

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held remotely via Zoom

15 December 2020

6.30pm

The Mayor, Councillor Lionel Harman
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sean McDonald

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	Councillor Sally Smith
Chowdhury	Councillor Robert Smytherman
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Hazel Thorpe
* Councillor Jim Deen	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Nicola Waight
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Paul Westover
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Steve Wills
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Tim Wills
Councillor Martin McCabe	Councillor Mark Withers
Councillor Dr Heather Mercer	
Councillor Richard Mulholland	

***Absent**

C/48/20-21 Apologies for Absence

The Mayor advised that he had received apologies for absence from Cllr Mike Barrett.

C/49/20-21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Louise Murphy declared an interest as a Non-Executive Director for Worthing Homes.

Councillor Hazel Thorpe declared an interest in Item 11 as the president of Worthing Lions.

Councillor Heather Mercer declared an interest in Item 11 as a Specialist Cancer Nurse.

C/50/20-21

Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 14 October and the Full Council meeting held on 20 October 2020 be approved as correct records and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/51/20-21

Questions from the Public

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

1. Question submitted by Becky Griffiths, a Worthing resident

To the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

“Motor neurone disease (MND) is a rapidly progressive condition – a third of people die within a year of diagnosis and half within two years and during that time symptoms worsen and needs increase.

It is vital to ensure people living a progressive and terminal condition like MND can live in safe and accessible homes, to help them realise their right to independence and quality of life in the short time they have left to live.

Faster access in identifying accessibility needs, requesting adaptations, applying for funding, and installing the home adaptations they need can enable them to live at home for longer, maintain their health and wellbeing for as long as possible, and remain engaged with their communities, families and friends.

It is our council’s role to ensure that local people with MND are well supported to access home adaptations or move to an accessible home in a timely manner.

The MND Association has proposed a set of recommendations and highlighted examples of good practice in their Act to Adapt report that would not only help people with MND, but also many other people who need accessible housing. These recommendations are based on our research and what people with MND, professionals and other experts have said.

Will this council commit to taking action to review current systems and implement the recommendations and good practice as set out in the Act to Adapt report to ensure adaptations can happen in a timely, efficient manner with minimum impact on the people they are supposed to help.”

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that the Act to Adapt report from the MND Association is a 42 page report that contains a number of recommendations for national and local government in respect of the delivery of adaptations to the homes of disabled persons, especially where the condition is life-limiting.

Adur & Worthing Councils, in line with all other lower tier local authorities, have a statutory duty to fund adaptations using Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs). Following a change in the funding stream for these grants, Adur & Worthing adopted additional discretionary DFG measures as part of an ongoing county-wide policy and review and it is the Councils’ belief that the West Sussex authorities already meet or exceed the majority of recommendations set out in the MND report.

These include the waiving of £5000 from any calculated contribution, non-means tested hospital discharge grants, the treatment of council tax support as a passporting benefit and the fast-tracking of applicants with life-limiting illnesses. In one case, the Councils installed a stairlift for the benefit of a terminally ill applicant within 8 days from their first contact.

In respect of best practice, it is of particular note that Adur & Worthing are the only West Sussex authorities to use an in-house Home Improvement Assistance team, which puts the applicant at the centre of the process and delivers adaptations in a timely and efficient manner.

The Private Sector Housing team completed 269 DFGs in 2019/20 for a total spend of over £2.32M (which was a 36% increase in completions and spend from 2017/18 when the policy was changed).

The Councils will, of course, continue to review their policy and services as part of the county-wide working group to identify and introduce improvements as necessary.

Ms Griffiths asked whether a member of the inhouse home improvement team would like to attend a meeting with the MND Association to explain their role.

The Executive Member agreed to pass on the invitation.

2. Question submitted by Russ Cochran, a Worthing Resident

To the Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services

Worthing Borough Council and the Football Foundation have produced and released a football facility plan for the Borough. The plan is very welcome to many of those who are active in supporting and running local clubs - especially as youth football is very much flourishing in Worthing. Unfortunately the plan doesn't include any proposals for Northbrook Recreation Ground yet. One of the youth clubs that uses the ground has 350 young players across 20 teams and the potential to provide more and more opportunities for young people if we can further improve the facilities.

