

Minutes of a meeting of the
Worthing Council
20 October 2020
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Lionel Harman (The Mayor)
Councillor Sean McDonald (The Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Paul Baker	Councillor Richard Nowak
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Helen Silman
Councillor Mike Barrett	Councillor Jane Sim
Councillor Keith Bickers	Councillor Dawn Smith
Councillor Ferdousi Henna Chowdhury	Councillor Sally Smith
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Robert Smytherman
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Jim Deen	Councillor Hazel Thorpe
Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Nicola Waight
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Paul Westover
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Steve Wills
Councillor Martin McCabe	Councillor Tim Wills
Councillor Dr Heather Mercer	Councillor Mark Withers
Councillor Richard Mulholland	

***Absent**

C/35/20-21 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

C/36/20-21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Noel Atkins declared an interest as an elected member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Louise Murphy declared an interest as a non-Executive Director of Worthing Homes.

Councillor Steve Waight declared an interest as an elected member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Paul High declared an interest as an elected member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes declared an interest as an elected member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Sean McDonald declared an interest as an elected member of West Sussex County Council and as Chairman of a Task and Finish Group on the Covid-19 pop-up cycle lanes.

Councillor Kevin Jenkins declared an interest as an Education Consultant to West Sussex County Council in relation to school governance and school travel plans.

Councillor Charles James declared an interest as a trustee of South Downs Leisure.

Councillor Val Turner declared an interest as a trustee of South Downs Leisure.

C/37/20-21 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/38/20-21 Questions from the Public

The following question had been received in advance of the meeting.

1. Question submitted from Shelley McCabe, a Worthing Resident

For the Executive Member for Health & Well-being:

Worthing Borough Council has committed to more pop-up cycle lanes. See page 9 of the 'And Then... Bouncing back in post pandemic Adur and Worthing' document.

Can you tell me where you will put these new pop-up cycle lanes, given the unpopularity of the current scheme?

The Leader replied that West Sussex County Council were the Highways Authority and as such had responsibility for any cycling infrastructure on the public highway.

It was a normal process for any new cycle routes to be consulted on widely, and for the designs to be developed over time with input from local stakeholders and residents. However, the 'pop-up cycle' routes installed by the County Council during the summer were designed at speed and installed with considerably less consultation than would normally be the case, in order that the county council could meet the very tight timeframes attached to the Government's funding stream (the Emergency Active Travel Fund).

This fund intended to help people that do not normally cycle to feel safe enough to cycle on the roads following on from the government advice to avoid using public transport because of Covid. The pop-up routes were intended to help mitigate the increases in congestion that were inevitable. They also aimed to help people use active means of travel to support their health and wellbeing, and to help reduce carbon emissions associated with transport.

Adur & Worthing Councils were committed to making cycling and walking safer and easier. The councils had developed a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

having consulted widely with local communities at the end of 2019. This set out a high level map of potential routes where cycle routes could be installed.

Any proposed future cycle routes delivered by the County Council were likely to be explored based on routes identified in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. The council would work with the County to try to ensure that appropriate levels of consultation were always undertaken, and that the consultation process informed the design of and any implementation of future cycle routes.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.1.10, Councillor Martin McCabe moved that the matter raised by the question be referred to the Executive. The motion was seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman but not supported following a vote.

2. Question submitted from Susie Pepper-Smith, a Worthing Resident

Worthing saw a record number safely protest in our town this summer to say Black Lives Matter, which was reflected in many cities and towns across our country, across the world. Many local councils passed motions showing support recognising that the status quo must change.

Many Worthing residents tuned into our councils meeting 3 months ago to see what progress could be made here, and sat patiently through many hours of other business as Black Lives Matter was at the bottom of the agenda. Unfortunately, just as the BLM motion was to be debated, transmission to the public was cut due to a technical failure.

Given the motion was not heard, and given the alertness to the public of Worthing demonstrating the status quo on Black Lives, what consideration was given to having the motions on Black Lives Matter not sitting at the end of business once again?

The Leader replied that the Council and its officers were committed to tackling racism and xenophobia in Worthing and it was extremely unfortunate that the debate transmission was cut short due to the technical failure with the livestream.

