staffing and employment issues) be ratified to consider options and a process for the appointment of a fixed term joint Chief Executive, the Directors and the Service Heads, the

- membership of the Joint Appointments Committee to be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2007 ;
- e. Agree that Officers refine the recommended service blocks, further develop appropriate financial and governance arrangements for Members to consider in July 2007 and investigate and seek external funding to help progress the development of appropriate financial arrangements in consultation with the Joint Working Party (Leaders and Deputy Leaders of each Council)
  - f. any savings achieved in 2007/0-8 be placed in a Partnership contingency Fund to help dampen the effect of departure costs in 2008/09
  - g. Consideration be given to an 'in principle' decision, to move to a Leader and Cabinet system and if this is determined, agreed that both Councils should subsequently develop Cabinet arrangements that align to each other, as closely as possible.

**SEM/564/06-07 Local Government (Early Termination of Employment)(Discretionary compensation) Regulations: Options Report for Worthing Borough Council and Adur District Council**

This report was withdrawn from the agenda prior to discussion.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:31pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

**Chairman**