Can the cabinet member for environment confirm that there will be opportunities for other local clubs such as; Worthing Dynamos, in the future, to enjoy benefits similar to those that another club in Worthing has received in recent years?

Supplementary - will the Executive Member agree to meet with me at Northbrook Recreation Ground to discuss this matter and future plans, when it is safe to do so?

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied that he would be happy to do so.

In the absence of Paisley Thomas, the Mayor read out the following question:-

3. Question submitted by Paisley Thomas, a Worthing resident

To the Executive Member for Regeneration

The commitment by Worthing Borough Council to invest in and improve the look of public spaces in the town centre is very welcome. I've looked at the plans for Portland Road and it looks very exciting. While I completely support these plans we also have a number of secondary shopping areas in Worthing that are equally important for local people and the economy. Talking to people running local businesses in Broadwater I know that they are keen to see some investment in their areas as well. Does the council have any plans to invest in shopping areas other than the town centre?

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that the Council was currently auditing a number of its secondary shopping areas (outside of the town centre) with a view to investing in them in the first 6 months of next year. The Council knows these areas are holding their own in the current climate (in terms of vacancy rates), however it is committed to support these areas to ensure it can maintain them as places where residents (and visitors) wish to visit.

The Council can't invest in all areas, however the Executive Member was pleased to say Broadwater had been selected as one of those places where the Council wished to intervene. Broadwater has already been audited and an upgrade plan is being prepared now. This investment will be in the form of upgraded street furniture in the first instance (i.e. benches etc.) and will be due in the first half of next year.

C/52/20-21 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Executive Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor asked for a moment of quiet reflection to remember Past Mayors / Hon Aldermen Bob Clare and Harold Piggott who had passed away recently.

The Mayor announced that 2020 had been an unprecedented year and that it had been very quiet by way of mayoral engagements but that he had managed to undertake a few engagements and activities.

The Mayor reflected on Remembrance Week and expressed his thanks to the Worthing Veterans and military associations for ensuring that Worthing remembered despite the lockdown.

The Mayor took the opportunity to publicly commend everyone in Worthing for their fortitude and resilience. He highlighted that by working together Worthing is in the great position of having one of the lowest Covid rates in the country.

The Mayor mentioned a few people in Worthing who were doing fantastic work to support and raise substantial donations for a local charity; those who went beyond and above their call of duty by assisting the elderly in the community. He also provided a brief overview of the Councils' Digital Team success story.

The Mayor ended by offering his congratulations to the Adur and Worthing Council volunteers who received a Special Recognition Award by the High Sheriff of West Sussex for helping out in the community during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Leader wished to place on record his thanks to all Councillors for the work undertaken during a very difficult year and a restful and well earned Christmas break.

The Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services reiterated the Mayor's thanks to Steve and Nigel in the Environmental Services Team for their sterling work looking after an elderly resident.

The Executive Member for Customer Services congratulated the Housing Team for winning an award for the innovative scheme Opening Doors.

Cllr Paul High, Planning Committee Chairman, advised that the Planning Committee had met on 16 occasions in the past year, including one of the first Council meetings to be held virtually. He placed on record his thanks to the membership of the Planning Committee and the Council's Officers who supported the meetings.

The Head of Paid Service virtually presented two certificates, the first being the shortlisting finalist for Council of the Year in the Local Government Chronicle Awards and the other being for the shortlisting in the Municipal Journal Awards. Both Adur and Worthing Councils had been shortlisted in both awards for being in the top 5 or 6 Local Authorities across the UK recognising some of the extraordinary work of the Council's Officers over the last couple of years.

The Head of Paid Service also announced that the Solicitor to the Councils and Monitoring Officer, Mrs Susan Sale, was leaving the Councils after 19 years of service, to take up a post with Oxford City Council.