The order of the agenda was standard and set out in the council's constitution and any motions always appeared at the end. The Council had ensured the two notices of motion that were deferred from the last meeting, because of these technical problems, had been listed first for debate.

Ms Pepper-Smith asked a supplementary question seeking details of the work undertaken by the Community Working Group.

The Leader replied that work had been taking place involving Community Works and other groups from around the town.

3. Question submitted from Susie Pepper-Smith, a Worthing Resident

The question asked was not allowed by the Mayor as it was not the question submitted in advance of the meeting.

4. **Question submitted from Emma Taylor, a Worthing Resident**

As a Worthing mother of a mixed race daughter, I would like to see the council progress to equality being a central part of its actions, whether that's services, policy or processes. Often it feels like a bolt-on after thought at best. As we know, the last Worthing Borough Council meeting in July did not hear the Black Lives Matter motion that was at the bottom of a long agenda. Please could the council set out what discussions were had with members of this committee with a view to holding an earlier meeting to address the motion on Black Lives that dropped off the end of the agenda in the summer?

The Leader replied that it was, as previously advised, extremely unfortunate that the debate was cut short due to the technical failure with the livestream.

Due to the technical failure with the livestream, the motion was carried forward to the next Full Council meeting, which would be the usual approach for any item that had not been debated in full, and was in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The two notices of motion that were deferred from the July meeting, had been listed first for debate.

5. **Question submitted from Emma Taylor, a Worthing Resident**

The motion to this meeting, that was originally listed to be heard at the last WBC meeting, states

"Worthing Borough Council reaffirms our commitment to condemning racism and working to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia. We commend the words of our Prime Minister who said that "black lives matter and I totally understand the anger and the grief that is felt not just in America but around the world and in our country as well"

Hundreds of people in Worthing demonstrated in June and we saw protests here again in July outside our Town Hall expressing a shared frustration at the lack of equality for BAME communities. Since then, what review of the work with local bodies and programmes' support and resources have taken place which reaffirms Worthing's commitment to fighting and preventing racism and xenophobia?

The Leader replied that the Council and its Officers were committed to tackling racism and xenophobia in Worthing and have begun reviewing a number of work streams to see how the work of the Council could reflect this.

Officers had connected to the local organisers of the BLM campaign locally to discuss issues that could be worked on together. Officers had also been continuing to develop the community response to Covid-19 and outbreak planning to ensure there was wide reach to local ethnic minority groups and communities.

Community Works, an organisation commissioned by Adur, Worthing and WSCC Councils had been supporting local BAME groups and organisations and working with them to understand more about the makeup of different groups within the local area.

In addition Community Works had been undertaking a significant amount of work around anti-racism and diversity. They were developing a range of work to tackle barriers to

engagement for BAME* organisations, and championing the voices of the, perhaps, less often heard organisations. They were building a strategic plan around this work.

Community Works had also been providing more intensive support and developing a closer understanding of local groups through regular meetings over the last 6 months and connecting them to one another through small networks.

In addition, Community Works had been delivering Zoom training sessions and workshops working with BAME* leaders locally, for C&VSOs to reflect on their board diversity and consider how to be more inclusive and attract a diversity of trustees to their work.

6. Question submitted from Mr Conell Loggenberg, a Worthing Resident

Question(s) for Leader of the Council, Mr Daniel Humphreys

On 14th June 2020, I wrote an email letter, addressed to yourself. The email was an Open Letter for the Promotion of Racial Equality.

Copied into that email, was the Leader of the Opposition (Labour Party Members), Councillor Rebecca Cooper and separately, Liberal Democrats Member, Councillor Robert Smytherman.

In the letter I raised the matter of the Monument in Steyne Garden. (If time permits, I'd like to read the letter for the benefit of members of the public who may not be aware)

On 16th June 2020, you replied, thanking me for my email and stated that (and I quote):

“This issue is obviously more relevant than ever at the moment and I would like to assure you that I support the campaigns to promote a more inclusive and fairer society in which race and skin colour should never be a basis for discrimination. Black lives matter and the recent unlawful killing of George Floyd serves as an appalling example of how far we still have to go.

I am aware of the war memorial on Steyne Gardens and I know about the history of the “South Africa War”. It is undoubtedly not a proud part of British history...”

