

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

Councillor Lionel Harman (Mayor)

Councillor Hazel Thorpe	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Sally Smith
Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Dan Coxhill
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Emma Taylor
Councillor Sean McDonald	Councillor John Turley

Absent

Councillor Noel Atkins, Councillor Roy Barraclough, Councillor Mike Barrett, Councillor Ferdousi Henna Chowdhury, Councillor Edward Crouch, Councillor Jim Deen, Councillor Margaret Howard, Councillor Charles James, Councillor Martin McCabe, Councillor Dr Heather Mercer, Councillor Richard Mulholland, Councillor Richard Nowak, Councillor Helen Silman, Councillor Dawn Smith, Councillor Robert Smytherman, Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes, Councillor Nicola Waight, Councillor Steve Waight, Councillor Steve Wills, Councillor Tim Wills, Councillor Russ Cochran, Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies, Councillor Jon Roser and Councillor Rosey Whorlow

Substitutes

C/13/21-22 Apologies for Absence

In order for the meeting to be socially distanced, the Group Leaders agreed in advance of the meeting that attendance would be reduced to a politically balanced quorate.

C/14/21-22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hazel Thorpe declared an interest in Item 11 as a sponsor of the NSPCC.

C/15/21-22 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 21 May 2021 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/16/21-22 Questions from the Public

The Mayor advised that 3 questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

- 1. The Mayor read out a question on behalf of Mr James MacMillan, a Worthing Resident**

Since the inception of the assisted bin collection scheme, what has been the take up year on year, how is this service promoted to the community and how is the system controlled to ensure there are no false claims?

The Leader replied that since the inception of the assisted bin collection scheme, the Council had 2,805 residents on the assisted collection list which was approximately 3.4% of homes. The Council had an assisted collection sign up point on its website: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/assisted-collections/> which could be completed by either the residents themselves or via a relative/friend. Each application was checked to ensure that it met the criteria as set out in the Household Waste Collection Policy.

In order to ensure that there were no false claims, each resident was required to fill in an online application form detailing their need for an assisted collection.

Each application was assessed on a case by case basis. None of the applications were automatically granted, this was so that the Council could assess and ensure that all criteria were met in order to have an assisted collection status. If the Council felt it necessary, it would make contact with the applicant to again ensure the criteria was met or to gather further information.

If all of the criteria were met and the application was successful, the resident was added to the assisted collection list. Assisted collections were continuously monitored by way of periodic checks and through crew feedback.

2. Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Mr Rod Thick on behalf of Transition Town Worthing

In 2013 Worthing Borough Council was unanimous in supporting a motion from Cllr John Rogers asking West Sussex County Council to take a wide range of measures “to actively encourage even more cycling by residents and visitors”.

The County Council’s claim to “take the provision of cycle routes seriously” has proved an empty promise; in practice “as and when resources allow” has meant that cycling is never prioritised; and 8 years later the £161,000 of Section 106 money that is allocated to cycling has not been used to the benefit of the community and sits in the bank losing value to inflation.

Transition Town Worthing’s Transport Group has actively supported the Waves Ahead Conference on transport, the Adur & Worthing Cycling and Walking Action Group, the public consultation on the Adur & Worthing Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan LCWIP, the Climate Conference and the Climate Assembly.

All of these initiatives have shown public support for measures to encourage active travel; and urgent action is needed on climate, health, and air pollution. How will Worthing Borough Council turn that support and that need for urgency, into action?

The Leader replied that the Council was committed to working in partnership with a number of organisations to deliver sustainable travel interventions. The Council was in active dialogue with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), as the highways authority, to

identify improvements for the town. The Council was aware of consultations on a number of Active Travel schemes, including the proposed improvements to the A24 in Findon.

The Council was looking to actively utilise the S106 monies it had at its disposal, with the hope it could partner with WSCC to unlock further funding to deliver schemes in the town.

