

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber at the
Town Hall Chapel Road Worthing on**

23 February 2106

The Mayor, Councillor Michael Donin
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sean McDonald

Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Mary Lermite
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Heather Mercer
Councillor Keith Bickers	*Councillor Nigel Morgan
*Councillor Joan Bradley	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Callum Buxton	Councillor Mark Nolan
Councillor Michael Cloake	Councillor Luke Proudfoot
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Clive Roberts
Councillor James Doyle	Councillor Bob Smytherman
*Councillor Norah Fisher	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Diane Guest	Councillor Keith Sunderland
Councillor Alex Harman	Councillor Bryan Turner
Councillor Lionel Harman	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Joshua High	Councillor Vicki Vaughan
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Vino Vinojan
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Vic Walker
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Tom Wye
Councillor Susan Jelliss	Councillor Paul Yallop
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	

*=absent

C/045/15-16 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bradley and Fisher.

C/046/15-16 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, the following declarations were made:

Councillor Bryan Turner - member of West Sussex County Council
Councillor Paul High - member of West Sussex County Council
Councillor Michael Cloake - member of West Sussex County Council
Councillor Bob Smytherman - member of West Sussex County Council, also as Town Crier connected to the TCI (Town Centre Initiative).

C/047/15-16 Questions and Statements from the public

The Mayor informed Council that 4 members of the public had registered to speak within the time allowed for registering and one further person had submitted 2 questions.

The first question was put by Ms Jaqui Ball to Councillor Val Turner (Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing),

"Given the serious flaws, which have been admitted by the Council, in the procurement process for the voluntary sector infrastructure contract, what assurances can the Council give to the hundreds of Worthing voluntary and community groups that, if they find themselves in a similar position to Voluntary Action Worthing in the future, due and proper weighting will be given to successful track record, in-depth local knowledge and extensive local contacts?"

Response from Councillor Val Turner:

The purpose of this commissioning exercise was to achieve the best possible infrastructure support service across Adur and Worthing ensuring this reflected the wants and needs of local groups as well as responding to the changing role and ambition of CVS's identified by NAVCA, their national body.

Therefore, the process was designed to highlight how the service provider would perform in the future and help drive forward our ambition of enterprising communities set out in Catching the Wave and Surf's Up. The process was not assessing how well an organisation had performed in the past but how the service provider would have clear vision and purpose for the future to be able to respond to the changing nature of the voluntary and community sector across Adur and Worthing. Although there was a procedural error in how the tender was advertised due to the Councils' preference to have the service provided by a local organisation, this did not affect the scoring of the two applications and due and proper weighting was clearly stated within the tender document and applied.

Future commissioning exercises will always ensure we are able to secure the best possible service for Adur and Worthing and this type of exercise ensures we are able to award contracts to organisations that best fit the skills, knowledge and experience required.

CVSs play a fundamental and critical role for communities and they are highly valued organisations offering expert advice and support whilst also acting as an advocate and spokesperson for the sector as a whole. We firmly believe that this exercise has helped deliver that and will ensure a model of excellence is delivered across Adur and Worthing making best use of resource and delivering an effective and efficient service.

Supplementary from Ms Ball:

Ms Ball asked how long it would take for the new organisation to build local contacts and knowledge that had taken the current organization 20 years.

Councillor Val Turner explained that some of the staff had previously worked in Worthing, she expected that in 6 months the organisation would be making a difference.

The second question was put by Brian Gill of Transition Town Worthing.

“Tender for the provision of: Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Service in Adur and Worthing

“ in respect of our local Council for Voluntary Services (known as Voluntary Action Worthing - or VAW), given what many feel to be:

- the questionable cost of the whole tendering exercise, involving external consultants etc.(whose advice may be seen to have been ignored); and therefore the question of value for public money.
- the then, many connected and responsible questions as to that process in relation to:
arguably clear evidence as to proving possible, but substantial shortcomings in the same, as regards equity and evenhandedness, and thus failures to comply with the accepted principles central to good and fair commissioning practice. Some these breaches have had to be admitted to, in a formal report by Council officer John Mitchell; but leaving others awaiting reply.
- And then,as a result of that process, insofar as that is questionable, the following considerations as to the decision itself:

the paying of little heed to the likely considerable and future social cost of such unplanned and arguably unnecessary change, to both Worthing and Adur's extensive and active voluntary sector, and, therefore negative consequences to our wider community); and questionable avoidance of the relevant process of democratic scrutiny available, to address such issues; all which might be said to fly in the face of the above remaining, and justified, democratic concerns about the process...