The Head of Paid Service, the Mayor and Councillors wished to place on record their thanks to Mrs Sale for her commitment to Worthing Borough Council, the excellent support and wise counsel that she had provided to both Officers and a succession of Mayors during that time and to wish her very well for the future.

C/53/20-21 Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items.

C/54/20-21 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

Council had, before it, recommendations from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Joint Strategic Committee and Joint Governance Sub-Committee.

Extract of these minutes had been circulated as items 7A(i), 7B(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) & (v) and 7C(i)

Item 7A(i) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2020

JOSC Work Programme

The Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 November 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Richard Nowak.

On a vote: For 22, Against 1, Abstentions 11

Resolved

That the Council

- i) noted the progress in implementing the 2020/21 JOSC Work Programme; and
- ii) noted the changes made to the JOSC Work Programme since it was agreed by the Councils in July 2020.

Item 7B(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

Towards a sustainable financial position - Budget update

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Louise Murphy.

On a vote: For 27 , Against 0, Abstentions 8

Resolved

That the Council

- i) noted the current 5 year forecasts;
- ii) noted the committed growth items as set out in appendix 2;
- iii) approved the proposed savings as set out in appendix 3;
- iv) approved the use of capital resources to fund savings proposals as set out in the capital flexibilities schedule in Appendix 4.

Item 7B(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

Investing in our places - Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Kevin Jenkins.

On a vote: For 24 , Against 3, Abstentions 8

Resolved

That the Council

- a) considered the General Fund Capital Investment Programmes for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and confirmed the schemes to be included as detailed in Appendix 2, 3 and 4;
- b) approved the changes to the General Fund Capital Investment Programme for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 2 and 3;
- c) recommended the full programme detailed at Appendices 5 and 6 for approval by the respective Councils on the 17th December 2020 (Adur) and 15th December 2020 (Worthing).
- d) noted the amendments and additions to the reserve lists as detailed in Appendices 7 and 8;

Item 7B(iii) Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

Council Tax Support Schemes for 2021/22

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Elizabeth Sparkes.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Maragret Howard, seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman but not supported.

Following debate on the substantive motion, a vote was taken:
For 21 , Against 12, Abstentions 2

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the Council Tax Support scheme in respect of working age customers for 2021/22

- i. to be based upon the scheme for 2020/21 with the £5.00 weekly restriction retained; and
- ii. the discretionary budget to support those in severe financial difficulties should be retained; and
- iii. that 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.

Item 7B(iv) Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

WorkspaceAW - Designing a new model of working following Covid 19

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Ed Crouch.

Following discussion on the item the proposals were unanimously supported.

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council

- a) noted the feasibility work undertaken to date, which concluded that there were significant opportunities to reduce the Council's office footprint, realise financial savings whilst delivering Good Services and creating an effective flexible working environment;
- b) noted the expected net annual savings of approximately £179,740;
- c) noted that project budget allocations were indicative at this stage, with 20% optimism bias and subject to detailed cost analysis and procurement;
- d) approved a capital budget of £2,335,720, on an invest to save basis, as set out in section 7.5 of the report;
- e) agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Members for Resources to review the final business case and give authority to proceed;
- f) approved the use of capital receipts to fund the revenue costs associated with the project utilising the capital flexibilities as set out in paragraph 7.4 of the report.

Item 7B(v) Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

Worthing Local Plan

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Kevin Jenkins.

On a vote:

For 31 , Against 3, Abstentions 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council

- i) considered the officer's report, comments made by the Planning Committee (11/11/20), the key changes made to the Local Plan (Appendix 1) and the Proposed Submission Worthing Local Plan (Appendix 2).