The Council had also committed to exploring the delivery of a bike share scheme across Worthing (and Adur) that would see over 300 bikes installed across its places, allowing people an ease of opportunity to choose cycling over the motor vehicle. The Council was working in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council, and WSCC, to deliver this.

Mr Thick asked a supplementary question in relation to the £161k from developers to widen the path between George V to Seaplace Cafe. Will the money have to be paid back to the developers after a certain amount of time or if some of it has already been used for a feasibility study, can the Council retain the rest to deliver the cycle path?

The Leader replied that it wasn't an open ended agreement, there was always a cut off point at which time the developer / contributor can come back to the authority and say that the money hasn't been spent. At that time, there would be options for both WBC and WSCC to renegotiate.

3. The Mayor read out a question on behalf of Mr Tony Bellasis, a Worthing Resident

The question concerned Worthing Lido.

I understand that Worthing Lido was actually built in 1897 as a birdcage bandstand. It stood as such for 30 years before being knocked down to make room for the D-shaped band enclosure we see today. In 1957 a swimming pool was added, which operated until 1988, when it finally closed. While it was still open, it was finally used to house dolphins during refurbishments of the Sea Life Centre.

I believe that The Lido is an important feature on our seafront, as part the town's history. I understand that significant work is now required on the structure, to prevent it from being lost.

So, please can the member for regeneration reassure the people of Worthing that this building will be preserved for generations to come, and explain what work is being undertaken to achieve that?

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that the Lido had been situated on Worthing seafront for many years and had changed its functionality several times throughout that period. Whilst there had been a tenant in the Lido for many years, the Council still retained the freehold interest and was committed to preserving this important structure on its promenade.

It was important to note that any structures built in this era, in a coastal location, were impacted by the tides and were susceptible to the harsh sea conditions. The Council had an ongoing maintenance program for the Lido, however investigations were underway to assess long-term options to, firstly, secure the immediate future and then consider how best the structure could be used for the benefit of future generations.

The Executive Member could reassure the people of Worthing that this building would be preserved for generations to come.

C/17/21-22 Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Executive Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor placed on record the Council's condolences to Councillor Steve Wills and his family following the loss of his mother, as well as remembering Sam McCarthy-Fox who had been a long serving member of staff at Worthing Theatres and Museum.

The Mayor informed the council that it had been his honour to be the Armed Forces Champion for the Borough. He highlighted the work and cooperation with a number of organisations around the County supporting both serving and former armed forces personnel.

The Mayor highlighted the need to strengthen and renew the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant in Worthing and mentioned that an A&W Armed Forces Strategy Document, which would be incorporated into the council's policies and procedures, was currently being produced and would be available for members to view in the near future.

The Mayor informed the Council that he was looking forward to undertaking normal civic duties following the lifting of Covid restrictions. He had attended the reopening of Highdown Gardens; the opening of the sales office at Columbia House, where he cut the ribbon; celebrated Sussex Day by reading the Sussex Charter around the Town; conducted his first Town Hall tour and also attended the Commemoration Service for the Battle of the Boar's Head in Beach House Park.

The Mayor notified Council that planning for the unveiling of the Blue Plaque for Past Mayor Ellen Chapman was well underway and would take place in October, details for which would follow in due course.

The Mayor thanked all those who had donated to his sponsored Worthing Ward Walk, in support of the mayoral charities, which he would be undertaking on Saturday 24 July.

There were no announcements from the Leader, Executive Members or the Interim Chief Executive.

C/18/21-22 Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised under the urgency provisions.

C/19/21-22 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

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

Extracts of these minutes had been circulated as items 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D(i) to 7D(v).

Item 7A Joint Strategic Committee - 8 June 2021

Worthing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Leader proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic meeting held on 8 June 2021. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and following a vote it was unanimously:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council approved the adoption of the revised draft CIL Charging Schedule for implementation on 1st August 2021.

Item 7B Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 10 June 2021

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21

A Member of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Louise Murphy, proposed the recommendation from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 June 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Karen Harman.

During debate, a Member raised concerns about the quality of the scrutiny function and encouraged Councillors to engage with good scrutiny.