“ I would therefore, in light of the above real and local concerns, like to ask the Council to confirm that the whole matter is to be called in, and subjected to an unbiased examination by the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader responded as follows

Councillor Turner has covered a wide range of points in her response to the earlier question regarding the procurement process the Council has acknowledge the flaw in the process, the call-in lapsed on Friday , there was no valid call in.

Mr Gill's supplementary felt that the matter needed scrutiny suggesting that the Governance Committee should look at the outstanding issues.

The Leader suggested that this was a matter for the Governance Committee and was up to this committee to consider looking at the issue.

The next question was asked by Matt Dumbleton

“How does this decision demonstrate that the results of consultation with us, local groups (to keep the existing providers and support them) were considered?”

The Leader responded that

The event facilitated by Toynbee Hall gathered evidence to form an integral part of the tender document and was at the forefront of the requirements for the model of excellence that is intended to drive forward our ambition of enterprising communities and ensure the best possible infrastructure support to Worthing.

The supplementary question related to why the council had placed such a low regard to a proven local expert with local partnerships. The Leader responded that the VAW was held in high regard. The use of the consultants had been for the contract document.

The next question was asked by Nik Demetriades.

“Can voluntary sector organisations, staff, volunteers and taxpayers in Worthing and Adur be assured that there was not a hidden political agenda at work that predetermined the outcome of this tender from the very start of the process, that was designed to award the tender to a ‘favoured’ organisation from Brighton that was to all intents and purposes ‘groomed’ to put in an application, whilst at the same time, no other organisations in West Sussex or elsewhere (other than Voluntary Action Worthing and Adur Voluntary Action) , were given that same opportunity to also tender for the contract through proper advertising – which is a due requirement of the official, formal tender process.”

The Leader responded to the question:

Getting the best service for Worthing and Adur was at the forefront of this commissioning exercise. In no way was the outcome predetermined or any hidden political agenda at play that would favour any organisation applying. This was an open, fair and transparent process that was designed to help secure the best possible service provider for Adur and Worthing. As part of this both Adur Voluntary Action and Voluntary Action Worthing were encouraged to apply.

The contract was advertised locally (through the Shoreham and Worthing Herald and the Council’s procurement portal and website) rather than nationally, due to a regrettable error stemming from the Councils’ preference to have the service provided by a local organisation. We have now put additional procedures in place to ensure that this doesn’t happen again and that any applicable tenders for local services are advertised nationally in accordance with procurement guidelines. Seven different organisations expressed an interest in tendering for the opportunity, but only two of those submitted Tenders.

Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Dave Simmons (for Adur) and Councillor Val Turner (for Worthing), have been consulted and actively involved in the decision process. A briefing was sent to all Adur and Worthing Councillors in July 2015 advising of the proposed changes, and both Leaders were kept up-to-date with progress.

A detailed supplementary question was asked which the Leader requested be put into writing for a written response.

There being time remaining in the 30 minutes allowed for public questions, the Mayor invited other members of the public present to address Council. Two questions had been submitted by Barbara Cook since the close of the registration time for questions.

Mrs Cook asked a question relating to the commissioning of a special workshop to receive input from Voluntary Sector Groups where those attending unanimously voted for the continuation of Voluntary Action Worthing to provide the service, why was the contract awarded to an organisation with no local knowledge or experience?

The response was given by the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, the use of the consultants was to seek information for the procurement process and the future direction of the CVS supplier; to ensure that the review of the contract reflected what the voluntary sector was looking for in the future.

Mrs Cook's second question related to Queen Street Church's Car Park. A petition had been submitted to keep the Queen Street Car Park free, communal and unoccupied by a temporary school. West Sussex had gone ahead with the project and should have ensured that a certain number of car parking spaces should have been retained during the build. Bohunt continued to occupy the site despite ignoring certain conditions. WSCC had been made aware of the breaches. The county and ward councillor for this area had not been helpful in assisting the residents. Ms Cook suggested that the democratic process overlooked and the continued use went against policy 11 in Worthing's Core Adopted Strategy as the car park was a 'community facility'.