Further in your reply, you state:

“I also agree that we should review the way in which we remember and educate people about this particular war and the others that were taking place in southern Africa during that period. So I will work with colleagues and approach the management of Worthing Museum to assess the public facing displays relating to this time and explore options for adding to the information provided in Worthing that gives the proper context. An information board explaining the history of the war near to the memorial or in the museum or Town Hall may be appropriate.”

And in the concluding parts of your email, you stated:

“When the museum reopens and we look into this more widely I will contact you again if that is alright with you?”

On 18th June 2020, I replied to your response:

“Dear Daniel,

Thank you for your reply.

I welcome your offer of collaboration to set in motion actionable proposals for tangible unambiguous public facing representation that people of Black Ethnicity’s Lives do matter. I wish to acknowledge your early motion to engage local Museum Management towards aims for public displays as an encouraging development for confidence.

May I suggest that we commence that conversation with the Museum’s Management Team by way of a letter of overriding purpose intent from Council on the issue.

Some of the work, that of sourcing all available relevant historical records to this war, could already be done prior to our face-face meeting(s).

These early interventions would benefit us expediency and promote trust and confidence in pursuit of the aims.

I will in due time inform you of parties and representatives who wish to attend face to face meeting(s).”

4 months has lapsed.

I have not heard from you again on the issue.

Question:

Does the Council commit to, beyond that of a declaratory statement to do so, work with People of Black and Asian Ethnicity, to reflect widely on or alongside the same monument, including elsewhere such as the museum, the full and proper context of Black People’s suffering and the loss of their Lives as an equal commemoration of Lives Lost in that war?

If so,

Who is taking Leadership on the matter, when have they started doing so and, given that I haven’t heard anything from the Council on this matter since the 16th June 2020 promising to work with colleagues and contact Worthing Museum Management, what exactly has so far been done and is there any evidence to support what may have been done.

If, for any reason, the Council had not yet moved on this issue, when will it do so?

The Leader clarified that it was the South Africa Wars that were not proud moments in our history and that as stated previously this evening, the Councils had undertaken extensive work with the local communities during the summer.

The Local Authority had been focusing its resources in responding to the pandemic, including its support to residents in need and in developing resilience within the

communities and businesses of Worthing to enable recovery and manage the anticipated second wave.

The Museum, an independent trust, was in the process of undertaking a careful and limited re-opening process and the Council would now take the opportunity to progress this matter with the museum's service.

Mr Loggenberg asked who would be taking ownership of the matter and when it would commence as a supplementary question.

The Leader replied that he would take leadership of the matter and speak to relevant people later in the week to form a plan.

7. Question submitted from Ms Kelly Hannah-Rogers, a Worthing Resident

Does the Council believe it is required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (or legal equivalent) for the changes to its constitution which has affected how the public partake in its democratic processes?

The Leader replied that Councillors were aware of their duties but did lean on the advice of the Council's solicitors at times. Under the Equalities Act 2010, the Council must have regard to 3 equality objectives: eliminating discrimination and other prohibited conduct; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

The Council did do Equalities Impact Assessments but the Leader had been advised that the Council was not required to undertake these in all situations but instead must be minded to its duties.

In regards to public participation and how that had changed as a result of changes to the constitution, resulting from emergency legislation that parliament had put through to enable remote meetings such as this. No equality impact assessment was undertaken in relation to those changes but Councillors were aware of their duties in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 and the Leader was not aware that anyone had suffered particular disadvantage as a result of meetings taking place remotely.

Ms Hannah-Rogers asked why equality implications had not been incorporated within the 26 May report as a supplementary question.

The Leader replied that to the best of his knowledge the report to the Joint Governance Committee had given consideration to the equality implications.

8. Submitted Question from Ms Kelly Hannah-Rogers, a Worthing Resident

Was the relevant Equality Impact Assessment or legal equivalent put before elected members on 21 and 26 May 2020 respectively, when considering a change to the council's constitution?

The Leader replied that as per his previous answer, an Equality Impact Assessment had not been conducted for the report to Council on 26 May.

Ms Hannah-Rogers asked what the equality considerations were as a supplementary question.

