

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

26 February 2019

The Mayor, Councillor Paul Baker
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Hazel Thorpe

Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Heather Mercer
Councillor Antony Baker	Councillor Nigel Morgan
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Richard Mulholland
Councillor Mike Barrett	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Keith Bickers	*Councillor Clive Roberts
Councillor Beccy Cooper	Councillor Jane Sim
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Bob Smytherman
Councillor Jim Deen	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Alex Harman	Councillor Bryan Turner
*Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Lionel Harman	Councillor Nicola Waight
Councillor Joshua High	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Paul Westover
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor Steve Wills
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Mark Withers
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Tom Wye
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Paul Yallop
*Councillor Sean McDonald	

*=absent

C/044/18-19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Karen Harman, Clive Roberts and Sean McDonald.

C/045/18-19 Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to all Elected Members of the Council who had a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to item 9, the setting of the Council Tax, in accordance with section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

Members were invited to make any declarations of interest in relation to items on the agenda:-

Councillors Noel Atkins, Paul High, Bob Smytherman, Elizabeth Sparkes, Bryan Turner and Steve Wills declared personal interests as Members of West Sussex County Council.

Councillors Louise Murphy and Steve Wills declared personal interests as Non Executive Directors of Worthing Homes.

C/046/18-19 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 11 December 2018 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Mayor.

C/047/18-19 Questions from the public

The Mayor announced that there was 1 registered question for the meeting.

Mr Jeffrey, a Worthing resident, asked the following question in relation to air quality and Worthing pollution levels:-

About a year ago a report related, with reference to Air Quality, that Worthing pollution levels were within relatively acceptable levels. A year on, further data came to light that levels within the Borough are not within recommended levels. There seems to be difficulty in making improvements in Air Quality given current resource limitations. Does the Council accept the Status quo in regards to Air Quality, or, is it committed to finding resources, to fund improvements?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that the levels referred to relate to those along the A27 at Grove Lodge and Lyons Farm, which was the only Air Quality management area in Worthing. Monitoring elsewhere showed levels were compliant with the national objectives.

Improving air quality spanned geographical areas and responsibilities lay with numerous authorities at national, regional and local levels. Locally this involved environmental health, planning, highways, and public health teams as well as local residents and businesses.

The Council was committed to improving local air quality and believed that improvements could only be gained by partnership working and collaboration between all stakeholders. This included Highways England who had responsibility for the A27 and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) who had responsibility for other roads in Worthing.

It was important to note that whilst the Council played a lead role in tackling air quality, many of the measures needed, required a range of partners to play key roles. These ambitions were set out in the new West Sussex Air Quality Strategy 'Breathing Better', which sits alongside and complements the Council's local Air Quality Action Plan.

The following questions were received from members of the public at the meeting:-

Mr Field, a Worthing resident, asked a question regarding empty shops and business premises in Worthing.

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that although there were a number of empty shops in the town centre, Worthing had a vacancy rate of 4.5% in retail premises, this was significantly lower than the national average.

It was noted that a lot was dependent on how much the local community in Worthing chose to use Worthing Town Centre. Online shopping was replacing a large number of the department stores that had traditionally been seen on the high street.

The Council was working hard to support and improve the town centre through partnership working with West Sussex County Council and the investment of £12m in relation to the public realm, which would help to improve the public experience of the town centre. In addition, work was ongoing in respect of town centre car parks and with public transport providers to ensure that the town centre was accessible at all times.

Mr Finders, a Worthing resident, asked why Brooklands Go-Karts had been refused a vacant plot in Brooklands.

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services agreed to provide a written response to the question.

Mr Bazer, a Worthing resident, acknowledged that a number of Worthing Borough Councillors had declared personal interests as Members of WSCC. He sought clarification as to which Councillors had voted against the cuts.

A Member advised that the vote on the WSCC budget was a recorded vote and the information could be obtained from the minutes of the meeting on the WSCC website.

C/048/18-19 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader, Executive Members, Head of Paid Service

The Mayor informed Council that since the last full council meeting he had attended many events. These included:-

- The Mayor's Carol Service held on the 16 December 2018 and conducted by his Chaplain Rev Gaz Daley at St Mary's Church Broadwater;
- A visit to the Royal Mail sorting office in Worthing, with Cllr Val Turner, on the 20 December 2018;
- A visit to Worthing Hospital, with the MP Tim Loughton, on Christmas Eve;
- On Christmas Day, the Mayor and Mayoress had a full itinerary of visits to residential homes and day centres, with christmas lunch at the Guild Care Bradbury Centre;
- In January, the Mayor attended and spoke at a number of local school assemblies to promote the Roland Gibson Mayoral Charities Swim on the 16 march 2019 at Splashpoint;
- The World Holocaust Memorial Day was held on Sunday 27 Jnauary 2019, at the memorial in Beach House Park, and was led by Councillor Tom Wye with prayers from the Mayor's Chaplain;
- The Adur & Worthing Better Business Show was held in the Town Hall and Assembly Hall on Wednesday 13 February.