Following a vote (For 7, Against 5, Abstentions 0) it was

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council approved the JOSOC Work Programme 2020/21.

** The Interim Chief Executive left the meeting prior to the consideration of Item 7C.*

Item 7C Joint Senior Staff Committee - 7 July 2021

Benchmark salary review and proposed recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

The Chairman of the Joint Senior Staff Committee proposed the recommendation from the Joint Senior Staff Committee meeting held on 7 July 2021.

During debate of the item, Members considered both the timing of the proposal as well as the proposed level of increase to the salary of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service in comparison with those paid by other local authorities and in other sectors.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and on a vote (For 7, Against 5, Abstentions 0) it was

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council approved that an increase be applied to the salary of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, being a range from £134,000 rising to £155,000

** The Interim Chief Executive rejoined the meeting prior to the consideration of Item 7D(i).*

Item 7D(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 13 July 2021

Financial Performance 2020/21 - Revenue outturn

The Leader proposed the recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and on a vote (For 8, Against 0, Abstentions 4) it was:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council

- (a) NOTED the overall final outturn for 2020/21;
- (b) APPROVED the net appropriations to General Fund Reserves in the year as detailed in section 6 of the report totalling: Adur District Council £5,326,227, Worthing Borough Council £8,700,773;
- (c) AGREED the net carry over of revenue budget to 2021/22 funded from reserves as detailed in appendix 6: Adur District Council £189,000 Worthing Borough Council £242,000.

Item 7D(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 13 July 2021

Financial Performance 2020/21 - Capital and Projects Outturn

The Leader proposed the recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and on a vote (For 8, Against 0, Abstentions 4) it was:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council

- (a) Noted the overall capital final outturn for 2020/21
- (b) Agreed the net carry over of General Fund Capital underspends for Worthing Borough Council as detailed in paragraph 5.10;
- (c) Approved the financing of the Worthing Borough Council 2020/21 Capital Investment Programme, including the use of capital receipts as set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8; and
- (d) Approved the carry forward of Council resources underspends to fund budget pressures as detailed in paragraph 4.2.2 and summarised in paragraph 5.15.

Item 7D(iii) Joint Strategic Committee - 13 July 2021

Developing a revenue budget for 2022/23 at the time of a pandemic

The Leader proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Louise Murphy and on a vote (For 7, Against 4, Abstentions 1) it was:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council approved the Budget Strategy for 2021/22 outlined in Section 9 of the report

Item 7D(iv) Joint Strategic Committee - 13 July 2021

Investing for our future - Capital Strategy 2022/25

The Leader proposed the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and on a vote (For 8, Against 0, Abstentions 4) it was:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council approved the Capital Strategy for 2022/25.

Item 7D(v) Joint Strategic Committee - 13 July 2021

Securing the regeneration of Teville Gate through acquisition of the site

The Leader presented and proposed the recommendations from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins.

During debate of the item, members gave consideration to the previous ownership of this site, the cost of acquisition, the associated risks with the approach proposed, the need to see money invested in Worthing and the delivery of new homes.

Following a vote (For 8, Against 0, Abstentions 4) it was:

Resolved: That Worthing Borough Council

- a. approved an overall budget of £8.12m to meet the costs of acquisition funded from prudential borrowing;
- b. amended the minimum revenue provision policy as set out in paragraph 7.4; and
- c. increased the operational and authorised borrowing limits by £8.12m.

C/20/21-22 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 received in relation to homelessness, the Sussex Bay project, Brooklands Park, Montague Place, Southern Water and the strategic plan for Worthing Theatres and Museum.

C/21/21-22 Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

Before the Council was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 9.

The report before members sought approval of the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21, which was a statutory requirement under Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

The Pay Policy Statement was proposed by Councillor Daniel Humphreys, seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and, following a vote (For 8, Against 4, Abstentions 0), it was

Resolved: that Worthing Borough Council approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.