The response was given by Councillor Bryan Turner

As stated in the question the Bohunt Academy applications have been dealt with by West Sussex County Council and it is also the responsible authority for the enforcement of planning conditions.

Worthing Planning Committee did recommend to WSCC that a planning condition be attached to the permission for the temporary school on Queen Street Car Park requiring a minimum of 31 spaces but WSCC only required the provision of a minimum of 20 spaces up until the 4th January as the contractors required access to the temporary car park to complete the new Academy.

An additional condition was imposed by WSCC requiring a Parking Management Strategy within two months of the original permission (by 22nd September 2015) and this did require the provision of a minimum of 20 public parking spaces for the duration of the permission, alternate measures to minimise school related on street parking pressures, and potential provision of parking associated with the use of Queen Street Church.

It is apparent that alternative parking provision for the public has not been provided in accordance with this planning condition although the Academy has been seeking agreement with Northbrook College to see whether its car park could be used. The Council is aware of residents concerns but ultimately it is up to the County Council as the relevant Planning Authority whether it is expedient to take any enforcement action in connection with any non-compliance with planning conditions attached to the relevant planning permission. (I understand that the level of parking by the public has not been significant and therefore this maybe a factor in WSCC not taking action

A licence was entered into with WSCC to allow the temporary portacabins on Queen Street Car Park but this only repeated the planning condition requiring 20 spaces to be provided by the 4th January 2016. A lease for the more permanent use of the car park for Bohunt staff, once they move into the new Academy buildings, is currently

being negotiated between Bohunt and WBC. This will require 20 public spaces to be permanently available and access to the whole car park outside of the school day.

C/048/15-16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 December 2015, be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/049/15-16 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader, Executive Members, Head of Paid Service

In his announcements the Mayor encouraged Councillors to support the Worthing Museum and Art Gallery as much as possible, the Mayor also mentioned supporting the Worthing Symphony Orchestra. The Mayor felt that Councillors should do as much as possible to raise the profile of and promote the Worthing culture offer.

The Mayor mentioned the first Worthing half marathon where 1500 runners has taken part including councillors and officers.

Forthcoming events for the Mayor's charity were the charity swim at Splashpoint on Saturday 12th March and an evening at the Connaught Theatre on 17th April.

The Mayor informed Council that he had been visited by the Muslim Association UK as where they had donated £500 to GuildCare, one of his charity's, they had made the presentation in the Parlour and had bought some copies of the Koran for councillors. Councillors were asked to collect their copy from the refreshment table.

The Mayor mentioned a working party looking at the future of the Mayoralty, one visible sign was the Chief Executive taking on the duties of the Mace Bearer at the Council meeting.

There were no announcements by the Leader, Executive Members of the Head of Paid Service.

C/050/15-16 Items raised under the urgency provisions

There were no urgent items for Council.

C/051/15-16 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

Council had before it recommendations from Joint Governance Committee, the Joint Strategic Committee and the Executive, as detailed as item 7 on pages 5 to 16, of the Council agenda, with copies attached to the minutes.

Item A Joint Governance Committee - 19 January 2016

(i) Use of electronic devices in meetings of the Council

Councillor Sparkes as the Joint Chairman presented the Committee's recommendation item 7A1 on pages 5 and 6 of the agenda;

The recommendation and amendment was seconded by Councillor Yallop.

On a vote the following was noted: For: 32 Against: 0 Abstention: 2

Resolved that the existing Protocol for Public / Press Recording of Public Council Meetings be replaced with the revised document as set out in Appendix B to the Committee's report;

(ii) Motion on Notice - Worthing Borough Council

Councillor Sparkes as the Joint Chairman presented the Committee's recommendation 7A 2 on pages 7-8 of the agenda; the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Bickers.

Concern was expressed that a Motion to Worthing Borough Council had been debated at a Joint committee meeting when there was an informal arrangement that matters affecting a single council be debated by members of that Council only.

On a vote the following was noted: For: 32 Against: 0 Abstention: 2

Resolved that the Scheme of Officer Delegations be amended to limit the Solicitor to the Councils authority to settle proceedings on behalf of the Council, and to prevent the inclusion of confidentiality clauses unless prior written agreement had been sought from the Leader of the Council (or deputy in their absence) and the Leader of the main opposition (or deputy in their absence).

