

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

**19 December 2017**

The Mayor, Councillor Alex Harman  
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Paul Baker

*Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Louise Murphy
*Councillor Antony Baker	Councillor Mark Nolan
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Luke Proudfoot
Councillor Keith Bickers	Councillor Clive Roberts
Councillor Callum Buxton	Councillor Jane Sim
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Bob Smytherman
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor James Doyle	Councillor Hazel Thorpe
Councillor Diane Guest	Councillor Bryan Turner
Councillor Lionel Harman	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Joshua High	Councillor Vicky Vaughan
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Paul Westover
Councillor Susan Jelliss	Councillor Steve Wills
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Mark Withers
Councillor Heather Mercer	Councillor Tom Wye
Councillor Sean McDonald	Councillor Paul Yallop
*Councillor Nigel Morgan	

\*=absent

**C/037/17-18 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkins, Morgan and Ant Baker.

**C/038/17-18 Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, Councillor Thorpe declared a personal interest as Vice-President of the Lions, visually impaired bowls and for 7D(iv) Trustee of Maybridge/Keystone Club.

Interests were declared during public question time, these are recorded in the minutes later in the meeting.

**C/039/17-18 Questions from the public**

The Mayor announced that there were 4 registered questions for the meeting.

## **Question 1 Mr Barry Dunne to the Executive Member for the Environment**

The historic Worthing Open Bowls Tournament has been running in Worthing for 90 years. Every year, several hundred people attend the tournament, staying in local hotels and enjoying all that Worthing has to offer. It is estimated that our Tournament generates in excess of £50,000 for the town's economy. Up until this point, we have been able to offer participants free parking for the duration. However, recent communications from the Council indicate that this may no longer be the case. The logistics of operating a paying car park for this tournament is not within the capacity of the Bowls committee. In order for this tournament to continue, could the Council commit to provide parking as per previous years for the two weeks that this tournament runs every year?

### **Response by Councillor Guest**

Council is committed to continuing discussions with the organisers to work together to find a mutually agreeable solution for car parking at future bowls tournaments in Worthing.

## **Question 2 Ms Fraser to Executive Member for Customer Services**

Worthing Council is due to consider recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee on Item 7D (vi) of tonight's agenda.

My question concerns the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Priority 2: Partnerships - Creating strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

At the JSC on 5 December I asked why there was no date in the Action Plan to monitor the number of evictions from private rented accommodation. It was explained that as applications to the county court to serve eviction notices did not take place at regular intervals, it was therefore impossible to set dates to monitor these.

It has recently come to light in Parliament, that evictions from private rented property have quadrupled nationally since 2010. Such a rise must be of concern to everybody. As there are mechanisms in place to monitor evictions nationally, it should therefore be possible for Worthing Council to do likewise.

In light of this, can Worthing Council give a commitment to monitor evictions from private rented accommodation over the next year and report back to the JSC and Worthing Council in December 2018 and insert this date in the relevant section of the Action Plan?

### **Response by Councillor Mercer**

It is not possible to report on or monitor evictions from private rented accommodation. Evictions from private rented accommodation can occur either because a tenant vacates at the end of a notice period or because a landlord successfully applies to court for a possession order.

In both cases, the local authority will not be aware of the position unless the landlord or evicted tenant contacts us. Central Government data is drawn

from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and usually reports on the number of possession orders granted and bailiff's warrant executed.

Local authorities do not have access to MoJ data, therefore, it is not possible to report on or monitor evictions from private rented accommodation.

Whilst we can attempt to gather data on the number of households who present to the Council for assistance having been evicted from private rented accommodation, this will only represent a subset of those evicted from private rented accommodation, as many do not present to the Council.

A supplementary question was asked on the supply of homes for those on the waiting list for re-housing, suggesting that the Council should invest in house building. In response the questioner was informed that the Council had no ability to build houses, it was the responsibility of Worthing Homes.

*(At this point Councillors Murphy and Wills declared interests as Council representatives on Worthing Homes).*

### **Question 3 From Helen Silman to Executive Member for Customer Services**

My question relates to the Joint Strategic Committee Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy Report by the Director for Communities, item 7A on the Agenda.