In addition to the events attended, the mayor had sent congratulatory letters to the following local residents who were recently awarded in the Queen's New Year Honours:-

- Martin Frost, who received an MBE (Member of the British Empire), for services to disappearing fore-edge painting;
- Ms Bernadette Lawrie, Police Constable, Sussex Police, who was a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM), for services to Policing in Worthing.

The Council was informed about the work involved in refurbishing the Council Chamber, which had been funded from the Councils' annual budget for building maintenance, and the Mayor sought the support of Councillors for a number of upcoming charity events, which included:-

- The sing along Mamma Mia film night at the Connaught Studio on Wednesday 6 March;
- The charity swim at Splashpoint Leisure Centre on Saturday 16 March;
- The charity show at the Pavilion Theatre on Sunday 31 March; and
- The charity ball at the Charmandean Centre on Saturday 27 April.

Finally, the Mayor advised Councillors that if they had lost or misplaced their WBC Pin Badges, there was still an opportunity to purchase another one, for a cost of £5, to be paid to the Mayor's Charities.

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised that the Council had recently received a planning application for Teville Gate. A notice had also been received in relation to Teville Gate House, which would be demolished in the coming weeks. The plan was for this to be replaced with 70,000 square feet of office space of AAA quality.

C/049/18-19 Items raised under the urgency provisions

There were no items raised under the urgency provisions.

C/050/18-19 Decision Making following a change to the membership of the Labour Group

The report informed the Council of a change to the membership of the Labour Group and consequently, a change to the political balance of the Council.

The report also outlined decisions required by Council to ensure that committee appointments were determined according to the relevant legislation.

On a vote: For 32, Against 0, Abstain 2

Resolved that the Council:-

1. noted the revised political balance of the Council, as per paragraph 3.4;
2. noted the changes to the membership of the Planning Committee (Councillor Jim Deen replaced Councillor Richard Mulholland), as outlined in Annex B;
3. noted the change to the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, Jim Deen replaced Richard Mulholland, as confirmed to the Proper Officer.

C/051/18-19 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

Council had before it recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee, the Executive and the Licensing and Control Committee 'A'. Extracts of these minutes had been circulated as items 8A, 8B(i), 8B(ii), 8C, & 8D.

Item 8A Joint Strategic Committee - 8 January 2019

The Future of Public Space Protection Orders

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on the 8 January 2019, which recommended that Council approve the extension of PSPOs 1, 2 & 3, in their current form, until 21 August 2022.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Val Turner.

Members debated the effectiveness of the scrutiny of PSPOs and the need for robust information to enable their effective scrutiny in the future.

On a vote: For 27, Against 5, Abstain 2

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the extension of:-

- (a) PSPO 1 - Public Place Drinking, in its current form, for a further three years until 21 August 2022;
- (b) PSPO 2 - Begging in Worthing Town centre, in its current form, for a further three years until 21 August 2022;
- (c) PSPO 3 - Unauthorised Camping, in its current form, for a further three years until 21 August 2022.

Item 8B(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 31 January 2019

Joint Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on the 31 January 2019, which recommended that Council approve the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and Minimum Revenue Provision Statements.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes.

On a vote: For 28, Against 0, Abstain 6

Resolved that the Council approved the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and Minimum Revenue Provision Statements.

Item 8B(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 31 January 2019

Council Tax Support Schemes for 2019/20

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on the 31 January 2019, which recommended that Council approve 2019/20 Council Tax Support scheme and that a further public consultation be conducted during the summer of 2019 to inform the 2020/21 scheme.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Keith Bickers.

On a vote: For 25, Against 7, Abstain 2

Resolved

That the Council approved that:-

1. The Council Tax Support scheme for Worthing Borough Council in respect of working age customers for 2019/20 be based upon the scheme for 2018/19 with
 - a. the £5.00 weekly restriction retained; and
 - b. the discretionary budget to support those in severe financial difficulties retained.
2. No other changes should be made beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit.
3. A further public consultation should be conducted during the summer of 2019 to inform the decision in respect of the scheme to be implemented in respect of 2020/21.

Item 8C Worthing Executive - 4 February 2019

Overall budget estimates and setting the Council Tax 2019/20

This item was considered as part of Item 9 on the agenda.

Item 8D Licensing and Control Committee 'A' - 13 February 2019

Animal Welfare Licensing Policy

The Chairman of the Licensing & Control Committee 'A' presented the recommendation from the Licensing and Control Committee 'A' meeting held on 13 February 2019, which recommended that Council approve the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Paul Westover.

On a vote: For 33, Against 0, Abstain 1

Resolved that the Council approved the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy.

C/052/18-19 Council Tax 2019/20

The Mayor introduced the item explaining that item 8C, the recommendation from the Executive would be considered as part of this discussion with the full proposed recommendation being contained in the green papers placed before Councillors in the Chamber. As required by the Regulations there would be a recorded vote on any amendments to the proposed budget together with the final vote.

