

Minutes of a meeting of the
Worthing Council
20 April 2021
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Lionel Harman (Chairman)
Councillor Sean McDonald (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Hazel Thorpe	Councillor Richard Mulholland
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 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	

**** Absent**

C/73/20-21 Apologies for Absence

The Mayor advised that he had no received apologies for absence

C/74/20-21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sally Smith declared an interest as an employee of Worthing Borough Council medical group

Councillor Beccy Cooper declared an interest as a trustee of NHS Community Foundation Trust

Councillor Louise Murphy declared an interest as a non executive director of Worthing Homes

C/75/20-21 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

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

1. Question submitted by Tanya Marwaha, a Worthing Resident

For the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing:

Will you give your support to the Championing Youth Minds initiative?

The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing replied the Council was aware of this organisation and it was exploring how it could best engage with them to support this work. It was also important to note that the Council was already heavily engaged in other work in this important area, including leading the work around young people's mental and emotional wellbeing through Adur and Worthing Find it Out Plus.

The Wellbeing Team were also engaged in supporting work around healthy behaviours, including smoking cessation support, where it knew there were higher rates amongst young people with additional needs - this would be run as a pilot and the insight gathered used across the service to better engage people from this age group. The service linked with WS MIND - the two way referral pathway between MIND and A&W Wellbeing would be explored and refreshed.

In addition the Council was also supporting young people's wellbeing in relation to the provision of mentoring as young people transition from Middle to High School. The Council was also developing a community resource to provide ambassadors for young people and their families and commissioning back to school mentoring for young people struggling to adjust to the return to school learning.

2. Question submitted by John Salisbury, a Worthing Resident

For the Executive Member for Digital and Environment

A petition has been promoted by a member of this council opposing plans to close the public toilets at Church House Park in Tarring. Does the council have any plans to close these facilities?

The Executive Member for Digital and Environment replied that the Council had no plans to close the facility, but it was considering ways to help reduce ASB and vandalism. One option that was being explored concerned the bowling club. The bowling club had approached the Council to ascertain if it was viable for them to take on the running of the toilets and incorporate them into the rest of their building - therefore meaning public access would be via the club. The Council agreed that this would likely reduce ASB and vandalism, however there had to be a public consultation regarding all options for the facility before any decisions could be made. A consultation plan was currently being drafted that would cover any options for the facility to ensure that they remained open, safe, and suitable for use.

Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor placed on record the Council's condolences to Her Royal Highness The Queen and her family after the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip.

The Mayor invited members to join him in wishing Insp Allan Lowe a happy retirement. Allan had been a long serving member of the Community of Worthing for the past 21 years and a strong supporter of work with the Council in the Safer Community field and had been a guiding hand at the Joint Action Group for many years. Allan's last day of service with Sussex Police would be Friday 30 April. The Mayor would be presenting Allan with a certificate as a token of recognition of "Thanks and Appreciation" for the service and dedication to the Communities of Worthing.

The Mayor informed the Council that there had not been many civic engagements since the last council meeting. With the lifting of Covid restrictions he highlighted the need to still be cautious and respectful to others and thanked everyone for their cooperation and help in keeping the Covid rates relatively low throughout the pandemic.

The Mayor encouraged support to the Capt Tom Moore Foundation so that Capt Tom's legacy would continue to bring hope to many.

Lastly, the Mayor thanked those councillors who had chosen not to stand again at the upcoming elections, for their service on the Council and wished them the best in their future endeavours.

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

C/78/20-21 Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised under the urgency provisions.

C/79/20-21 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

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

Extract of these minutes had been circulated as items 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7E and 7F

Item 7A Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 18 March 2021

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/22

The Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 March 2021. The recommendation was proposed and seconded and on a vote it was

Resolved: The Worthing Borough Council approved the JOSOC Work Programme 2021/22.

Item 7B Joint Governance Committee - 23 March 2021

LGA Model Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct

The Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee presented the recommendation from the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 23 March 2021. The recommendations were proposed, seconded and debated. On a vote it was:

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council:

- a. adopt the LGA Model Code of Conduct;
- b. accept the procedures set out in Appendices 2, 3 and 4;
- c. agree that the Members Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with complaints under that Code should be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer, every two years including any related policies;
- d. agree to have two separate sub-committees for Adur & Worthing Councils.

Item 7C Joint Strategic Committee - 30 March 2021

Delivering Pathways to Affordable Homes

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic meeting held on 30 March 2021. The matter was proposed, seconded and on a vote it was:

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council approved the adoption of the 'Developing Pathways to Affordable Homes' report as part of the Housing Strategy for 2021-2022.