The report notes the severe shortage of TA available for Worthing residents. Reasons given for this situation include shortages of both Affordable and "social" Housing which would enable people occupying existing TA to move on into permanent homes.

In March this year the Report by the Director for Communities on Housing Strategy paragraph 5.1 notes that "Councils have also approved capital budgets of 3 million for the purchase of fit for purpose temporary and emergency accommodation."

My question is :

Using this budget: How many housing units for TA have already been acquired , how many are in the pipeline and how many altogether will be acquired and when. How many do you expect to be in the Borough and how many elsewhere.? How many additional TA units will be available by April 2018 when the Homelessness Reduction Act takes effect.

### **Response by Councillor Mercer**

Procuring suitable emergency and temporary accommodation is challenging, consequently Council has followed a dual strategy of reviewing options both to buy, and to lease accommodation

Acquiring properties have been difficult due to a highly competitive and fast paced market in Adur and Worthing. Some of the available properties would have required significant and costly conversion work to make them suitable for temporary accommodation and on others we have been priced out of the

market by developers. Negotiations on 8 properties have fallen through either because we were out bid or they were unsuitable.

None the less in 2017 the Councils have identified a number of additional units of accommodation suitable for emergency and or temporary accommodation

We are currently in negotiations with private landlords to lease 47 units of self contained units for emergency accommodation which we anticipate will be available in varying completions dates in 2018.

We have also completed negotiations with private sector landlords on 3 properties and are negotiating for 4 more which we anticipate will be available in early 2018 (in total these properties provide 19 bedrooms)

These homes are in addition to existing arrangements with private sector leasing and other nightly providers. All are within Adur, Worthing or neighbouring Boroughs.

We are also in discussions or actively working with a number of organisations and partners to continue to grow this number going forward, however due to the early nature of these discussions we are unable to release any further specific details

It is not possible to estimate how much temporary accommodation units will be required when the Homelessness Reduction Act takes effect. Our emphasis will be intervening to help as many households as possible to sustain their existing accommodation in the first place.

A supplementary question was asked on the effect of the universal credit and increased homelessness. In response the Executive Member said she would welcome news on any potential properties of interest to the Council.

#### **Question 4 from Margaret Harris to the Leader**

My question is about the recommendation of the Joint Strategic Committee on Council Tax Support. (6 December Item 9)

I would like to refer you all to Appendix 3 and 4 of the report which sets out the categories of people affected, as well as the number of Liability Orders issued.

Councillors will be aware from this report that over half of those affected are disabled, that 647 Liability Orders have been issued (as at 16 November) and that £70 860 has been raised in court costs.

Will Councillor Humphrey's please now explain to the Council how this austerity measure has impacted specifically on those disabled residents in Worthing who are on the very lowest incomes?

#### **Response by the Leader**

The £5.00 weekly restriction of Council Tax Support applies to all working age customers and there will be disabled residents whose financial circumstances mean that they don't qualify for or claim Council Tax Support. Every effort is

made to engage with affected customers including encouraging applications to apply for the hardship fund.

On a supplementary question asking council to postpone the decision until Council had debated the proposal, the Leader responded that the Council would have a full debate later in the meeting the Council Tax Support scheme for the coming year as it was required to do each December and had done for the last 5 years.

There remained time in the 30 minutes allowed for public questions.

Sam from Melrose Avenue Worthing asked whether Persimmon Homes had delivered the full affordable homes quoter on its sites in Worthing. The Executive Member undertook to respond in writing with the percentage delivered.

### **C/040/17-18 Confirmation of Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council on 31 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and they be signed by the Mayor.

### **C/041/17-18 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader, Executive Members, Head of Paid Service**

The Mayor announced that he was honoured to be involved in all the Remembrance Events in Worthing where the attendance was high. His thanks went to all those involved for their hard work and dedication in ensuring that these commemorative events took place smoothly and placed on record his thanks to all councillors, veterans and members of the public who filled Chapel Road on Remembrance Sunday.

The Mayoress and Deputy Mayoress had attended the Rotary Youth Speaks Competition Event on his behalf. The Mayoress felt that it was a worthwhile and inspiring event where she was impressed with the talent shown by all that took part .