** The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8.45pm and it was reconvened at 9.00pm.*

C/22/21-22 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12

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 5 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 Coxhill, Howard, Murphy, S Smith and Thorpe.

First rotation:

Question 1 from Councillor Margaret Howard to the Executive Member for Resources

Worthing Council has lent substantial sums of money to key partners, including South Downs Leisure and the Theatre Trust to keep them afloat during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst we agree with the Council supporting the two Trusts we believe that the Council and the Trusts should be more transparent with taxpayers money and there should be readily available reports on the amounts and the planned use for those funds.

Could the Executive Member for Resources please explain what money has been loaned or granted by Worthing Council to the two Trusts, which is over and above that granted by the Government, and what have the Trusts told WBC are their plans for the use of these funds?

The Leader replied that the pandemic had hit South Downs Leisure Trust (SDLT), Worthing Theatres and the Museum Trust (WMT) hard and the Council had sought to provide support where it could, but this support had not included the provision of loans.

The Council paid the annual contract sum for WMT as per the contractual agreement and in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance on the support to public sector suppliers. WMT also received some additional funding from the Arts Council. No other financial payments by the Council had been made to WMT.

The Council had paid additional grant funding to SDLT. This was approved by the Joint Strategic Committee on 8th September 2020 which detailed the amount of support that the Trust would receive for the remainder of 2020/21 and 2021/22. It was important to note that in the absence of the opportunity to generate income through the normal channels, SDLT used the majority of its reserve fund.

The additional agreed support package amounted to £594,000 in 2020/21 and £198,000 in 2021/22 which was funded through Covid 19 government grants.

The Council had also successfully applied to the National Leisure Recovery Fund for additional financial support of £200,000 to offset the costs incurred. These funds had been carried forward to the current year and were available to fund any reopening costs.

Question 2 from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

Many of us, since covid have found it harder to get around due to lack of exercise. Recently I have been made aware of a severe lack of thought and resources given to making Worthing Town and its surrounding area accessible and welcoming to all comers.

Given the withdrawal of the Worthing Mobility and Access working group – how will the people of Worthing and visitors with accessibility and health issues be best served?

The Leader replied that the Council had a focus on improving all aspects of the town centre to ensure all visitors had the opportunity to experience the place in a safe way.

An example of the Council's commitment was to ensure its streets were as decluttered as possible to allow for safe circuits. The Council was working with local businesses and issuing pavement licences which allowed a business to trade outside with the distances needed to adhere to mobility and disability standards.

As the Council brought forward new public realm spaces, as it was doing in Portland Road and Montague Place, the Council had, and would continue to, engage with representative groups to guide the design. For example, the Council continued to work with the RNIB and its local sight support groups who had provided great advice and expertise in its efforts to make part of the town centre accessible and to reduce obstructions and trip hazards for people with sight difficulties.

The Council's key car parks were assessed by the British Parking Association against the Park Mark Safer Parking Award which considered things like physical accessibility, the number of blue badge bays and the accessibility of any payment machines. The sites were reviewed on a regular basis. Whenever the Council carried out improvement works in its car parks it always looked at how it could improve accessibility. The refurbishment

of Buckingham Road car park for example would focus on making the site more welcoming and accessible. A further example was the creation of more blue badge bays in Liverpool Gardens car park since the council took that site over in August last year.

Councillor Thorpe asked a supplementary question regarding the reestablishment of the Worthing Access & Mobility Group.

The Leader requested that details be shared with him following the meeting to see how the Council could help support this.

Question 3 from Councillor Louise Murphy to the Leader

Could the Leader please update the Council on what this council is doing to ensure that Worthing is able to benefit from the government programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund that will help us to build back from the effects of the pandemic?

The Leader replied that the Council was continually active in dialogue with partners, including the Greater Brighton Economic Board and Coast to Capital LEP, to ensure it was best positioned to apply for government funding. As with all grants, there were eligibility criteria and outline prioritisation for where the funds were to be distributed, however the Council continued to ensure that the Council was part of the bidding process, and submitted high quality applications.