The Mayor advised that the item would be dealt with under the new budget procedure rules and therefore, ordinary rules of debate did not apply.

The Council was asked to suspend Council Procedure Rules where they conflicted with the budget procedure rules, in accordance with paragraph 7.2 of the budget procedure rules.

The suspension of Council Procedure Rules was proposed by the Mayor and seconded by Councillor Robert Smytherman.

On a vote: For 33, Against 0, Abstain 1

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council to address the Chamber.

In addressing the Chamber the Leader highlighted the challenging financial context that Local Government found itself in along with the progress made, over the last 12 months, in delivering the Platforms for our Places Strategy to make Worthing a better place to live, work and enjoy for residents and visitors.

The proposed budget provided the financial means to complete the third year of that strategy, whilst taking prudent and responsible steps that protected services and supporting a wide range of actions.

A copy of the Leaders budget speech is appended to these minutes as Appendix A.

The proposal was seconded by the Executive Member for Resources, Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes.

The Leader of the Labour Group on the Council, Councillor Cooper, addressed the Council, voicing her dismay at the continuity of austerity measures and the consequences this was having on Local Government finances and the services provided to local residents. The Council had an ever reducing funding pot to meet the needs of the Borough, whose needs were not reducing.

Concerns were raised in regards to the social costs associated with austerity in the form of homelessness, overburdened schools and hospitals, closed children centres, unrepaired roads and uncollected bins.

Councillor Cooper proposed the following budget amendments:-

1. We are fundamentally opposed to the £5.00 minimum Council Tax payment for working age Council Tax Support claimants. We think that this is discriminatory and penalises further Worthing residents who are working to make ends meet in very difficult economic circumstances.

Furthermore, whilst this payment delivers £90,000 to the Borough, it delivers £300,000 to the County Council. As the County Council has seen fit to reduce its vulnerable support grant by £1.8 million, the notion that we then collect £300,000 from vulnerable people, to return to the County Council is financially unbalanced and morally questionable.

We acknowledge that the consultation for the 2019/20 collection has already been conducted and that the revenues and benefits department is now organised in such a way that to undo the 2019/20 decision, would be logistically difficult for officers. We therefore propose that the Council uses 2019/20 to undertake a review of the impact of the Minimum Tax payment policy, which we are confident will demonstrate its fundamental unfairness and support our contention that this payment should be stopped in 2020/21. We propose the use of £15,000 of the Council's projected underspend to provide the funds for this exercise.

2. We are supportive of Worthing Borough Council purchasing properties to ease the pressure on the provision of emergency accommodation for some of our most vulnerable residents and their families. In this context, we welcome the recent acquisition of the former Downview public house in West Worthing.

We propose that the Council goes a step further and follows the lead of 44% of Councils across the country and forms a Local Housing Company (LHC) as facilitated by the 2012 Localism Act. This would enable the Council to work alongside the provision made by Worthing Homes to develop residential schemes which target the particular housing needs in Worthing for affordable homes for rent and sale, move-on accommodation and other specific housing needs as they are identified. The company would generate additional income to the Council in the form of dividends and enable Worthing to respond to Government demands that Councils should play a more active role in housing delivery and shaping the local housing market.

We propose a budget amendment to fund a scoping exercise in 19/20 to investigate the feasibility of setting up a Worthing LHC with a report back to Council before the end of the year, with a view to forming an LHC in 2020/21. This has been costed at £50,000 and we propose that this should come from our projected underspend as a one-off cost.

3. We are committed to a broad range of policies designed to protect our environment – particularly through the encouragement of recycling in the Borough. We consider the decision to change the frequency bin collections was made purely on the grounds of cost saving and took no account of the evidence from local authorities across the country that other options of the frequency of recycling and residual waste bin collection have a greater impact on recycling rates, as have other initiatives involving education, community involvement, incentives and so on.

Worthing's recycling performance is poor, and at under 40% lags well behind the national average of 45%, and well short of the best authorities which are achieving 60% and more.

We propose that the Council should commission a wide-ranging, fact-finding study of domestic waste and recycling, learning from best practice in LAs achieving high recycling rates, and undertaking limited scale trials across the borough of educational and community initiatives to enhance recycling rates, with a full assessment of their impact and effectiveness in improving recycling, with a view to a wider introduction of the most successful across Worthing.

We would aim to release the funds needed for this important initiative by stopping the procurement process for Worthing Cultural Services releasing £100K in 2019/20 budgeted for the additional costs to the Council as a consequence of a contract being let to an outside provider for the provision of these services.

We would like to emphasise that we are fully supportive of cultural offer provided by Worthing theatres and the museum, but we are concerned that the out-sourcing of these services involves a substantial annual payment to the selected provider which we understand will not be reviewed for five

years. This locks the Council into budgeting for a payment which cannot be altered at a time when local authorities are facing the most severe cuts in funding for decades and need to be financially nimble in order to meet essential service provision.