The Mayor had been delighted to host in the Parlour, a British Empire Medal investiture by the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Susan Pyper to a local resident Mr Neil Hulme. Mr Hulme was a butterfly enthusiast who “almost single-handedly” saved a rare species from extinction. He was awarded a British Empire Medal for services to nature conservation. The Mayor placed on record the Council’s congratulations to Mr Hulme on receiving this award.

The Mayor introduced to Council and extended a welcome the TS Vanguard Mayoral Cadets for 2017-2018:

- Lance Corporal Lilly Thomas from Worthing representing the Marine Cadets
- Acting Leading Cadet Rosie Warland from Worthing representing the Sea Cadets

Mayoral Cadet badges were presented to each of the Cadets.

The Mayor announced that David John Chapman, former Councillor and Mayor, passed away on Thursday 7 December 2017 aged 68 at his residence in Spain. His funeral was in Alicante on 15 December. David had been Mayor during 1998-1999.

Announcing some upcoming events the Mayor would be hosting the presentation of Legion D'Honneur Medals. The Honorary French Consul would be presenting the medals to two veterans with the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Susan Pyper on Saturday 13 January 2018 at 11.30 am at the Town Hall

The Mayor encouraged all councillors to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day - Saturday 27 January 2018 - at 10.30 am . There would be a short event held at the Holocaust Memorial Tree in Beach House Park.

The Executive Member for Regeneration updated Council on the progress towards the redevelopment of Teville Gate, explaining the recent delivery of concrete blocks and hoardings pre demolition.

### **C/042/17-18 Items raised under the urgency provisions**

There were no items under the urgency provisions for Council.

### **C/043/17-18 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council**

Council had before it recommendations from the Joint Governance Committee, Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Strategic Committee on various dates. Extracts of these minutes had been circulated and are attached to the minutes as items 7A to 7D.

### **Joint Strategic Committee - 7 November 2017**

The Leader of the Council presented the recommendation on page 9 circulated with the agenda, item 7A .

#### **(1) Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy**

Councillor Mercer seconded the proposal.

A question was asked on the consultation and possible changes to the policy.

On a vote For 29 Against 0 Abstentions 3

**Resolved** that the Council adopt the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy, subject to the outcome of the consultation process.

### **Joint Governance Committee - 28 November 2017**

The Joint Chairman of the Committee proposed the recommendation on page 10 (7B) of the agenda, it was seconded by the Mayor.

#### **(1) Honouring Links - Richebourg L'Avoue**

There were no speakers on the item.

On a vote For 32 Against 0 Abstentions 0

**Resolved** that

1. in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the Council of the Borough of Worthing do grant Freedom of the Borough to the office of Mayor of Richebourg;
2. Council noted that an Extraordinary Council meeting will be required to formally confirm the Freedom of the Borough, with this likely to be after the February or April Council meetings.

### **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 30 November 2017**

The Chairman of the Joint Committee presented the recommendation from his Committee on page 11 the agenda, item 7C.

#### **(i) Work Programme Update**

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Smytherman.

Members spoke to encourage submission of items to the Joint Chairman for consideration for the Work Programme.

On a vote For 28 Against 0 Abstentions 2

**Resolved** that Council noted the changes made to the Work Programme since it was agreed in April 2017.

### **Joint Strategic Committee - 5 December 2017**

The Leader of the Council presented the Committee's recommendations on pages 12 to 20 circulated with the agenda, items 7 D, (1 to 6).

#### **(1) Treasury Management 2017-18**

The Leader highlighted that this was the mid year review. The proposal was seconded by Council Murphy.

There were no speakers on the item.

On a vote For 30 Against 0 Abstentions 2

**Resolved** that Council approved increases in the Prudential Indicator limits for the Operational Boundaries and the Authorised Limits for borrowing, due to the approved strategies for additional expenditure on the purchase of strategic property.

#### **(2) Sustainable Councils: 5 Year Forecast 2018/19- 2022-23**

The Leader informed Council that the Executive and JOSOC received regular updating reports. The recommendation was for the approval of the use of capital receipts for the proposals in the report. Councillor Bickers seconded the recommendation.