The Council had already submitted a number of strategic pipeline projects to the Coast to Capital LEP (to feed into the Shared Prosperity Fund process), whilst it recently submitted an application to the Levelling Up Fund. Within the short bidding timeframe, Officers worked extremely hard to pull the Council's proposition together, whilst also eliciting the necessary support from a range of key stakeholders.

The Levelling Up bid for Worthing focused on investment into its town centre to inject further new public realm and new cultural and creative uses.

Second rotation

Question 4 from Councillor Margaret Howard to the Executive Member for Resources

Regarding the loan of £10 million to Worthing Homes which is listed On Page 72 Section 1.4

I note that the loan of £10 million to Worthing homes is not decreasing and assume that only interest is being paid on the loan.

When is the loan contract due to end and does the Council have the option to call in the loan at the end of the contract or take the housing stock back into Council ownership?

The Leader told the Council that the loan was a maturity loan and so no payment of principal was due until the end of the loan agreement. The loan was advanced in 2 tranches each of which was repayable 10 years after the date of advance:

- Tranche A - £5m repayable on the 20th April 2027

- Tranche B - £5m repayable on the 19th February 2028

The loan was secured on Worthing Homes properties, so if Worthing Homes defaulted on the loan then the Council could assume responsibility for the properties detailed within the loan documentation.

Question 5 from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

Leader, we have both served on the Plastic Free working group, and I am aware that officers have changed their way of working and procurement. Can you update the Council on the extent of financial savings we may have accrued please?

The Leader stated that the last 15 months had been an exceptional time for everyone. For the councils, it had seen significant changes in the amount of visits to and time spent in its buildings, the amount of consumable goods purchased from its high streets, the amount of lunches eaten at work and so on. Due to a vast number of factors influencing the councils' finances during this time, it was not possible to provide detail on the financial savings accrued through a reduction in single use plastic consumption, however the councils' current financial position was available in the draft annual Statement of Accounts.

Since the Council pledged to become a Plastic Free Council, it had worked hard to deliver on the Action Plan produced at the time. As a result there were now over 50 refill stations across Worthing. The councils had conducted an audit to identify and replace all single-use plastics within its buildings with sustainable alternatives and, as the Council returned to the office, the plan was to focus efforts to visibly 'come back sustainably'. The Council had also broadened its internal staff network, to create Sustainability Champions who would work on eco-lunch and learn sessions, driving plastic-free councils work, Climate Assembly meet-ups, beach cleans or activities to promote awareness. Local community groups had committed to actions within Sustainable AW to deliver campaigns, local events, beach cleans and litter picks and promotion around reuse. This would be important as the impact of Covid had seen a massive increase in single-use plastics across the area, including on-the-go food / drink containers and face masks.

Councillor Thorpe asked a supplementary question regarding the ring fencing of savings and their use to support the sustainability of the local environment.

The Leader replied that the Council was very committed to all those environmental programs in platform three including reducing the use of plastics, increasing recycling and the naturalizing of various sites.

Third rotation

Question 6 from Councillor Sally Smith to the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

What has been the uptake of the Wellbeing alcohol service and how are outcomes being measured?

The Executive Member replied that 15 adults had been referred to the service since the project started in January 2021 (up to the present date of 20 July 2021). Nine of these

had been supported through the project with an Extended Brief Intervention (EBI); 18 EBI sessions had been delivered in total.

The reasons for the remaining six people referred who did not receive a direct intervention was around either non engagement (despite follow up) or having alcohol levels that surpassed the criteria for the project.

A number of outcomes were captured from the project including reduced levels of alcohol, reduction in numbers of days alcohol was consumed, improvements to psychological and physical health and quality of life, all of which contributed to a public health outcomes framework that was used for the Wellbeing Programme.

Question 7 from Councillor Dan Coxhill to the Leader

I fully support the efforts this council is taking to improve biodiversity and opportunities for rewilding in the borough. Can the Leader update me on the progress made in this regard?