We also feel that out-sourcing the provision does not tackle the underlying problems that Worthing has in trying to provide the broad cultural offer residents of Worthing should expect, with a minimum of financial support from the Council, in facilities that are inappropriate or inadequate for the kind of events that could generate sufficient income to reduce the Council's support. Out-sourcing, with an agreed payment from the Council to the contractor, will make it less likely that this fundamental issue will be tackled and saddle future Councils with an even greater financial burden.

Suspending the tender process and keeping the delivery of services in-house should have no immediate impact on the delivery of the cultural programme or affect the funding agreed to support that programme for 2019/20, but would allow a re-assessment of the decision in the light of the increasingly challenging financial situation the Council faces.

4. The recent Local Government Association peer review made a strong case for looking at the benefits of merging Adur and Worthing Councils. Mindful of our need to secure the provision of excellent frontline services in challenging financial circumstances, we propose a scoping exercise should be undertaken in 2019/20 to look at the feasibility of this recommendation.

We are aware that there will be pros and cons to a merger, but we are convinced that the peer review's recommendation of further investigation is sound, and given our current economic circumstances, this would be a timely and responsible action for this Council to take. We propose a budget amendment of £50,000 to fund this scoping exercise, using the projected underspend to fund this one-off cost.

The amendments were seconded by Councillor Jim Deen.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group on the Council, Councillor Robert Smytherman, addressed the Council stating for the record that he had opposed the cuts by West Sussex County Council and had proposed an amendment to reinstate the housing support money, which was not supported.

Councillor Smytherman acknowledged the financial liability of the Theatres and expressed support for the proposal to put them out to a trust. He challenged the proposals regarding bin collections and car park investment, stating that the Liberal Democrats would like to see a weekly collection of recycling waste and a fortnightly collection general waste and commercial sector investment in Worthing's car parks.

Councillor Smytherman did support the investment in Commercial Property and welcomed the additional revenue this generated for the council. He also paid tribute

to all the European citizens based in Worthing, who came here to work everyday and made a huge contribution to the community.

Councillor Mark Withers, UKIP, addressed Council, raising reservations about the Council Tax Support Scheme. He questioned whether the Council was thinking enough about the most deprived in its communities, highlighting the need to be aware of both the vulnerable and needy.

Councillor Antony Baker, Independent Conservative, addressed Council highlighting the need to promote the watersports industry. Council was informed that large numbers of people visited the town to participate in watersports and that more could be done to promote such activities and improve facilities.

Members in the Chamber rose to debate the budget and the budget amendments. Councillors stated their broad support for the budget but mostly spoke against the proposed amendments.

The Leader was given the right of reply.

In accordance with the Council's Budget Procedure Rules, the Mayor then put the amendments to the vote in the order of the amendments were received. Each amendment was voted on in turn, with a recorded vote being taken. The results of which, are set out below:-

Amendment 1

For (7): Councillors Barrett, Cooper, Deen, Howard, Mulholland, Smytherman and Withers.

Against (25): Councillors Atkins, Antony Baker, Barraclough, Bickers, Crouch, A Harman, L Harman, J High, P High, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Sim, Sparkes, B Turner, V Turner, N Waight, S Waight, Westover, Wills, Wye and Yallop.

Abstain (2): Councillors Paul Baker and Thorpe.

The proposed amendment was not supported.

Amendment 2

For (5): Councillors Barrett, Cooper, Deen, Howard and Mulholland.

Against (27): Councillors Atkins, Antony Baker, Barraclough, Bickers, Crouch, A Harman, L Harman, J High, P High, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Sim, Smytherman, Sparkes, B Turner, V Turner, N Waight, S Waight, Westover, Wills, Withers, Wye and Yallop.

Abstain (2): Councillors Paul Baker and Thorpe.

The proposed amendment was not supported.

Amendment 3

For (5): Councillors Barrett, Cooper, Deen, Howard and Mulholland.

Against (27): Councillors Atkins, Antony Baker, Barraclough, Bickers, Crouch, A Harman, L Harman, J High, P High, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Sim, Smytherman, Sparkes, B Turner, V Turner, N Waight, S Waight, Westover, Wills, Withers, Wye and Yallop.

Abstain (2): Councillors Paul Baker and Thorpe.

The proposed amendment was not supported.

Amendment 4

For (5): Councillors Barrett, Cooper, Deen, Howard and Mulholland.

Against (27): Councillors Atkins, Antony Baker, Barraclough, Bickers, Crouch, A Harman, L Harman, J High, P High, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Sim, Smytherman, Sparkes, B Turner, V Turner, N Waight, S Waight, Westover, Wills, Withers, Wye and Yallop.

Abstain (2): Councillors Paul Baker and Thorpe.

The proposed amendment was not supported.

Once the amendments had been voted upon and determined, the Mayor then put the substantive motion to the Council for a vote. A recorded vote was taken the results of which, are set out below:-

For (23): Councillors Atkins, Antony Baker, Barraclough, Bickers, Crouch, A Harman, L Harman, J High, P High, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Sim, Sparkes, B Turner, V Turner, Westover, Wills, Withers and Yallop.