A question was asked about joint officer teams and parity of costs with Adur as the amount set aside by that Council did not match that proposed for the Borough. The Leader responded that the recommendation was to approve where the redundancy costs would come from.

On a vote For 30 Against 0 Abstain 2

**Resolved** that Council approve the use of capital receipts to fund redundancy costs associated with the savings proposals outlined in Appendix 3 of the report:

- Worthing: £300,000

### **(3) Investing in Service Delivery: Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 - 2020/21**

The Leader's proposal was seconded by Councillor Crouch

On a vote For 29 Against 0 Abstain 2

**Resolved** that the programmes be approved as as detailed in Appendices 8 and 9 of the report.

### **(4) Report to determine the local scheme for Business Rates Discretionary Relief**

The Leader presented the recommendation on Policy Option 4 in the report which was seconded by Councillor Crouch

It was noted that independent public houses were included in the policy; this was to encourage local businesses rather than nationally known chains.

On a vote For 29 Against 0 Abstain 3

**Resolved** that Council agreed

1. that Option 4 (including pubs) be approved as the rules to be applied to the discretionary award schemes for Worthing Borough Council for 2017/18;
2. that the criteria detailed in paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7 of the report be approved as the rules to be applied to the discretionary award schemes for Worthing Borough Council respectively for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21

### **(5) Council Tax Support Schemes for 2018/19**

The Leader presented the recommendation explaining the each year the Council had to determine the local Scheme. He was recommending the same policy as the previous year with no increase.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Bickers.

Members rose in the chamber to support or oppose the recommendation.

Those in opposition to the Scheme cited their previous arguments against the £5 per week contribution which would hit the most vulnerable in the Borough. The complex hardship claim form was mentioned as being an unnecessary bureaucracy. The consultation low response and lack of impact statement were challenged.

In support of the Scheme, Members encouraged applications to the hardship fund, giving examples of how they and officers supported applicants through the process. Comments were made that the majority of residents would be paying a contribution to Council Tax which was fair to all.



On a vote For 25 Against 5 Abstain 2

**Resolved** that Council approved

1. The Council Tax Support scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of working age customers for 2018/19 should be based upon the scheme for 2017/18 with
  - a. the £5.00 weekly restriction retained; and
  - b. the discretionary budget to support those in severe financial difficulties retained; and
  - c. no other changes made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit.
2. A further public consultation should be conducted during the summer of 2018 to inform the decision in respect of the scheme to be implemented in respect of 2019/20.

#### **(6) Delivering our Housing strategy - the draft Adur and Worthing Community Homelessness Strategy**

The Leader presented the recommendation which would help those vulnerable in Worthing. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Mercer.

Members supported the Strategy commending that KPI and rag ratings would be useful as an indication of progression of the delivery of the outcomes. It was mentioned that the strategy was a multi agency partnership where some outcomes may not be in the remit of the Council.

Members supported prevention of homelessness wherever possible.

On a vote For 30 Against 0 Abstain 2

**Resolved** that Council approved the adoption of the Community Homelessness Strategy.

#### **C/044/17-18 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 21 to 25.

The Leader highlighted the Economic Strategy, Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme and the intentions of the work with West Sussex County Council on public realm and seafront proposals.

A question was asked on the public realm with a request for an update on the Teville Gate proposals.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that the Council was working with the Mosaïque Group who had presented its plans for consultation but no formal planning application had yet been received although expected.

### **C/045/17-18 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 12**

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 14 questions from Members under CPR 12, which would be asked in accordance with the Rule, one supplementary question may be asked which must arise out of the original question or the reply. Questions will be asked in rotation around the Groups represented in the Chamber, there is 30 minutes allowed for questions. There are 5 rotations of speakers possible, at the end of 30 minutes the Mayor explained that he would extend the time to the end of the current rotation of speakers.