The Leader replied that the matter related to a change in the constitution to allow remote meetings to be held instead of physical meetings, as up until that point, it would have been illegal to hold a remote meeting. The consideration was about switching across to and being able to do remote working and the Leader had been very alert to any issues that would have restricted the participation of any groups.

The Leader also advised that he had not been made aware of any issues or concerns raised in regard to these changes.

C/39/20-21 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Executive Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor announced that unfortunately the Mayoral charity fundraising had not been going well due to the restrictions however, the GoFundMe page the Mayor and Mayoress had set up for the Blue Plaque for Ellen Chapman had reached its target. The order for the plaque had been placed and it was hoped that it would be put at the entrance of the Town Hall early next year. The Mayor took the opportunity to publicly thank everyone who contributed, and made a special mention to the Council's friends in Richebourg, after speaking to Jérôme Demulier the Mayor of Richebourg had kindly donated £565.

The Mayor highlighted the importance of working together during difficult times and the need to support one another whatever our personal beliefs or political ambitions. The information regarding what people needed to do to beat the Covid-19 pandemic was clear - Hands-Face-Space.

The Mayor was grateful for all the regular updates received from the officers both in the Borough and from West Sussex County Council and thanked them for all they had done during the year. He implored community leaders to engage with the public so they remained safe, not as had been done in recent weeks, using the public health crisis for political gain.

The Mayor also provided an overview of the engagements and activities he had taken part in during the summer months.

The Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services shared some good news in relation to Green Flags and paid tribute to the Parks and Foreshore staff and 'friends of' groups for Beach House Park, Marine Gardens, Field Place and Highdown all scoring gold.

There were no announcements from the Leader or the Chief Executive.

C/40/20-21 Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

C/41/20-21 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

Council had, before it, recommendations from the Joint Governance Committee.

Extracts of these minutes had been circulated as items 7A(i) & (ii) and 7B.

Item 7A(i) Joint Governance Committee - 30 July 2020

Worthing Borough Council Petition Scheme

The Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 30 July 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Beccy Cooper.

The motion was unanimously supported on a vote.

Resolved

That the Council approved an amendment to paragraph 6.2 of the Petition Scheme to include the following

Following the debate by Councillors, the Petition Organiser will be given a further opportunity to address the Council and shall have a maximum of 3 minutes to make a closing statement.

Item 7A(ii) Joint Governance Committee - 30 July 2020

Joint Governance Committee Appointments: Parish Councillors

The Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 30 July 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Keith Bickers.

The motion was unanimously supported on a vote.

Resolved

That the Council

- I. approved the appointment of Cllr Ann Bridges, as a Co-Opted Member for Lancing Parish Council, to the Joint Governance Committee for 2020/21;
- II. approved the appointment of Cllr Caroline Baxter, as a Co-Opted Member for Sompting Parish Council, to the Joint Governance Committee for 2020/21.

Item 7B Joint Governance Committee - 22 September 2020

Recruitment and Appointment of Independent Persons

The Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Steve Waight.

The Council debated the need for Mr Simon Norris-Jones, Independent Person for Standards, to go through a full recruitment process before his term of appointment was extended in the interests of fairness and transparency. It was suggested that as there had been no problems with his work over the last 4 years, there was no reason for him to reapply for the position.

On a vote: For 24, Against 10, Abstentions 3

Resolved

That the Council approved the appointment of Mr Simon Norris-Jones as an Independent Person for Standards for a further term of 4 years.

C/42/20-21 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 Ordinary meeting of the Council, which were detailed in Item 8.

Questions were asked regarding the appointment of Councillors to Outside Bodies, modelling of the Council's Budget in the event of a second wave of Covid-19 infections and a further lockdown, the climate emergency and wider consultations in relation to fortnightly bin collections.

C/43/20-21 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 9 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 Hazel Thorpe, Sally Smith, Martin McCabe, and Margaret Howard

First rotation:

Question from Councillor Sally Smith to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

Research shows that up to 60000 people in the UK may have been suffering from 'long covid' for more than three months, with prolonged symptoms of coronavirus and at risk of being forgotten. Are the numbers of people with 'long covid' in Adur and Worthing being collated?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that the Council was aware of this issue but were not collecting these figures to date. The Council would be reviewing this as part of its work through the Wellbeing Programme.