Item B - Joint Strategic Committee - 2 February 2016

(i) Treasury Management Strategy

The Leader of the Council presented the Committee's recommendation item 7B 1 on new page 9 of the agenda; the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Nolan.

On a vote the following was noted: For: 32 Against: 0 Abstention: 2

Resolved that the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements be approved.

(ii) Strategic Property Investment Fund - Investment Strategy

The Leader of the Council presented the Committee's recommendation item 7B 2 on page 11 of the agenda; the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Sunderland.

The Leader commended the work by officers to move forward with proactive management of the property portfolio, this was supported by Council.

On a vote the following was noted: For: 31 Against: 0 Abstention: 3

Resolved that approval be given to the key principles and criteria set out in the report form the basis of the new Joint Investment Strategy in accordance with paragraph 4.03(d) of the Councils' Constitutions;

(iii) Council Tax Support Schemes

The Leader of the Council presented the Committee's recommendation item 7B 2 on pages 13-14 of the agenda; the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Bickers.

Members of the Opposition asked Council to think carefully before approving the Scheme before it; questioning the ability of vulnerable residents to find the additional payments required under the Scheme; how residents had been made aware of their entitlement; the amount of support given to claimants to complete the claim form; and whether the amount set aside was adequate for the number of claimants.

On a vote the following was noted: For: 28 Against: 4 Abstention: 2

Resolved that the Council

- a. approved the Council Tax Support scheme for 2016/17 should be based upon the scheme for 2015/16 with no changes beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit;
- b. agreed that the preferred scheme for 2016/17 should form the basis of the scheme for 2017/18 subject to consultation;
- c. delegated authority to determine the scheme for 2017/18 to the Executive Member for Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Customer Services.

Item C - Executive meeting - 9 February 2016

The Mayor announced that Item 7C would be taken together with item 8 on the agenda

C/052/15-16 Council Tax 2016/17

Council had before for it the recommendation of the Executive, a complete copy of the council budget and the full recommendation to Council including the West Sussex County Council precept placed in the Chamber, these are attached to the signed minutes as item 8.

The Mayor reminded Council that in the usual tradition, the Leader would be invited to address council with the recommendation of the Executive, following the seconding of the proposal for the council tax, the Leaders of the Opposition Groups and spokesperson on the council would be invited to address the meeting.

The normal rules of debate would apply, amendments would be dealt with as they arose; a recorded vote would be taken on any amendment and the final vote in accordance with the Regulations.

The Leader addressed Council to propose the recommendation of the Executive and the council Tax level for 2016/17.

Starting with the future finances of the council particularly without revenue support grant, the Leader spoke on the investment in digital services leading to revenue savings, the

maximising of income from assets particularly car parks and the increased revenue from greater use over a range of services.

The investments by the Council would make Worthing a place people enjoyed living therefore more would be made of green spaces, the cultural and events programme was expanding, naming the half marathon and the improving Theaters programme as examples, and there was a continuing proactive approach to housing. The Council's continued role in housing, homelessness and the street community had been recognised in the iESE nomination for transforming services.

In recycling, the Council was accepting more products with the income stream increasing to near £800K. Local employment rates were the reducing for a third year in a row with just 1% of the population on job seekers allowance.

In ending his address to Council, the Leader spoke of the work by officers of the Council and their work for the Town.

In making the proposal for the council tax for 2016/17 the Leader explained that his address had painted a picture of the Borough on the way up.

Councillor Nolan seconded the proposal.

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Main Opposition to address Council.

Councillor Sunderland addressed Council supporting the positive direction of improvement for the Council and its services, particularly in digital changes. In mentioning national government policy and reforms, Councillor Sunderland spoke about changes that gave local choice but removed it with caveats - using business rates, and new homes bonuses as examples. Councillor Sunderland did not support the national government exporting the national debt to local residents which required council tax increases leading to the poorest having to pay more.

In making a proposal to amend the budget the Leader of the Opposition spoke on the need to support the most vulnerable. His proposal, seconded by Councillor Smytherman, was to add a further £30K to the hardship fund already set aside in the budget.