The Mayor announced that the following Councillors and their number of questions had been submitted:

Councillor Thorpe 2 questions  
Councillor Smytherman 4 questions  
Councillor Withers 1 question  
Councillor Cooper 4 questions  
Councillor Yallop 2 questions  
Councillor Murphy 1 question

The order would be

First rotation:

Councillor Thorpe - Question 1, Councillor Withers, Councillor Cooper - Question 1.  
Councillor Yallop

Second rotation

Councillor Smytherman - Question 1, Councillor Cooper Question 2, Councillor Murphy

Third rotation

Councillor Thorpe - Question 2, Councillor Cooper Question 3, Councillor Yallop

Fourth rotation

Councillor Smytherman - Question 2 , Councillor Cooper Question 3

Final rotations

Councillor Smytherman Questions 3 and 4

### **First Rotation:**

### **From Cllr Hazel Thorpe to the Executive Member for Resources**

It has been reported recently that you intend to use tax payers Capital receipts – our assets including S106 monies from previous planning applications to pay for staff redundancies - how can you justify this use of public money?

### **Response by Councillor Crouch:**

The Councils are under continual pressure to make significant savings. The budget shortfall rises from £1.9m in 2018/19 to £6.4m by 2022/21 if the Council takes no action to balance the budget.

The budget strategy focuses on three strands of work to bridge the gap:

- Investment in commercial property
- Improving income from commercial activities
- Cost efficiencies resulting from the digital programme and other initiatives

The savings proposals recently considered by both JOSOC and JSC identified some measures which would result in redundancy costs.

The resources will only be used to fund redundancy costs where it can be demonstrated that the financial benefit of the savings generated will exceed the cost of any redundancy costs over a three year period - thereby justifying the use of these resources.

The Joint Staff Committee recently agreed a new redundancy policy which will reduce future departure costs. This further protects the Council's financial position. Nevertheless if we want to generate sufficient savings to balance the budget, there may well be an impact on staff resulting in the need to fund redundancy payments.

The Council can only use receipts generated from the sale of assets in the period 2016-2019 and not S106 receipts which must be used in accordance with the agreements regarding their use.

### **Councillor Mark Withers to Executive Member for Customer Services**

Have we have any support in place as a local authority to help with those suffering from universal credit problems through Christmas and the New Year such as a gap before first payment?

#### **Response by Councillor Mercer:**

Universal Credit for new claimants in Worthing who are single (e.g no dependents) has been in place for some time. Full service Universal Credit for *all* claimants has been postponed until July 2018

New Claimants who experience financial hardship can access advance payments from DWP (via the Job Centre), Discretionary Housing Payments (via A&W councils) and specific support via the Local Assistance Network via WCHP if they are in specific crisis.

New Claimants with specific budgeting needs can be referred to CAB under a specific scheme via DWP and our Revenues and Benefit team.

### **Councillor Cooper to the Leader**

Relating to Item 7A: Temporary Accommodation Placement & Procurement Policy

I note that there is to be a consultation on this policy for a period of 6 weeks. Two other items on this agenda record mark disappointment at a poor consultation response (see Business Rates relief, paragraph 3 on page 17 and Council Tax support scheme, paragraphs 7&8 on page 18).

In view of this, are any special steps being taken to improve response rate, aside from the setting up of a JOSOC working group, which I assume will be post consultation? Does the chairman of the JSC not agree that this is important, must not be simply a bureaucratic exercise and we must get a decent response to tackle the issue?

### **Response by the Leader**

In relation to the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy the Housing team have not only provided the public with the opportunity to respond, but also, as is evident in the work undertaken to develop the Community Homelessness Strategy, have consulted widely with local partners and stakeholders

### **Councillor Paul Yallop to Executive Member for Environment**

As Cllr Guest should be aware last year the Marine Ward Members gained support from her predecessor, Cllr Roberts, to include the refurbishment of West Park Playground in this year's Capital Investment Programme. Would the Executive member kindly update Council on progress with this project and confirm that she remains committed to delivering the scheme working with the Friends of West Park Group to ensure the end result satisfies the wishes of local residents.

### **Response by Councillor Guest**

I can confirm that I am as fully committed, the refurbishment which is being financed with £75k funding from Worthing's capital programme is scheduled to be completed by Summer 2018.