Councillor Smith asked a supplementary question regarding financial and practical support for those suffering long covid.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that residents' health was always something that was taken into account.

Question from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

As they stand, the current proposals for reform in England (set out in the Planning White Paper) from the Wildlife Trusts view and others will not lead to a system fit for the future. Instead, these reforms could:

- increase nature's decline;
- fail to integrate nature into people's lives; and
- undermine the democratic process for local decision-making.

There is no suggestion in the White Paper of including nature or accessible green spaces into the **new Growth or Renewal areas** and there would be no change for wildlife in the Protected area, leaving things as they are - an approach which we know is already failing wildlife, and us. The need for green and open spaces are even more essential in the light of covid 19.

Can the leader reassure us that this omission will be put right and that our Council will in its consultation of the White Paper and future planning put wildlife and conservation at the heart of Community planning?

The Leader replied that a report was being taken to Worthing Planning Committee on 21 October, which formed a proposed response to the White Paper 'Planning for the Future' (a similar report was taken to Adur Planning Committee on 5th October). The response made clear the importance that should be given to wildlife and conservation in the proposed new planning system as follows:

'...the three-zone approach appears focused on built development and does not appear to facilitate or support biodiversity or actions relating to climate change. Should this approach be maintained, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must make clear that planning for biodiversity must be integrated within all three zone types - and in fact, should be the starting point for planning in each area, rather than an 'add on'.'

The response also referred to the proposed replacement of existing legal and policy tests, and stated: 'it was vital that a streamlined Local Plan system can truly assess and mitigate environmental impacts in a way that gives confidence to the public and others that the planning system is genuinely safeguarding and enhancing natural assets and biodiversity.'

Cllr Thorpe asked a supplementary question regarding unachievable housing targets.

The Leader replied that the figures were unrealistic but were being reviewed. The White Paper was a separate issue and there were robust responses coming forward from Councils nationally.

Second rotation:

Question from Councillor Sally Smith to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

A population survey has shown that alcohol intake increased significantly during the lockdown period due to a number of complex factors including social isolation, anxiety about the future and redistribution of services. What follow up interventions are the Wellbeing team able to offer to those whose health is now adversely affected?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that Adur & Worthing Wellbeing had adapted interventions across the entire program to be able to deliver alcohol interventions remotely via online and phone, in order to continue to support people who wanted to make healthier lifestyle changes whilst the Council was unable to deliver face to face due to the COVID pandemic.

The team of five Wellbeing Advisors continued to offer one to one support to adults 18 and over; in addition the Council had recently appointed a dedicated Wellbeing Advisor for Alcohol, with additional funding from Public Health West Sussex, who joined the team from 1 October. This new post was working alongside our existing team of Wellbeing Advisors and once fully established, would deliver Extended Brief Interventions for people drinking at Risk and Higher Risk rates with the aim of reducing levels of alcohol and preventing dependency. Support was offered as a person centred approach, with people supported into other services as appropriate to their needs such as: volunteer opportunities to reduce social isolation, Money Mentors for help with Financial issues, Weight Management services for people who were above a healthy weight etc. Alongside the client support work, this post would create and deliver local campaigns to raise awareness of the harmful effects of alcohol and link people into the support available.

Councillor Smith asked a supplementary question regarding preventative work taking place pre second lockdown.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that WSCC was responsible for public health. WSCC were providing regular communications and the issue was not being ignored.

Question from Councillor Martin McCabe to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing praised our proposals for a local Chat Bench scheme as "a really good idea" at the Council JSC in June. So can the Member please confirm how our local Chat Bench scheme is progressing and what name it will inevitably be rebranded as?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that she did not think the approach proposed worked in the current situation. However, moving forwards, an alternative solution could be a 'Friendly Bench' community led offer.

Third rotation:

Question from Councillor Margaret Howard to the Leader

At the Joint Strategic Committee in September, on behalf of constituents, I asked about the cycle lanes and was repeatedly told this comes under WSCC, however this completely ignores the fact that there are Council Officers and Members involved in the Local Cycling and Walking Plan, including the Leader of this Council.

That plan was very thorough and found that the Broadwater route through the A24 was the most favourable however as with most paper exercises once it was implemented it proved to be hugely unpopular.