Item 7D Joint Strategic Committee - 30 March 2021

Strategic Property Investment Fund 2021 Annual Commercial Property Investment Strategy 2021/22

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic meeting held on 30 March 2021. The recommendation was proposed, seconded and upon a vote it was

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council approved the adoption of the Commercial Property Investment Strategy for 2021-2022.

Item 7E Joint Strategic Committee - 30 March 2021

Delivery of Worthing Integrated Care Centre and MSCP on Worthing Town Hall Car Park

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic meeting held on 30 March 2021. The matter was proposed, seconded and on a vote it was

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council release the full budget for the construction of the integrated care centre funded through borrowing subject to final agreement of the Heads of Terms for the occupier leases, acquisition of Central Clinic and the development agreement (£33,971,000)

Item 7F Joint Strategic Committee - 30 March 2021

Delivering Colonnade House Expansion

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic meeting held on 30 March 2021. The matter was proposed, seconded and debated. On a vote it was

Resolved that Worthing Borough Council approve the creation of the capital budget of £4.050m referred to in Section 7 of the report.

C/80/20-21 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.

There were no questions under this item

C/81/20-21 Selecting the Mayor for 2022/23

The Leader proposed Councillor Richard Nowak as Deputy Mayor for 2021, to become Mayor in 2022. The proposal was seconded and Councillor Nowak confirmed his willingness to serve as Deputy to Councillor Lionel Harman and to represent the Borough as its Mayor from May 2022.

There were no other nominations. On a vote it was

Resolved that Councillor Richard Nowak be the nominated Deputy Mayor for 2021 to serve as Mayor from the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2022.

C/82/20-21 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 14 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 11 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 Walker, Thorpe, Nowak, Deen, James, Baker, Howard, Wills, Murphy and Chowdhury. Councillor Walker withdrew the submitted question as answers had been provided in an earlier part of the meeting.

First rotation:

Question from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

Cllr Humphries as you are aware, developers' CIL and S106 monies are monitored and should be reported annually to show the public how much money has been raised and how it is spent. It should have been published on December 31st 2020.

Although most of the CIL pot can be spent on infrastructure projects anywhere in the Borough, there is a need to ensure that 15% of the money collected is spent on projects located in ward where the development is approved.

This will usually be within the same ward as the development in question though not always.

I was told that there was a Joint Officer group meeting on or around the 22nd of January of this year, to decide how the process for the CIL local pot could be launched.

There is currently £11k in the pot for Tarring.

My Question is:

Given that a key aim is to ensure that this is a community led process -

What involvement will local groups and ward members have and when will this happen as there has been a long period of silence since I asked my questions?

The Leader replied that the Joint Officer Member Board agreed to delay the launch of the Neighbourhood Pot to await the outcome of the Examination which was to consider extending the CIL charge for all Wards. However, the Inspectors decision was expected shortly and it was intended to launch the Neighbourhood Pot in parallel with the new Charging Schedule during the summer. The public engagement and request for bids would be for those Wards that had exceeded £10,000 and currently, as well as Tarring, included Central, Durrington, Offington, Marine and Salvington wards.

Both the Joint Strategic Committee and the JOMB had agreed the process for evaluating bids and as indicated the onus would be on the community putting forward projects for potential funding. As part of the bidding process local community groups would be encouraged to engage and seek support from the relevant Ward Councillors. The CIL Neighbourhood Pot was intended to be focussed on the needs/wants of the local community, hence the emphasis on the money being available to local community groups and organisations to fund infrastructure projects which would benefit their local area. Ward Members would be able to assist the community groups by providing their support for particular projects which they believed would have the biggest impact on the ward (and/or neighbouring ward).

Question from Councillor Richard Nowak to the Leader

"The purchase of the fields along Shepherds Mead and Long Meadow by this council is a very welcome initiative to improve biodiversity and establish the council's commitment to the local environment. The fields are currently widely used by walkers and dog walkers.

Can the Leader offer reassurances that all users will be consulted with and accommodated as plans for the fields are developed?"

The Leader replied that over the coming months multiple engagement activities and sessions would be held to fully explore how the Council would work with local people to enhance the natural environment at Shepherds Meads and Long Meadow, while maintaining the really popular amenity value of the space for the local community.

Working in partnership with South Downs National park, the Council would be working very closely with local residents as well as the many frequent visitors to the site from further afield, with activities advertised on site at Shepherds Mead, as well as through council media streams and the strong local relationships already in place, ensuring that it was reaching everyone that wanted to be involved.