- ii) was satisfied that the preparation of the Worthing Local Plan had complied with the relevant regulatory requirements. As such, the Council approved the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan for publication in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Representations would be invited on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan.
- iii) delegated authority to the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Worthing Borough Council Executive Member for Regeneration, to make minor changes to the plan (if necessary), prior to the formal publication of the Local Plan for consultation. These would be limited to typographical, formatting, statistical updates and other minor amendments. Any such changes would be recorded in a schedule and published for transparency.
- iv) delegated authority to the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Worthing Borough Council Executive Member for Regeneration, to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent Examination under section 20(7C) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) together with the submission documents prescribed by Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations, following the conclusion of the Regulation 19 publication and a review of the representations received.
- v) authorised the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Worthing Borough Council Executive Member for Regeneration, to submit a schedule of proposed minor modifications (where it was necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity) and any proposed main modifications to the submitted Local Plan and associated documents to address any issues relating to soundness and legal compliance.
- vi) authorised the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Worthing Borough Council Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any main and additional modifications as part of the examination process and undertaking consultation that may be necessary on any consequential changes to the Submission version of the Local Plan (and associated documents) so that a post-Examination Adoption version could be finalised in advance of taking the Local Plan back to Full Council for approval to be adopted.

Item 7C(i) Joint Governance Sub-Committee - 10 December 2020

Appointment of Independent Persons for Standards

The Council considered the recommendation from the Joint Governance Sub-Committee meeting held on 10 December 2020.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Steve Wills and seconded by Cllr Daniel Humphreys.

A Member expressed their support for the proposals and their disappointment that the Council only had 1 Independent Person for Standards prior to these proposed appointments. From a public perspective point of view, it was important to have more than 1 Independent Person and a decent pool of individuals to assist with this work.

Cllr Cooper wished to place on record her agreement with the points raised.

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

Resolved

That the Council approved

- 1) the appointment of two Independent Persons to act on behalf of both authorities, namely, John Bateman and Lindsay Viljoen;
- 2) that the Independent Persons be appointed for a term of four years from the 1st January 2021, subject to the Full Councils being able to deselect an Independent Person on reasonable grounds;
- 3) recommended to the Member Officer Working Group that the Joint Governance Committee hold a formal meeting with the Independent Persons on at least an annual basis to discuss their experience, observations, recommendations and feedback to the Committee from their roles.

C/55/20-21 Designation of the Monitoring Officer

The Council received a report from the Head of Paid Service, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The purpose of the report was to formally designate the Council's Monitoring Officer.

The recommendation in the report was proposed by Councillor Daniel Humphreys, seconded by Councillor Ed Crouch and unanimously supported by the Council.

Cllr Crouch wished to place on record that he recognised the role of Monitoring Officer was not an easy one, especially when the role itself and post holder were subject to robust challenge. Passionate people sometimes challenge passionately, on a personal level Cllr Crouch had agreed with Ms Sale the majority of the time but passionately disagreed some of the time. Cllr Crouch wished the outgoing Monitoring Officer well in her new role.

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council agreed to designate Maria Memoli as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 11th January 2021.

C/56/20-21 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 9.

Questions were received regarding the property investment portfolio, redevelopment of the Teville Gate site, further consideration in relation to the declaration of a poverty emergency and the level of debate at meetings of the Joint Strategic Committee.

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 10 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 were 30 minutes allowed for questions with 4 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 Sally Smith, Hazel Thorpe, Charles James, Karen Harman, Louise Murphy, Jim Deen, Henna Chowdury and Tim Wills

First rotation:**Question from Councillor Sally Smith to the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing**

Under the Equality Act (2010), there are nine protected characteristics, yet the Council website only signposts one local service, dementia awareness. While this is of course very valuable, Worthing is becoming more culturally, economically and socially diverse. To support and encourage diversity and promote inclusion in Worthing, is it not time that the website should be urgently updated?

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that providing information and services to ensure that the Council was supporting and reaching its communities remained vitally important. The website included a range of information and links to support and services such as disabled access to buildings, disabled facilities grants, disabled parking, accessible toilets, council tax exemptions, Adur & Worthing Councils as a disabled confident employer, accessible community transport, advice for disabled voters, disabled access to beaches, accessible play, hate incidents and how to report them and local census information on specific groups.

As part of the Council's Covid Community response it was updating its web pages to ensure they reflected the diversity of need across the communities in relation to Covid need.