I appreciate that WSCC makes the final decisions but we cannot hide behind that fact as the public needs to know how we are representing their views and if we are applying pressure where it is needed.

So my question is what has WBC done via the Officers and the County Council Members that are present here, to represent the views of its residents to WSCC?

The Leader replied that while the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) did highlight the A24 as a key route, what that document didn't do was provide the design solution.

Whilst the Council was supportive of cycling and walking, the Council's views were made very clear to WSCC Officers and Members that we, as the Borough Council, asked for a series of changes to the design at the conception stage. This feedback was formed through Transport Initiatives, a consultancy that specialised in sustainable travel and who assisted with the LCWIP. Whilst some changes were made, not all suggestions were taken on board.

Members and Officers were continually in active dialogue with WSCC counterparts to highlight areas of concern and, where required, forward comments through that come directly to the Borough Council.

Cllr Howard asked whether the Council's Officers were in contact with WSCC as a supplementary question.

The Leader replied that officers were in conversations with WSCC but official responses would be made via Councillors.

Question from Councillor Martin McCabe to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

Can the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing please confirm that she individually submitted responses to the following local consultations and please give us the dates of submissions and an outline of the content of her submissions:

- 'Have your say on a new draft strategy for children and young people who are in care and care leavers' - West Sussex County Council consultation, 19 Aug 2020 to 16 Sept 2020.
- 'Changes to Post 16 provision at Oak Grove College' - West Sussex County Council consultation, 7Sept 2020 to 5 Oct 2020

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that the consultations highlighted were not responded by the Councils or by the Executive Member.

In regards to young people, the Council continued to work with WSCC to support work around care and care leavers and support this important work but did not feel the need to comment on the new strategy.

In regards to Oak Grove College, education was not in the Executive Member's remit and she was not aware of any concerns raised by residents.

Fourth rotation:

Question from Councillor Margaret Howard to the Executive Member for Resources

I understand that there is a huge shortage of housing in Worthing with very few sites to develop. Our plans to purchase commercial investment property have been stalled due to the precarious nature of commercial properties. Income from housing both in rents and appreciation in value is much less precarious than income from commercial property and it would seem that this is where WBC should now be directing their plans for future investments. This has been made difficult because WBC sold off their housing to Worthing Homes, yet they are not building or buying enough homes to address the demand. We have also been unable to attract enough developers to keep up with that demand for homes either.

Has this Council considered starting our own Housing Revenue Account to buy land such as Teville Gate and use local businesses to look at ways that we can build our own homes using the money put aside for investment properties?

The Executive Member for Resources replied that the Council's Commercial Property investment fund was established to diversify the Council's general budget income and take a "managed risk" based approach to investment as set out in the Commercial Property Investment Strategy which was adopted annually by the Council. The approach was to balance risk by diversifying asset type, asset class, lot size, and location to ensure that the Council's exposure was minimised to anyone type of asset.

The adopted approach had proved successful. Over the Covid-19 period the Council's rent collected on the investment fund had performed extremely well with Worthing Borough collecting:

- 94% for the March quarter date;
- 93% for the June quarter date; and
- 98% for the September quarter date.

The rent collection rates showed that the Council's investment portfolio had performed well above industry levels and the private sector.

The suggestion of establishing a Housing Revenue Account to provide an investment income stream to supplement the Council's general fund was unfeasible due to the legal framework surrounding Council owned affordable housing.

Housing Revenue Accounts were required by legislation to be a "ring fenced account" which meant that tenant rents could not be used to subsidise council tax funded services and vice versa. Housing Revenue Accounts could only be used for specific housing related services such as maintenance, housing management, and improvement of the existing stock.

Investing in housing through a housing revenue account would therefore not be able to make any contribution to the Council's revenue budget.

Councillor Howard asked a supplementary question regarding unallocated funds being invested in housing.

The Executive Member for Resources replied that the additional resources referred to would only be secured if a bid for a property was submitted.

Fifth rotation:

Question from Councillor Margaret Howard to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

The Council's response to food poverty due to Covid was excellent and we heard the extent of that response last night from the Director of Communities. The Council opened a food depot and helped many isolated and vulnerable individuals to access food and they assisted the mutual aid groups and food banks to provide food to vulnerable residents. Therefore it is of great concern that the Council is unable to provide the same excellent service this time. This is mainly due to lack of funds from the government and WSCC. In fact we heard that of £737k given to WSCC our Council will only receive £10k of that fund for food support.