Second rotation

Question from Councillor Jim Deen to the Executive Member for Regeneration

The Council recently issued a press release implying that the planned public realm improvements scheme for Portland Road would cost £925,000. Could the Executive Member for Regeneration confirm what the actual total cost of the scheme will be from the date of its first announcement in January 2018 through to the date when the scheme will be completed?

The Executive Member told the Council that the build cost for the scheme referred to in the press release was accurate - £927,544 - a figure that was also referred to in the Officers' Decision report of 21 January 2021. It was confirmed that the project, under the project management of the Borough Council team, would be delivered within the overall budget of £3m identified for this work by West Sussex County Council and reported in the Joint Strategic Committee papers of June 2020. The Executive Member looked forward to reporting on the precise figure on completion of this important scheme for our town centre traders and visitors.

Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services

Brighton and Hove City Council are investing £1 m in the safety of their residents and visitors this summer when facilities are open again.

How much is this council intending investing in our safety in Worthing, what is your strategy for supporting charities who put on events and how do you intend to implement it especially with respect to public conveniences?

The Executive Member stated that Council had received over £250,000 from the government in the previous 12 months to support reopening of the town centre following all of the lockdown periods. This funding had accommodated a number of interventions including:

- Road closures, to enable businesses to utilise new outside space for additional tables and chairs (e.g. Portland Road and Montague Place)

- Taxi Marshalls, to provide support for dispersing in the town centre from Thursday to Sunday (in peak times)
- Additional covid signage to highlight the need for social distancing
- Dedicated safety marketing campaigns, including #WelcomeBackAW and #RoadmapAW
- Business support through our Business Advice pages

The Council was also actively working with partners, including the Town Centre Initiative and the Police, to ensure safety in the town centre. This work was in addition to the 'business as usual' activities around outreach work.

For events, whilst additional covid safety guidance had been introduced (via national bodies) charities would still be able to 'apply' to run an event through the events team. To support these events, and the town centre as a whole, as lockdown restrictions have eased, all public conveniences were now fully open and covid signage had been installed to advise the general public to adhere to covid safety.

Councillor Charles James to the Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services

"The people of Worthing are looking forward to Spring and Summer with more anticipation than ever before.

Can the executive member for environmental services confirm that when the sun comes out the town centre will be bursting with colourful flower displays?"

The Executive Member told the Council that making sure town centres were attractive and well turned out was a priority for the council.

The Council had come to the end of its current floral display contract and a recent tender exercise produced no viable tenders. The council saw this as an opportunity to build skills and resources around our floral displays, and as such the team began the task of bringing these works in house to make sure the town centre remains bright, colourful and inviting. Flowers were on order, as were all associated pieces of equipment, and we are currently recruiting to the roles required to deliver the programme. The flowers were being grown off site currently, and it was envisaged that the first stages of planting would begin in April but this was weather dependent as there had been some late frosts. There would be further planting later in the season to extend the flowering time to make sure the centre was bright and colourful for the longest period possible.

C/83/20-21 Motions on Notice

Members had a motion before them proposed by Councillor Val Turner and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes. The motion was debated and on a vote it was

Resolved:

The abduction and death of Sarah Everard had again highlighted the importance of the work undertaken by this Council to help ensure that residents in its community felt and remained safe. No one should feel unsafe or fear abduction on its streets. Fortunately, such events were rare, although, for us in Sussex, we had experienced such an event

when, in July 2000, Sarah Payne was abducted and murdered whilst playing in Kingston Gorse. It was an event that is etched in the memory of a number of Members of this Council here tonight, as was the disappearance of Georgina Gharsallah, here in Worthing. That is why this Council reaffirms its commitment to help keep our town safe.

As part of our community safety work, alongside the Police and other agencies, we had invested in improved CCTV in our town centre. The Council also committed to improving its car parks so that residents and visitors coming into the Town Centre could feel safe and secure when accessing their vehicles. Working with our partners in the Evening and Late Night Economy, the Council has secured Purple Flag status for its town, and would endeavour to ensure that these high standards were maintained and built upon.

The Council was determined to create an environment that is welcoming, safe and secure to everyone.

Violence in any form is not acceptable and no one should feel that they cannot go out and walk alone on our streets. The Council would work to ensure that its town provides an environment that discourages those who wish to cause harm to others.

In our language and by our deeds the Council would ensure that it holds accountable those who cause such harm to its Town.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.17pm

Mayor