After discussion and in light of information exchanged in the Chamber, with the agreement of his seconder, the amendment was withdrawn.

The Mayor invited the Leader of the UKIP group to address Council

Councillor James rose to address council referring to the government austerity measures and how the council came to be proposing an increase in the Council Tax for the Borough. Going on to mention the amount paid nationally to the European Union which could be used locally to pay for maintenance of the Town Hall, prevent increases to the council tax and the police budgets. Mentioning the reductions in the support grant and the PCC budget increases he expressed sympathy with the Cabinet and Leader on the difficulties they had faced with their budget; making the best use of the resources the administration had, he would be supporting the budget.

The Mayor invited the Green Party representative to address Council.

Councillor Doyle addressed council regarding the current and future use of business rates, possible country precept for social care and the ending of the revenue support grant. He welcomed the proposals for a 4 year budgeting plan hoping that forecasting was better in future years, particularly in the predicting Income. Councillor Doyle supported the change to Theatres, investment measures for the Town and encouraged the Leader and Cabinet to support start up businesses with encouragement to grow to contribute to the Town. Speaking on the proposed increase, which amounted to 8p per week, he would be supporting the proposed budget.

Following the addresses by the Group Leaders, the Mayor invited other councillors to address Council

Members rose to support the budget expressing both the low council tax level of the past years and the reluctance to increase the council tax in the coming year. Many noted that future cuts should not be made to services for the vulnerable or in front line services, the making of efficiencies was a priority.

The Head of Finance and her staff were commended for the work on the budget.

In speaking on the proposed increase, many pointed out that there were opportunities for the Council particularly, in regeneration, to improve further the Town and increase tourism.

In accordance with the Regulations, a recorded vote was taken of those councillors present in the Chamber.

Councillors For the recommendation (32)

Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Bickers, Buxton, Cloake, Crouch, Doyle, Guest, Alex Harman, Lionel Harman, Joshua High, Paul High, Humphreys, James, Jellis, Jenkins, Lermite, Mercer, Murphy, Nolan, Proudfoot, Roberts, Smytherman, Sparkes, Sunderland, Bryan Turner, Val Turner, Vaughan, Vinojan, Walker, Wye, Yallop.

Councillors Against the recommendation (0)

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Councillors Abstaining (2)

Councillor Donin (as Mayor), Councillor McDonald (as Deputy Mayor)

Resolved

1. Council noted that on 9 February 2016, the Executive calculated the Council Tax Base 2016/17 as 37,360.30 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];
2. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 is £8,227,860

3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- (a) £79,223,240 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £70,995,380 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £8,227,860 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R), in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
- (d) £220.23 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (e) £0.00 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £220.23 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

4. Council noted that for the year 2016/17 the West Sussex County Council and The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:-

All of the Council's Area 2016/17	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Worthing Borough Council	146.82	171.29	195.76	220.23	269.17	318.11	367.05	440.46
West Sussex County Council Total as split below:	805.26	939.47	1,073.68	1,207.89	1,476.31	1,744.73	2,013.15	2,415.78
West Sussex Council – 1.95%	789.77	921.39	1,053.02	1,184.65	1,447.91	1,711.16	1,974.42	2,369.30
West Sussex County Council – Adults Social Care element	15.49	18.08	20.66	23.24	28.40	33.57	38.73	46.48
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex	99.27	115.82	132.36	148.91	182.00	215.09	248.18	297.82

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in table shown above, as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/17 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
All of the Council's Area	1,051.35	1,226.58	1,401.80	1,577.03	1,927.48	2,277.93	2,628.38	3,154.06

C/053/15-16 Leader's Report on decisions taken by the Executive

The Leader of the Council presented his report on decisions taken by the Executive since the last Ordinary meeting of the Council; which were detailed in Item 9, on pages 17-19 on the agenda.

The level of delegation to officers was questioned, the speaker suggesting that officers advised the Executive who could then be held to account for decisions. It was suggested that the current arrangements should be reviewed.

The Investment Prospectus was welcomed.

C/054/15-16 Schedule of meetings

The Council was invited to formally approve the dates for its meeting in 2016 to 2017 and to note the proposed dates for the other committees

The meeting dates were proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Atkins.