The Leader replied that a huge amount was being done, including

- Acquisition of New Salts Farm, 100 acres of chalk grassland. Working closely with the community and South Downs National Park to rewild, while preserving a much loved amenity for walkers;
- Working with partners to attract investment in kelp forest restoration, and creating a vision for Sussex Bay, the blue mirror to the South Downs. Secured £79k investment from DEFRA to create an investment model in kelp blue carbon;
- Large scale tree planting scheme by the Parks and Foreshore team;
- Natural capital baseline assessments being undertaken with support from Surrey Wildlife Trust and Sussex Local Nature Partnership. Rewilding sites have been identified across our open spaces; and
- Beach House Park application for Green Flag Status.

Councillor Coxhill asked the following supplementary question: Does the Leader believe enough is being done to "tell the story" of why more wild areas are better for our local natural environment?

The Leader replied that there was always more to be done to communicate the importance of restoring nature. Along with the SustainableAW magazine which promoted the council's work and lots of incredible community projects, the Council used Facebook and other social media to keep promoting the importance of nature and its restoration.

Our Zero 2030 conference and Climate Assembly had helped raise awareness over the last year or so, and the Council had key officers blogging on a range of nature based topics.

The fabulous Junior Tree Trail at Highdown, designed and created by Creative Waves and Men in Sheds was helping children learn more and engage with nature whilst the Council's summer campaign "The Great Outdoors" had been designed to encourage people out into our wonderful open spaces.

C/23/21-22

Chairman's Announcement

The Mayor advised of a change to the order of the agenda. Item 12 would be taken ahead of item 11.

C/24/21-22

Motion on Notice

Members had a motion before them proposed by Councillor Sean McDonald and seconded by Councillor Dan Coxhill.

The motion was debated and on a vote (For 7, Against 5, Abstentions 0) it was

Resolved:

"In recent weeks and months local residents and council taxpayers in Worthing and across Sussex had been inconvenienced by a number of unauthorised encampments on public land. Such incursions had resulted in considerable and unjustifiable expense for clearing up sites and making repairs to public property. Worthing Borough Council and Sussex Police had reacted quickly in each case and were to be applauded for their efforts. However their legal powers to deal with these cases in a more timely manner were currently limited.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that is being taken through Parliament by the Home Secretary included changes to the law that would make such acts of trespass a criminal offence and give police powers to seize vehicles for example to help pay for the damage and mess caused, which otherwise fell on the law-abiding local taxpayers who were fed up of this abuse.

Residents could be assured that this council would continue to play it's part in seeking to deter these types of unauthorised encampments and by supporting communities where this disruption did occur.

This council fully supported this new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill and applauded The Home Secretary for bringing the Bill forward."

** At 9.49pm, Councillor Rebecca Cooper left the meeting and Cllr Sally Smith joined the meeting.*

C/25/21-22

Motion on Notice

Members had a motion before them proposed by Councillor Sally Smith and seconded by Councillor Daniel Humphreys.

The motion was debated and on a vote it was unanimously

Resolved:

This Council recognised that violence against women and girls could include, or be linked to, domestic abuse. This was often a hidden crime unreported to the police and although both men and women were affected, incidence and severity were much greater for

women. Domestic and family violence could affect well being and developmental growth of children and teenagers both in the short and long term.

The Coronavirus pandemic had further caused what one worker described as 'an epidemic beneath a pandemic'. The charity Refuge reported that in the year between February 2020 and March 2021 72% of calls to their helpline were from women who said they were experiencing violence and abuse, and nearly a fifth said their abuser had threatened to kill them. Tragically, statistics showed that more female homicide victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner than by strangers.

It was imperative we learnt from and acted on the weaknesses in our systems and structures the pandemic had so starkly exposed. The Council had a well developed network of support via the Wellbeing team, links with the Police, the Housing needs team plus connection with Worth, West Sussex specialist services and the Women's accommodation support officer. This Council together with all parts of society should play their part in tackling domestic violence'.

The meeting ended at Time Not
Specified