Against (3): Councillors Cooper, Deen and Mulholland.

Abstain (7): Councillors Paul Baker, Barrett, Howard, Smytherman, Thorpe, N Waight and S Waight.

Resolved that

1. The Council noted that on 4 February 2019, the Executive calculated the Council Tax Base 2019/20 as **38,504.3** [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 2019/20 was **£9,154,490**.
3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- (a) **£83,879,820** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) **£74,725,330** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) **£9,154,490** 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) **£237.78** 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) **£237.78** 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. That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 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	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
2019/20	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worthing Borough Council	158.52	184.94	211.36	237.78	290.62	343.46	396.3	475.56
West Sussex County Council Total as split below:	922.38	1,076.11	1,229.84	1,383.57	1,691.03	1,998.49	2,305.95	2,767.14
West Sussex Council – Core	856.47	999.22	1,141.96	1,284.71	1,570.2	1,855.69	2,141.18	2,569.42
West Sussex County Council – Adults Social Care element	65.91	76.89	87.88	98.86	120.83	142.80	164.77	197.72
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex	126.61	147.71	168.81	189.91	232.11	274.31	316.52	379.82

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 2019/20 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	1,207.51	1,408.76	1,610.01	1,811.26	2,213.76	2,616.26	3,018.77	3,622.52

C/053/18-19 Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by the Executive

The Leader of the Council presented his report on decisions taken by the Executive since the last meeting of the Council.

Questions were asked in relation to Platforms for our Places and the redevelopment of the Grafton Car Park.

C/054/18-19 Schedule of Meetings 2019/20

Before the Council, was the schedule of meetings for the Council and joint meetings for 2019/20. Council was invited to formally approve the dates for its

Meetings during this period whilst noting the proposed dates for other committees.

The Schedule of Meetings for 2019/20 was proposed by Councillor Daniel Humphreys and seconded by Councillor Val Turner.

Members considered a proposal to remove the Council meeting scheduled in April 2020. It was noted that the Council meeting was required to receive recommendations from the Executive and other Committees and for the selection of the Deputy Mayor.

It was agreed that the Group Leaders would meet with the Chief Executive to consider the feasibility of moving the date of the April Council meetings in future years.

On a vote: For 31 Against 0 Abstentions 1

Resolved that the Schedule of Meetings for 2019/20 be approved

C/055/18-19 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 8 questions from Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12. He advised that one supplementary question could be asked which must arise out of the original question or the reply. Questions would be asked in rotation of the Groups represented in the Chamber and there was 30 minutes allowed for questions with 7 rotations of speakers possible. At the end of 30 minutes the Mayor explained that he would extend the time to conclude the current rotation of questions.

The Mayor announced that the following Councillors had submitted questions:

Councillors Cooper, Deen, Mulholland and Withers.

The order would be

First rotation: Councillor Mulholland, Councillor Withers

Second rotation: Councillor Mulholland

Third rotation: Councillor Cooper

Fourth rotation: Councillor Cooper

Fifth rotation: Councillor Deen

Sixth rotation: Councillor Cooper

Seventh rotation: Councillor Deen

First Rotation:

Question from Councillor Richard Mulholland to the Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services

Currently to be eligible for a larger black bin, a household has to have more than four members. Now we are moving to fortnightly refuse collection should we allow smaller families larger bin as for example those with infants may struggle with a small bin?

Response

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied no. The Council's policy was to provide a larger 240 litre bin for households where there were 5 or more occupants or medical needs. There were no plans to change this policy as the Council's aim was to encourage households to recycle more and put less in the residual waste stream.

For any households regularly finding themselves struggling with capacity, the Council would arrange for a Compliance Officer to visit and offer advice as to how the household could reduce their residual waste by recycling more.

Typically such visits identified that 20% of waste found in a households residual bin, could be put in the recycling bin.

Councillor Mulholland asked the following supplementary question, 'did the Council have sufficient new recycling (blue) bins to deal with an increase in demand?'

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied yes, but added that the Councils were also providing households with advice regarding the compacting of recycling waste to increase capacity in recycling bins.

Question from Councillor Mark Withers to the Leader of the Council

Further to our representation to the rail authorities about cycle rack provision for commuters, have we received any information from them on this issue?

Response

The Leader replied that he would take this issue forward following the meeting whilst acknowledging that similar problems had been experienced at both Durrington and Worthing Stations.

Councillor Withers asked if the Leader was aware of any other cycling related issues associated with Durrington Station.

The Leader replied that he was not aware of any issues raised regarding Durrington Station specifically, but issues had been raised in relation to cycling provision at railway stations more generally.

Second rotation:

Question from Cllr Richard Mulholland to the Executive Member for Regeneration

Can we expect to see any cranes on the Union Place site in 2019? And if so, what will they be building?