The Friends of West Park have been involved at every stage of the project, and together with Ward Councillors helped to facilitate the successful consultation event held at the Park in June this year. Further consultation sessions were also held at West Park and Elm Grove Primary schools to ensure that the local children who will be the main users of the play area play an integral part in helping to shape what they would like to see included in the scheme.

The tenders have been returned and are presently being evaluated, on the technical aspects of the project, Officers from the Environment team will in partnership with the Friends of West Park arrange for final consultations with the local community and schools to take place early in the New Year to choose the winning design.

### **Second rotation:**

### **From Councillor Smytherman to the Executive Member for Environment**

Was The Executive Member as surprised as I was to learn to the County Council is looking to make savings to their waste disposal service based on proposals for District and Borough Councils to move to fortnightly collection for waste collection. Can the Executive Member reassure this Council that following the major investment in a new fleet of collection vehicles there will be no such proposals to move to alternate weekly collections in Worthing?

**Response by Councillor Guest**

There are presently no plans in place to move to a fortnightly waste collection service.

**Councillor Cooper to the Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

2) Relating to 7C - Scrutiny Work Programme

Does the Chairman of JOSC believe that changes to the work programme will increase public interest in this scrutiny work? Has he received comment from anyone outside Worthing Borough Council about the work of the JOSC?

**Response by Councillor Barraclough:**

I and fellow JOSC Members are committed to increasing public interest in the work of JOSC and when the Committee is requested to make changes to the Work Programme.

Specifically, an additional meeting in February of JOSC has been convened which will see members interviewing the Police & Crime Commissioner and Local Police District Commander about Policing issues affecting local communities.

Members requests for items for consideration will always been considered, there is a link on the front page of the website for members of the public to request items be considered.

**From Councillor Louise Murphy to the Executive Member for Digital and Resources**

"With Government Grant Funding being removed altogether by 2020, Worthing Borough Council needs to raise funds through Commercial Services.

Can the Executive Member for Resources please outline what is being done to ensure we improve our Commercial Operations in order to generate the necessary additional income?"

**Response by Councillor Crouch:**

Our medium term financial strategy sets out our approach to ensuring the Council is able to maintain its financial health in the years ahead.

You are right to point out that income generation is a vital component, and I'm pleased to say that in recent years we have exceeded our income growth targets of £600k per annum for commercial services across the two Councils and £470k in 2018/19 for increased commercial property portfolio after repayments of debt.

We successfully operate significant commercial operations across waste management, car parking, the crematorium, theatres, weddings in the town hall and more. I'm very impressed by our commercial operations, and am pleased to update Council on further strategic work being undertaken

Our key commercial managers recently received training from Mike Southon, an entrepreneur coach who worked on Aylesbury Vale DC's successful commercial programme, and those officers are now working on several new business ideas.

Officers are also conducting more detailed medium term forecasting and market analysis on all our key commercial areas to ensure that we continue to run our businesses well, and manage our risk and opportunities as any good business would.

We are building a new approach to our annual service planning process, and will train all managers to create full business plans next year.

Finally, our Director for Digital & Resources is currently developing a commercial strategy which will include an assessment of what we can learn from successful modern platform businesses like Amazon, and how we might apply those principles to the local government context.

There are a number of financial challenges ahead for the Council.

### **Third rotation:**

#### **Councillor Thorpe to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing**

Winter and freezing temperatures are definitely here – what is the Council doing to support rough sleepers through the winter period?

#### **Response by Councillor Val Turner :**

A&W Councils have a committed approach to supporting rough sleepers including, support at the Worthing Winter Night Shelter (12 spaces) and the Salvation Army Welcome In ; all bar 1 rough sleeper would be in shelter - this person had failed to engage with outreach workers.

#### **Councillor Cooper to the Leader**

3) Relating to 7D(v) Council Tax Support Scheme

Can the Chair please give an assurance that this scheme has or will reach those most in need?