The food banks and other mutual aid groups are doing their best to access funding for food support from various sources. They are helping an increasing number of individuals and families whose income has decreased due to Covid. They are staffed by volunteers and run entirely on donated funds or goods. The number needing support will increase due to the reduction of furlough support and businesses folding. As time goes on less money is being donated by individuals to the food banks because people have less money to spare so it is possible that there may come a time when the voluntary sector cannot keep pace with demand.

In the event of a second Covid spike we know that there will not be a Council food depot which means the food response across Worthing will not be of the same standard even though demand is likely to be higher. We know that the Director of Communities and Community Works are trying to access further funds but again this may not be forthcoming.

Can Council funds that are not currently being used in sectors that cannot function during Covid be redirected to support the voluntary sector who are providing food support given that the voluntary sector are having problems accessing sufficient funds to meet demand?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that a full report and update was provided to the JOSOC in October, which outlined the approach for our phase three of the covid-19 community response.

The strategy was very much about continuing to work with and support the local food providers, enabling more local approaches to dealing with access to food and wider help during the pandemic.

As outlined at JOSOC, the food depot was a short term response delivered during phase one of the pandemic due to the gaps in provision in some of our neighbourhoods. This was only ever intended as a short term response providing one-off emergency food parcels.

The strategy now is very much about capacity building and supporting the local network of providers of food in local communities and helping them to access the help and support they need

WSCC had used some of its grant for food providers which included £10,000 for Adur and Worthing (£5,000 each). The Councils had also been working through their commissioned infrastructure provider- Community Works - and the Councils Communities and Wellbeing Team to develop the A&W Food Partnership. Community Works secured £50,000 Lottery funding, of which the majority was being passed to local food providers to help fund food and other related demand

The Councils Community Response of course continued to work with WSCC and could access food parcels for our community should they be in Covid-19 need.

Councillor Howard asked a supplementary question seeking clarification regarding the planned support for food banks.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing advised that whilst groups were being helped to apply for funding, the need for food banks earlier in the year was due to the speed of the situation. The situation at the present time was not the same as at the beginning of the pandemic.

C/44/20-21

Motions on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The report had been carried forward from the Worthing Full Council meeting held on 14 July 2020 following a failure with the livestream during consideration of the item and set out a motion received from Councillor Paul High which has been seconded by Councillor Val Turner.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Paul High and seconded by Councillor Val Turner.

During consideration of this item, Members debated the inclusion of paragraph 2. An amendment was proposed by Councillor Helen Silman and seconded by Councillor Dawn Smith but not supported.

Following a vote: For 26, Against 10, Abstentions 1

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council

‘reaffirms our commitment to condemning racism and working to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia.

We commend the words of our Prime Minister who said that “black lives matter and I totally understand the anger and the grief that is felt not just in America but around the world and in our country as well”.

We support the peaceful, safe and lawful protests that have formed the most meaningful part of the Black Lives Matter movement.

We note and confirm the work that has been conducted by Worthing Borough Council and our partners since we passed a motion condemning racism on 19 July 2016.

We reassure all people living in Worthing that they are all equally valued members of our community’.

*** Councillor Heather Mercer left the meeting at 9.46pm
C/45/20-21 Motions on Notice**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Henna Chowdhury and seconded by Councillor Margaret Howard.

During consideration of this item, Members debated the structure and language of the motion, the reference to ‘Stop and Search’ in Sussex, the BLM movement and work that was already being undertaken in this area.

Following a vote:

For 14, Against 19, Abstain 3

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council did not support the motion.

C/46/20-21 Motions on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Bob Smytherman and seconded by Councillor Martin McCabe.

Resolved,

In accordance with the Constitution, the Motion was noted and immediately referred to the Planning Committee.

C/47/20-21 Motions on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hazel Thorpe and seconded by Councillor Carl Walker.

Resolved,

In accordance with the Constitution, the Motion was noted and immediately referred to the Joint Strategic Committee.

The meeting ended at 10.01 pm