Response

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that it was unlikely that cranes would be onsite in 2019.

Third rotation:

Question from Cllr Rebecca Cooper to the Leader of the Council

Could the Leader outline his vision for the future of the Lido?

Response

The Leader replied that the Seafront Investment Plan outlined the ambitions of the Council along the seafront, not just for the Lido. He also stated that he would like to see the Lido be opened up as a heated outdoor swimming pool.

Councillor Cooper asked whether the Leader had a timeline to realise his vision as a supplementary question.

The Leader replied that it would be dependent on the outcome of ongoing negotiations.

Fourth Rotation:

Question from Councillor Rebecca Cooper to the Executive Member for Regeneration

Noting the continuing presence of exhaust fumes and buses obscuring the view of the seafront, how are talks with Stagecoach progressing?

Response

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied the question touched on two issues, the ambitions of the Seafront Investment Plan to further develop the seafront and the redevelopment of the Stagecoach site which, the Council was reminded, was private land.

It was noted that Officers from the Council along with colleagues from West Sussex County Council had continued dialogue with the senior management from

Stagecoach about the impact a £12m investment in Worthing Town Centre would have and the possible rerouting of buses if South Street was pedestrianised, which would have an impact on buses along the seafront area.

The Council continued with work to facilitate the move of Stagecoach from their freehold site along Marine Parade.

Councillor Cooper asked whether the Council could expect to see progress in the next 6 months as her supplementary question.

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised negotiations were ongoing and that he wasn't sure what the position would be in 6 months time.

Fifth Rotation:

Question from Councillor Jim Deen to the Executive Member for Regeneration

What progress is being made with New River Retail to make better use of the Montague Quarter which is becoming an increasingly dilapidated area in the heart of our town centre?

Response:

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that there was a low rate of unoccupied premises in the town centre, currently 4.5%. This was a lower rate than Horsham, Chichester and the national average. Continuing conversations were being held with New River Retail who were exploring the market, looking at they could make better use of that space and what other options they could bring forward.

Councillor Deen asked whether the Council was sticking to its original vision for that area.

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied New River Retail were exploring what the other options were. The Council would wait to see the proposals that come forward.

Sixth Rotation:

Question from Councillor Rebecca Cooper to the Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services

Could we please be provided with an update on progress with the Brooklands development, and whether the Go Karts business has been successfully sited in the development or elsewhere in the town?

Response:

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied that Officers were currently preparing the documentation for the tender for the developed (RIBA Stage 3) and technical (RIBA Stage 4) design of the masterplan for the Park.

This would allow the Council to appoint a company to produce concise information, to seek planning approval and also to provide detailed drawings, specification of works and schedule of works to be able to go out to tender later this year for the construction phase of the project.

Separately, the demolition of the redundant buildings (with the exception of the go kart building and toilet block) located on the park would take place once the services had been disconnected. Once the demolition was completed, the area would be reinstated to park land until the planned redevelopment of the park takes place.

In respect of the Go-karts, the Council provided initial advice about relocation options, this included out of area due to the availability of commercial space in Worthing. The Council continued to assess all commercial options as they arose.

Councillor Cooper asked whether there was potentially space, within Brooklands, for the Go-karts to be re-sited, as her supplementary question.

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied that the Master Plan had been consulted on, presented and adopted by the Council. In terms of relocation within the site, that was not something that was currently being considered.

There would be commercial opportunities that will be brought to market, on the Brooklands site, and any person, including existing concession holders, could put forward their vision for what could occupy the Brooklands site.

It was also noted that all proposals would be subject to planning.

Seventh Rotation:

Question from Councillor Jim Deen to the Leader of the Council

One of the suggestions made in the recent LGA Finance Peer Review was that the Council could make better use of the Social Value Act by doing as some authorities are doing and using the Act to secure financial contributions from contractors to fund community activities requiring support.

As this suggestion wasn't carried through to the Council's Action Plan, are we not missing an opportunity here to add to the funds of the Community Chest and enable it to extend the excellent work it is doing to help community groups and organisations in the town?

Response:

The Leader replied that the Community Chest was doing some excellent work which was well supported by the Council. He also highlighted that 18 months ago, the Joint Strategic Committee and the Council approved a Sustainable Procurement

Strategy which included a raft of social value considerations which the Council required from the people it did business with.

C/056/18-19 Motions on Notice

The Council had before it, a motion which had been submitted by Councillor Jim Deen.

The Council was asked to deal with the motion under provisions set out in paragraph 14 of the Council Procedure Rules (under part 4 of the Council Constitution - Rules of Procedure).

Councillor Jim Deen presented the motion to Council which was seconded by Councillor Rebecca Cooper.

Councillor Deen highlighted a number of problems with Permitted Development Rights (PDRs), including:-

- Developers were able to avoid the planning process under PDRs;
- Developers were able to avoid providing affordable homes under PDRs;
- Loss of employment space;
- It was estimated that up to 10,000 affordable homes could be lost as a result of PDRs.