#### **Response from the Leader:**

The Revenues & Benefits Service together with the Customer Service Team ensures that residents are encouraged to claim Council Tax Support and additional discretionary payments where appropriate

Other partners, both internal and external (e.g. Housing Services, Wellbeing and Citizens Advice) work closely with the Revenues & Benefits Service to ensure that take-up of both Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit is maximised

Officers are working hard via an internal working group to provide information and support to residents in respect of the impact of all aspects of Welfare Reform and the Director for Communities chairs a Welfare Reform Partnership with relevant stakeholders

### **Councillor Paul Yallop to Executive Member for Environment**

It has been some time since this Council regained control of its off-street car parks. Would the Executive member update the Council on the usage of the car parks since the tariffs were reduced and the long term effect of the #useitorloseit marketing campaign to attract more shoppers into Worthing.

### **Response by Councillor Guest:**

The Council brought the Worthing car parks back in house in 2014.

Since then we have been working hard to improve the quality of the car parks and the experience for customers. We have improved the cleansing and maintenance regime and have brought in night time patrols.

As part of the current capital programme the lighting in High Street car park has been replaced, with works on Buckingham commencing imminently. Work to replace the lifts in Buckingham car park are starting in December.

Our efforts have seen customer demand in multistorey car parks increase by 16% and by 25% in surface car parks, with an overall increase of 18%\* between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

Officers are working up further proposals to further enhance our car parking offer in the town, including additional investment in Buckingham & High Street car parks.

### **C/046/17-18 Motions on Notice**

#### **(A) Vacant building Credits - letter to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

Before Council was a report from the Proper Officer as item 10 A, attached to these minutes, continuing a Motion on Notice from Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Yallop.

Councillor Cooper addressed Council to propose her Motion explaining that affordable housing was daily national news, families needed a chance to have a house to live in, to get on the housing ladder to have affordable accommodation to rent. The Motion also asked that the confidential nature of viability assessments be removed for better public scrutiny.

Councillor Yallop seconded the Motion commenting that viability of schemes should be open - it was something that the Planning Committee wanted to look at when considering submissions from developers.

Members in the Chamber supported the Motion.

Councillor Cooper summed up the debate

On a vote For 32 Against 0 Abstain 0

**Resolved** that following letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government:

‘Worthing Borough Council is concerned about the impact viability assessments and vacant building credits are having on its ability to deliver its affordable housing strategy. It calls on the Secretary of State to take action on these two issues to ensure that the Council is able to meet its obligations to meet the urgent need for affordable housing in the Worthing area.

‘Viability has always played a prominent part in the development process and is a crucial part of the dialogue between planners and developers to ensure that both developers and the community get a fair deal out of any proposed development scheme. However, the introduction of a crucial clause in the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 stating that plans “should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened” is too broadly defined and unfairly reduces the ability of the Council to secure contributions towards affordable housing in line with Worthing Borough Council’s 2011 Core Strategy .

‘The problem is exacerbated by the confidential nature of viability assessments which prevent the public and press from scrutinising the figures and coming to an informed view of the validity of substantial reductions in affordable housing contributions being offered by developers. There seems little justification for this excessive confidentiality and it is contrary to the Government’s commitment to open Local Government.

‘Vacant Building Credit, announced by the DCLG in 2014, has added to the problems of securing Section 106 Affordable housing contributions on brownfield redevelopment plans. We understand the desirability of bringing buildings back into use that might otherwise remain undeveloped, but the lack of a clear definition as to when a building can be considered ‘vacant’, ‘unused’, ‘abandoned’ or ‘empty’ has created a loophole that is not always consistent with the purpose of the guidance and left urban Council areas such as Worthing with limited grounds on which to defend its commitment to make provision for affordable housing.



'We call on the Secretary of state to consider the implications of these two issues and to provide new guidance for Councils and developers that will address our concerns and enable us to meet our affordable housing requirements for the benefit of our residents and the country as a whole'.

### **(B) Ethical Landlords Scheme**

Before Council was a report from the Proper Officer as item 12 B , attached to these minutes, containing a Motion on Notice from Councillor Thorpe, seconded by Councillor Doyle. In the absence of Councillor Doyle, Councillor Smytherman seconded the Motion in the Chamber.

Following the Motions proposing and seconding in the Chamber the matter was referred to the Joint Strategic Committee for determination.

On a vote For 28 Against 0 Abstain 6

**Resolved** that the Joint Strategic Committee under Council Procedure Rule 14.5.1 determine the Motion.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9.20 pm, it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Mayor