On a vote there were For 32 Against 0 Abstain 2

Resolved that the dates for the Council meetings for 2016/17 be approved with the dates for the committee meetings being noted.

C/055/15-16 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 12

The Proper Officer had received 8 questions from Members under CPR 12, from Councillors Sunderland, James and Doyle.

Councillor Sunderland addressed the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing:

“Has the Executive Member been able to see both the tenders for the work of the Volunteer Bureau and whether she is prepared to stand by her officer's decision to choose the Brighton quote?”

Response by Councillor Val Turner:

Although I was not part of the Tender Assessment Panel, I have seen the scoring and commentary of the Panel for each of the tender criteria. As a result I am satisfied that the work of the Tender Assessment Panel is sound. The Director for Communities consulted with me and the Adur Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing before reaching his decision. We both support the decision reached by the Director.

Councillor James addressed the Leader

At the Joint Strategic Committee Meeting of the 2 February under Non Committed Growth items within the Chief Executive's portfolio, is a newly created post of Policy Officer at a salary of £45,000 a year to support the Chief Executive.

Could the Leader explain what role this new Officer will play? and why at this time of reduced budgets, and increased Council Tax it was felt expedient to create this position?

Response by the Leader:

Whilst the budget proposed for the new role is £45,000 the salary is more likely to be in the range of £35,000.

Councils are now operating in very different and fast changing worlds. I am clear that Worthing should not miss out and should be aware of changes and opportunities and adept at seizing them for the benefit of our town. Over the past 12 months we have seen significant changes around devolution, around health and social care integration, around new financial frameworks for local government (and a number of partners) and around increasingly complex partnership arrangements across public services (and increasingly with the private and third sectors as well).

The Chief Executive to ensure he has the policy support required to keep abreast of changes and to ensure that he and his leadership team place us well for them.

Councillor James may recall around 2 years ago as Councillors we approved the deletion of our then Policy Team (some 3 posts) and recognised that this may not be sustainable

into the longer term. This administration is keen to ensure we have the capacity to identify valuable change and catch all the waves we can!

Councillor Doyle addressed the Leader:

“In the Cities Outlook 2016 report from Centre for Cities, Worthing is among the worst for house prices and housing affordability. Does the leader think this is acceptable and how does he aim to improve this?”

Response by the Leader:

The Cities Outlook provides a snapshot of housing affordability based on 2015 median house prices and workplace earnings. This approach is useful for comparing cities but by excluding data from residence based earnings the findings can be distorted. A review of the data shows this to be the case for Worthing, unfortunately to its detriment.

Indeed, overall earnings are increasing at a faster rate in Worthing than many other areas in the south east, including Brighton. For full time workers this means their weekly income has increased by 16% since 2010, compared to a more modest 5% in Brighton, the south east and nationally.

However, earnings are not the only consideration when assessing housing affordability and it is recognised that, along with all other desirable locations in the south east, house prices in Worthing have started to increase as demand grows. Enabling new homes to be built to help meet the housing needs of our communities is one of the Council’s corporate priorities and I would like to reassure colleagues that I am actively working with partners across Greater Brighton and West Sussex to ensure that we can plan and deliver the homes that are needed for Worthing now and in the future. By way of example:

In March last year the Council took the innovative step of agreeing to lend Worthing Homes £10,000,000. The loan is to be used to fund the provision of affordable and social housing within the Worthing Borough Council area.

In December, the Joint Strategic Committee agreed that we should review the opportunities that exist on Council owned land for appropriate residential development to generate receipts for the council and meet local housing need.

Councillor James addressed the Executive Member for the Environment

“I am sure the Cabinet Member for the Environment will recall my question at the last Council Meeting regarding the increased maintenance budget for the swimming pool; £60,000 a year for the next 5 years, equalling £300,000. To which he intimidated it was down to increased usage and a “snagging” problem 2 years on from construction.

“But what the Cabinet Member did not tell the Council, but vouchsafed to the Worthing Journal was that the problem was the air conditioning, which was not working.

“Could the Cabinet Member for the Environment now answer the question fully and openly regarding the non-functioning air conditioning and confirm whether the Council Tax Payer will be picking up the bill, or will this fall onto the shoulders of the builders?”