The Council knew it needed to do more work on its web pages overall to ensure this reflected the diverse needs of its communities and would be doing more work on this in the new year.

Cllr Smith asked a supplementary question regarding the accessing of services by phone.

The Executive Member replied that there was a good signposting system in place.

Question from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

On the 1st December of this year "Hear My Story" / Adur Worthing Poverty Truth Commission were invited to participate in the first online All Political Parliament Group on Poverty meeting.

They heard a Social Metrics Commission presentation from Mathew Oakley - a respected economist and expert on welfare reform and the future of the welfare state, on the Commission's new methodology for measuring poverty as well as findings from their latest report.

The discussion was around the solutions needed to end child poverty for good.

The Department of Work and Pensions, however, have unfrozen repayment loans to be paid while under the pandemic to those on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) . This has hit the poorest of the poor.

"Hear My Story" raised a few concerns regarding the new measurements on poverty. Namely, - Those on Universal credit, have received a £20 increase which has not been extended to those on legacy benefits, which suggests an inequality amongst those on the lowest disposable income.

My question is to the Council, "What will this council do to address this inequality, and will they support the reinstatement of the £20 uplift to Universal credit to legacy benefits such as JSA".

The Leader replied that "Legacy benefits" such as Job Seekers Allowance were administered by the Department for Work & Pensions based on rules determined by the government, and as such the Council had no ability to challenge the decision not to retain the £20 increase for the forthcoming financial year.

Cllr Thorpe asked a supplementary requesting that the relevant minister be lobbied to expose these issues and the inequalities exposed.

The Leader replied that he represented the Council on the District Councils Network and the LGA Resources Board where cross party representation had been made on issues like the impact of where you set local housing allowance rates and where they may be better set and he would continue to do so.

Question from Councillor Charles James to the Executive Member for Resources

Is the Executive Member for Resources aware of the high levels of satisfaction amongst traders and businesses throughout the Borough, for the expedient way in which the Business Support Grant has been rolled out, and will the Executive Member pass on the thanks and gratitude of the Business Community to the Officers for the speedy and efficient way this has been achieved.

The Executive Member for Resources replied that the Council continued to be aware of the challenging environment for its businesses and its Officers had acted quickly and efficiently in the distribution of the Covid-19 business support grants. The first lockdown provided unprecedented levels of work, whilst the most recent lockdown presented another urgent need for its Officers to be ready once more. This work was continuing at pace as its Officers were now working on the distribution of further grants associated with Tier 2 restrictions.

The Executive Member replied that she would pass on Councillor James's thanks to the Officers who she knew continue to work very hard on issuing these grants to businesses as quickly as possible. The Executive Member knew that the Council's business community was in need of them.

Councillor James asked a supplementary question seeking an update on the roll out of the discretionary business support grant and the progress to date.

The Executive Member replied that under the first round, £972k had been paid out to 125 local businesses in Worthing. The Council had received £3m of additional funding which had been received from the government since Worthing had been moved into Tier 2. There were 3 further grants available for businesses to apply for and 1 of these discretionary funds closed on Sunday. The applications were being assessed and it was anticipated that payments would be made in the next few days.

Second rotation:

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

Understandably, there is currently much public interest in the availability, effectiveness and safety of the Covid vaccine and some Councillors have received queries from constituents on the matter. Would the Executive member for Health and Wellbeing consider a broad cross party statement on behalf of all Councillors, emphasising that it is not within the role of a Borough Councillor to provide any type of health advice other than appropriate signposting?

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that a cross party statement outlining the Councillors role as a signposter to health advice was entirely appropriate.

Cllr Smith asked a supplementary question regarding a local public health communication with regards to minimising risk in light of predictions of a third wave.

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that there was a lot of information coming out and that West Sussex County Council, as the lead, were putting out advice to people. The Council could only follow from what WSCC instigated and remind residents of the rules.

Question from Councillor Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Executive Member for Customer Services

Sussex Homegroup, part of the Council's Choice based lettings for people who need support, as I am sure you are aware, have a scale of mobility impacting upon their choice of home ranging from none to level 3. The clients do not get a floor plan either to aid their decision making.