The Council was requested to approve the sending of a letter to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, requesting that PDRs be abolished. It was noted that a number of Councils had requested this.

Members expressed their support for the proposal whilst acknowledging that the LGA was also campaigning on this issue.

On a vote: For 31, Against 0, Abstain 1

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council agreed the motion as set out below:-

Permitted Development Rights

In light of the increasing problems Worthing faced in meeting the demand for affordable housing, the Council would send the following letter to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

To the Right Hon James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Worthing Borough Council would like to bring to your attention the increasing threat that office to residential Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) pose to the ability of the Council to:

1. Deliver much needed affordable homes in the borough
2. Maintain the quality of housing provided
3. Maintain the balance between the provision of housing and property for employment.

Because office to residential PDRs allow developers to avoid the full planning process, we are unable to secure from such developments the contributions towards affordable housing in line with Worthing Borough Council's 2011 Core Strategy. We are also unable to ensure that the developments meet the quality standards for homes we would expect to secure through the planning process. PDRs also prevent us from exercising our judgement as a Council concerning the balance of need for housing and properties suitable for employment in the town.

We know that our authority is not alone in facing problems from office to residential PDRs. Across the country, the LGA calculates that, over the last three years, more than 10,000 affordable homes have been lost as a result of these PDRs.

We appreciate the need to find ways of accelerating the rate of house building, but we consider this change has resulted in possibly unforeseen, and certainly undesirable, effects. We urge the Minister to withdraw these Permitted Development Rights and to focus on enabling us to deliver the affordable, high quality homes we want to provide in Worthing to meet our housing need.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9.36pm, it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Mayor

2019/20 Budget - Leader's Speech

Cllr Daniel Humphreys - 26 February 2019

It's now just over two years since this Council approved the Platforms for Places strategy. We're all well aware of the challenging financial context that Local Government finds itself in, but still the strategy is an ambitious one that responds to the needs and expressed desires of our local community. The budget that we are presenting here this evening provides the financial means to complete the third year of that strategy and look forward to an even brighter future for the people of Worthing.

It's probably worth going over those ambitions before looking at how far we've come and what we expect to deliver with this budget.

- We agreed in this chamber to reaffirm our ambition for Worthing Borough Councillors to be the Leaders of our Place
- We established our ambition to provide the very best services and solutions for the people of Worthing through the use of innovative solutions such as our digital programme
- There is our Ambition to ensure we are making a positive contribution to protecting our environment for future generations
- Our ambition to work with partners across all sectors so that everyone in our community will be cared for, whether by being given good, housing, access to excellent healthcare, kept safe from crime or simply by being given the opportunity to play an active role in their community.
- And by no means the least of our ambitions, Our Ambition to demonstrate the confidence we have in our town by seeing development on key sites, developing our digital and creative economies to put our local economy in a strong position no matter what the future holds and supporting local employers

The budget that we are considering tonight furthers those ambitions, while taking prudent and responsible steps that protect the services our community value and enable them to thrive.

The last JSC meeting considered the two year progress report on Platforms for our Places and it's clear that we're collectively making some fantastic progress at a time when other Councils are retreating and regressing.

Sustainable Worthing

When agreeing to a programme of work to improve the way we as a Council work with the community to act as stewards for our natural environment we were ahead of the curve. Since then David Attenborough's "Blue Planet II" has put in to sharp focus the long-term impact that we are having on the world's environment.

As our Coat of Arms reminds us (Ex Terra Copiam e Mari Salutem) the defining characteristic of our community is one surrounded by the sea (which gives us health) and

the downs (from which we gain fullness or plenty). As such we are all too aware of the value of our natural assets and the need to care for them.

To this end we have introduced the Worthing Refill scheme, the Easit network to encourage greater use of public transport, the cycling and walking action group and our capital programme provides for over £450,000 of investment to improve how we manage our buildings to reduce their environmental impact.

We have committed to making a large improvement in our recycling rates. In order to achieve this colleagues and I have had to review what we have done for a long time and ask whether moving to Alternative Waste Collections is the correct action to take. I'm proud that we have been able to maintain the existing weekly collections of refuse and that we didn't, as many others did, take a knee-jerk decision to radically reduce the service. Last year our neighbours in Horsham District switched to the Alternate Weekly service and the evidence is compelling that this change that will drive up recycling rates. Like my colleague Cllr Crouch I have joined the refuse crews on their rounds and I can confirm that many that many in our community are putting out half-empty bins as part of the current collection service. This is no longer a good use of Council Taxpayers' money, it adds to congestion on our roads and as I have said is now out of step with the new best practice. *Some comments on the opposition.*

The budget provides for the investment required to make this service change and provide additional information to our communities about recycling. While there are always political points to be scored I would now urge all Councillors to engage and promote the information being made available to help our communities get ready for this service change. Suggestions to the public that there is cross party disagreement when we know otherwise is not helpful to anyone.