Response by Councillor Roberts:

A Ground Source Heat Pump was installed at SplashPoint as part of the build project. This system provides cooling to various parts of the building including the Fitness Studios and is the air conditioning referred to in this question. This system is maintained by the installers and a maintenance contract is in place at a cost of £9300 per annum. This contract excludes the supply of parts. Just after the warranty period expired one of these pumps broke down and required repairs costing £25000. These works were completed as they were operationally essential to Splashpoint. The Council is in dispute with the main building contractors (Morgan Sindall) over this repair as we believe the equipment should not have failed. These discussions with Morgan Sindall and the installers are ongoing.

Councillor Doyle addressed the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

“Could the Executive Member give an explanation of why the awarding of the contract for voluntary sector infrastructure support - an extremely important service to many residents of Worthing – was determined by officers and not by the her or the executive as a whole?”

Councillor Val Turner responded:

The letting of contracts is governed by the Contract Procedure Rules which are approved by Council. The actual letting of contracts is delegated to officers under the constitution provided that there is sufficient budget to fund any commitments arising from the Contact, the Council’s legal team are consulted with regarding the form of the contract and the Contract Procedure Rules are complied with.

Having said that, the Director for Communities consulted with me and the Adur Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing before reaching his decision.

Councillor James to the Executive Member for Customer Services

“Could the Cabinet Member for Customer Services explain why when a salary for a Head of Housing had been agreed it was then felt necessary to raise this salary by an extra £10,830? Again, at a time of reduced budgets and increased Council Tax”

Councillor Mercer responded:

The initial costing was based on an estimated salary for the new post. However after the budget was set a new salary scale was introduced for these posts and the Head of Housing was appointed at a salary on the new scale. The increased costs not only reflect actual salary paid, but other associated costs such as the new National Insurance rates and the higher employer’s pension costs.

Councillor Doyle to the Executive Member for Regeneration

“Castle Goring is one of our only Grade I listed buildings, and has been neglected for many years. Could the Executive Member update the Council on the current state of the building fabric, and any works underway or planned for the near future, to preserve this important building?”

Councillor Bryan Turner responded:

Castle Goring resides within the South Downs National Park area, and due to its national importance (Listed Grade I) and being placed on Historic England’s ‘Buildings at Risk’, the SDNP authority have chosen to prioritise this case and deal with all Planning applications and Listed Building Consents relating to the building. The national Park would also take responsibility for any enforcement action relating to the condition of the building or unauthorised works.

In late June 2015 the following update was issued:

Works have been carried out to the structurally unsound beam, which have enabled the removal of the temporary scaffold tower. This has also allowed for the re-roofing in natural slate instead of the roofing felt, together with all associated lead flashing works. The central glass dome is covered with a tarpaulin, so the structure should be practically water tight, which in turn should allow the building to dry out.

The application for planning permission for a change of use to allow for a wedding venue use, has been held up due to highway safety issues identified by the Highways Agency (DOT). The Listed Building Consent application was however approved, to allow the repair works to commence.

Further external works are known to have been carried out on the extensive chimney stacks further aiding the drying out process of the building.

The change of use application has been delayed due to highway safety, and parking issues. As a result of uncertainties over the outcome, various works to the interior which would be affected by the proposed use as a wedding venue, have been delayed. The SDNP authority report that remaining traffic issues are close to resolution, and they hope to take the outstanding application to their Planning Committee in March/April, which should ensure further works to the building continue and help to provide a sustainable use for the building.

Councillor James to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Chairman

“In previous years, it has been customary for the Council’s budget to come before the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Why has this practice ceased?”

Councillor Barraclough responded:

Settlement was very late this year and so it was not possible to produce the papers in time for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, the Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise all of the savings proposals and Council will debate the full budget.

C/056/15-16 Motions on Notice

Council had before it a Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor Wye, a copy had been circulated to all Members as item 12.

The Motion sought to instruct officers to carry out whatever changes to the Worthing Local Plan were necessary to ensure that any future applications to build/redevelop houses/flats or grow additional trees in the vicinity of Salvington Mill were refused.

Councillor Wye proposed the Motion inviting councillors to visit the Mill to see for themselves the restoration work and future preservation of a historic asset to Worthing.

Resolved that the Motion be referred to the Planning committee.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.10 pm, it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Mayor