1) Will you explain as fully as you can these levels of criteria please for clarity and can you explain why no floor plan is available for these clients - is this not important for those on the housing register too to choose appropriately in the first instance ?

The Executive Member for Customer Services replied that Sussex Homemove was a group made up of four local authorities for the purpose of jointly procuring a Housing

Needs IT system. The IT system was used to manage the Councils' homelessness functions and social housing allocation responsibilities.

A new IT System, delivered by Home Connections, was currently being implemented. Both the new and old IT system implements each local authority's housing allocation policy. Worthing Borough Council's (and also Adur District Council) housing allocation policy specifies mobility levels.

The system did not place households or properties into mobility levels. Households were placed in one of three mobility levels by the Council's officers based on the information provided by the applicant. If any member of an applicant's household had a problem with their mobility, officers would advise that they provide additional information on their mobility. This was to ensure that the household's needs were correctly assessed and the right mobility level awarded.

An applicant was awarded Mobility Level 1, if the applicant or someone in their household needed to use a wheelchair indoors and outdoors. This meant that the width of the doors and hallways of the property must be sufficient to allow a wheelchair through safely when in use and the property must be step free.

An applicant was awarded Mobility Level 2, if the applicant or someone in their household needs to use a wheelchair outdoors but not indoors. In such instances, the internal width of doors or hallways were not crucial but the gradient to the property was important and the property should generally have no stairs. Whilst one or two low level steps may be manageable internally and perhaps at the entrance, the location of the steps was important to ensure the household had a safe and quick means of escape in the event they needed to evacuate in an emergency.

An applicant was awarded Mobility Level 3, if the applicant or someone in their household had restricted mobility but did not need to use a wheelchair outdoors or indoors. This was important where an applicant or a member of their household used a walking aid (e.g. walking stick). They were unlikely to be able to manage several steps or steep gradients.

Each property advertised was assessed and given Mobility Level 1, 2 or 3 if they would be suitable for any of the groups above. A property would not have any mobility level rating if it was not suitable for any of the above mobility levels, in which case anyone without a mobility need could bid on them. Mobility rated properties were prioritised for those with the corresponding mobility level; in other words the applicant would be considered for the property before anyone who did not have the corresponding mobility level even if that person had a higher banding. This was important to ensure that available properties went to those for whom they were most suitable. It also ensured that those with mobility needs were not disadvantaged because properties were prioritised based on banding.

Properties advertised on the Choice Based Letting System using the information provided by the social housing landlord. Landlords did not provide floor plans and most social housing landlords did not have this readily available. Officers explained to all successful housing register applicants how to bid on the housing register.

Councillor Thorpe asked whether the Executive Member could ensure that the website was reviewed in regards to accessibility as a supplementary question.

The Executive Member advised that she would.

Question from Councillor Karen Harman to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

Bearing in mind the hard work done in Worthing by Officers, councillors and the residents to ensure that Worthing has the lowest, or at least one of the lowest Covid rates in the Country, what plans are being considered or are already in place to enable Worthing to lead the way in the delivery of the vaccines as they become available?

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that there was a programme of work underway with the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme in Sussex, to deliver the Pfizer vaccine and AWC Officers would support where appropriate.

Given the temperatures needed to store the vaccine, large hospitals ('hospital hubs') had been the first sites across the country to receive the vaccine.

The vaccination programme would continue to expand in Sussex over the coming weeks and months as more of the vaccine became available. This would include more hospital hubs, more GP-led local vaccination services, larger vaccination centres, and a roving service to take the vaccine into care homes and people's own homes if they could not attend a vaccination site. AWCs Officers had been assisting with securing sites in Adur and Worthing.

In line with Government guidance, some patients aged 80 and above who were already attending a hospital hub were being invited to have the vaccine whilst they were there. The largest care homes closest to each hospital hub were also being invited to book staff into vaccination clinics at the hospital. Any appointments not used for these groups were being used for hospital staff who were at highest risk of serious illness from COVID19.