Brooklands lake and park is an important natural asset enjoyed by residents of Worthing and visitors alike. Our budget provides for £90,000 to begin the delivery of an ambitious masterplan to bring a new lease of life to the park and lake.

Working with our health partners and unlocking our assets

Another area in which our ambitious plans are bearing fruit is through our work with the local health system. Our community's health is vital to a good quality of life. The Council has been actively working with partners to identify how we can improve health outcomes and help our residents to thrive. Our social prescribing initiative, *Going Local's*, success has been recognised, with the programme being renewed and expanded for another two years with the potential for roll out across West Sussex.

Through a modest investment of £76,000 shared between Adur & Worthing Councils, Coastal West Sussex CCG and the County Council we are able to refer people to a range of voluntary, statutory and private services, and therefore reduce demand on GP services. Six GP surgeries across the area took part in the trial with more than 1,000 referrals registered within 18 months. One of their referral service is our Wellbeing advisor who has helped 435 people find their way to a healthier lifestyle. While 1200 children have taken part in our Happy Hearts programme across schools in the District and Borough.

We also continue to work with partners to realise the development of the community health hub on the Civic Centre car park. This is an innovative approach to utilise our assets to deliver better outcomes for our community and deliver a financial return to the Council.

This is all great work and that colleagues share my pride in what we're achieving to improve health outcomes. However, the biggest determinants of health outcomes are employment and housing. And that leads me on the work we are doing to improve opportunities for both.

Housing our community

Our housing services continue to experience an increase in demand. It's to the credit of this Council and the officers who make these things happen that we can say that 182 households helped from becoming homeless across our area over the past year.

We have chosen to take further proactive steps to address the demand on services providing for additional growth in the budget of £270,000. The recent purchase of the Downview pub is an example of how we are improving the quality of temporary and emergency housing and reducing the costs for the Council Taxpayer. To further our efforts we are investing in our estates team to increase our capacity to make further purchases.

The Councils are also working constructively with partners across West Sussex to respond to budget decisions being made by the West Sussex County Council. We are providing a contingency sum of £210,000 to respond to the impact of these decisions, while we work with our partners to find a long-term solutions to supported housing.

Investing in our Town Centres

The biggest and perhaps the most ambitious area of work that we are delivering is our town centre regeneration programme.

While we remain confident that Worthing town centre provides a very attractive offer for residents and visitors, there is a need for investment to ensure that it remains so and that we're able to adapt to the changing requirements of the 21st century. The traditional role of the town centre as being primarily a marketplace for shopping is changing. We need to ensure that its evolving role as a place for living, meeting, learning and enjoyment is facilitated by all that we do.

The Budget will enable the continuing progress on our strategic sites, including Union Place and the Grafton site which we own as well as Teville Gate and the Stagecoach site. The investment we are seeing in the town and our ability to attract development partners is a testament to the fantastic opportunities that exist in Worthing and the work done by this Conservative Council.

To support this investment this budget proposes funding to create additional capacity in our planning service. This additional capacity will enable the Council to handle anticipated complex applications, without taking away resources from processing some 1,200 planning application the service receives annually.

In addition to this we will conduct a £7.9 million investment to upgrade our multi-story car parks. As the first and last impression many people get of Worthing it is important that these facilities are attractive and safe environments.

We are also making a significant investment in our heritage and cultural assets which are vital to our visitor economy. 60,000 people visited our Museum and Gallery in 2018 and we have ambitious plans to further improve them with the 'let the light in' project. This complements the other ongoing investments in our cultural assets, enhancing the experience of the theatre audiences and the ability of the theatres to continue to develop its varied and much loved programme.

£356,800 is being invested in the upkeep of our iconic Pier, including replacing some of the timber decking and we're investing £200,000 in to improving the town centre public toilets.

Outside of the town centre it is important to note that we had 35,000 visitors to Highdown Gardens last year. A bid worth over £800,000 has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which we hope that an enhanced visitor experience will see these numbers increase.

It is these investments which add to the vibrancy of Worthing and its attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

Our Financial Position

This is not the extent of our ambition, but all those things that I have mentioned demonstrate key areas in which we are making investments. These investments are supported by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which in turn is underpinned by new approaches to how we design and deliver our services, and develop our commercial activities and investment portfolios. These approaches are not only designed to improve the financial sustainability of the Councils, but also the services that our communities, clients and customers experience. We're making investments of over £340,000 in our digital services and we will continue to invest in new digital tools, in particular to improve how customers access Customer Services and the Revenues and Benefits service.

Our investment strategy is another key element to our budget strategy, and now represents 14% of our revenue. Given the financial challenges we face investment is an important aspect to our fiscal strategy. While you will have seen reports of significant sums being used to invest in property around the country, I wish to ensure members that we will continue to take a prudent approach to risk. Without this element of the strategy it is clear that we would not be able to fulfill the ambitious programme that we have been delivering on.

I therefore commend this budget to you and I hope that all Councillors will support it to realise our ambitions and enable our communities to better weather any uncertainties that the future may bring.