GP-led local vaccination services would be inviting eligible patients to receive the vaccine and further detail was being worked through to consider the roll out to wider health and care staff. The Council was identifying people without a GP that might be eligible to ensure all eligible people got vaccinated

Health and care staff from across Sussex were supporting this historic vaccination effort. Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust were leading the work to recruit and train more staff - both clinical and non-clinical - so that the NHS in Sussex could deliver the immunisation programme without impacting on other vital services.

Third rotation:

Question from Councillor Councillor Jim Deen to the Leader

How much has or will the Council pay to the Worthing Theatres and Museum Trust over the current financial year?

The Leader replied that the Council had made a contract payment of £1.46m to the Trust this year. The payment was made in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance which encouraged Councils to provide financial support to suppliers in the current difficult

circumstances. In making this payment, the council was aware of the significant costs associated with the running and maintaining the venues including business rate liabilities of around £600k per year.

Question from Councillor Councillor Louise Murphy to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

The pandemic has put a great strain on our local NHS, not least the doctors' surgeries in Worthing. The council's nationally recognised Going Local programme works with all the doctors' surgeries in Worthing and helps many people who are frequent attendees at those surgeries. Could the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing let us know if the programme has been able to continue during the pandemic and if so, what the successes have been?

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied that Going Local adapted to the emerging needs in the community throughout the pandemic. In March the Social Prescribers played an instrumental role in the formation of the Councils Covid Community Response Service. Their expertise in working with people holistically ensured that people were able to get the essential support they required during the uncertainty of the first lockdown.

At this time people were not always able to access their GP surgery - Going Local expanded its remit to include self-referrals, further increasing its preventative reach by supporting a wider demographic of the community. Going Local had remained in communication with GP's and surgery staff by attending virtual practice meetings - this had helped continue the promotion of the service. During the pandemic Going Local had expanded its team from 4 Social Prescribers to 6. The team were also developing a volunteer programme to build further resilience in the community - while continuing to relieve pressure on the local NHS.

Councillor Louise Murphy asked a supplementary question requesting that a paper be brought to the Joint Strategic Committee so that Councillors could consider the future of this successful initiative.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that Officers would be able to produce a report at some point in the next few months.

****The time permitted for questions expired during the consideration of question 8 and therefore the questions from Cllrs Chowdhury and T Wills were deferred to the next meeting of Full Council.**

C/58/20-21 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.

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

During consideration of this item, Members acknowledged the importance of raising awareness of breast cancer and testicular cancer and unanimously supported the motion.

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council urged men this Christmas season, as advised by Testicular Cancer UK, to:

CHECK YOUR BAUBLES

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer for men aged 15 to 49.

There are more than 2,000 new cases diagnosed every year.

Testicular cancer is a killer.

The survival rates for those who reach 'stage three' are only 57 percent.

But if caught early it is one of the most easy cancers to treat. 98 percent of men who get it survive.

This is just one of many cancers or long term health problems that can be successfully treated if identified early. Unusual lumps or skin changes, changes in bowel habits, pain or discomfort are all symptoms. So take up health screening when offered and get a medical check when experiencing any of these symptoms.

Men, and women, don't be shy.

Check regularly. And go to the doctors if you find a lump.

For more information, you can see the NHS guidance online at: <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/mens-health/what-should-my-testicleslook-and-feel-like/>

C/59/20-21 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.

The motion was unanimously supported by Council.

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council wished to place on record our profound gratitude and admiration to the people of Worthing for their dedication to the safety of our community

and for the unstinting work and bravery of all local frontline workers throughout the profound challenges of 2020.

These include those from the NHS, the care sector, blue light services, teachers and school staff, transport workers, essential retail workers, post and parcel deliverers, the Armed Forces, the borough's many volunteers and, not least, our own workforce and our contractors.

They have been a lifeline to many and an inspiration to us all, showing Worthing at its finest.

We thank you all.

C/60/20-21 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 Carl Walker and seconded by Councillor Sally Smith.

Resolved,

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

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm