

Public Document Pack

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at the Assembly Hall, Stoke Abbott Road, Worthing On

22 February 2022

6.30 pm

The Mayor, Councillor Lionel Harman
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Richard Nowak

Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Dr Heather Mercer
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Richard Mulholland
Councillor Mike Barrett	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Ferdousi Henna Chowdhury	Councillor Jon Roser
Councillor Russ Cochran	Councillor Helen Silman
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Dawn Smith
Councillor Dan Coxhill	Councillor Sally Smith
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Robert Smytherman
Councillor Jim Deen	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies	Councillor Emma Taylor
Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Hazel Thorpe
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor John Turley
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Nicola Waight
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Martin McCabe	Councillor Vicki Wells
Councillor Sean McDonald	Councillor Steve Wills
	*Councillor Rosey Whorlow

*Absent

C/55/21-22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Rosey Whorlow.

C/56/21-22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Carl Walker declared an interest as a co-founder of the Worthing Food Foundation.

Councillor Margaret Howard declared an interest as a co-founder of the Worthing Food Foundation and member of the Broadwater Support Group.

Councillor Russ Cochran declared a personal interest in item 7A.

Councillor Edward Crouch declared an interest in item 9 as a paid Director of Worthing Homes.

Councillor Steve Waight declared a personal interest as a member of West Sussex County Council where he was also the Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development.

Councillors Noel Atkins, Rebecca Cooper, Henna Chowdhury, Sean McDonald, Dawn Smith, Elizabeth Sparkes and John Turley declared personal interests as Members of West Sussex County Council.

C/57/21-22 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/58/21-22 Questions from the Public

1. Submitted Question from Mr Matthew Potter, a Worthing Resident

The Adur & Worthing Community Food Network includes a number of organisations who work with and support local people who would otherwise go hungry.

We are very grateful for the time, funds and resources from Adur & Worthing Council, which we could not have done without. We also appreciate their proactive approach and willingness to work with us.

However, demand for food is rising and many of our organisations are now operating at capacity. We are currently supporting over 3,500 of our neighbours with nearly 10,000 food parcels and 1,600 pre-prepared meals every quarter.

We would like cross-party support to work on a long-term, community-led action plan to address the causes of and the solutions to food insecurity, along with looking at future food acquisition and distribution so that we can better support our community.

This will require a fully-funded, community-led coordinator and continued cross-departmental focus, directed toward a long-term participatory Food Action plan.

We would ask that the Council:

Confirms its cross-party, continued support, both practical and financial, for the Community Food Network.

Further we ask for a cross-party financial commitment to fully fund a community-directed long-term Food Action plan that will address both the causes of, and the solutions to, food insecurity in our community.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing responded that the Councils' had been working in partnership with the food groups since April 2020, during the first national lockdown to share information and resources, with the Councils providing significant emergency resources and direct support, including money, space for food, an emergency food hub and assistance to ensure those in need, received food and other help.

The Council continued to play a key role with food groups and the AW Food Network to help and enable this group to meet the local needs of residents, focusing on how

partners can address food needs now, supporting groups with Covid funding resources and officer time/resources. Officers had also been working alongside other partners and many of the Council's generous businesses and volunteers who had continued to help and support people, with food, financial contributions, skills and volunteering hours

The Council recognised the approach needed to be more than alleviating the immediate need for food, and enabling more early intervention work to connect people to the wider support and advice available to alleviate need including help with money, housing, benefits entitlement, access to employment etc. The Councils had directed £195,000 of the COMF funding directly to food groups (Contain Outbreak Management Fund) to address food and these broader issues and had also used and mobilised resources to help ensure early help and prevention work was provided, through the Proactive project, employment coaches, money advice, temporary housing, and street outreach.

The Councils were keen to work on a more long term approach with food partners to tackle the long-term drivers of food need and insecurity and to support more sustainable food supply issues that help share food resources and tackle food waste in ways that address food insecurity in our community. The Council recognized the urgency of support now and the need to develop a long term plan and it was working in the best way possible to support this.

The Councils' fully recognised and supported the need to work cross party and as part of a coalition of community-directed, multi-agency partners. The Council was also working with Community Works and food partners to try and build a much better and informed position around food need and supply to inform the direction of this work and to enable its teams to work with local businesses to broaden the food supply issue. The Council would continue to play a role in supporting the food agenda, as part of a collaborative approach and would help work with others to attract funding and other resources to support this work.

Mr Potter asked a supplementary question about the implementation of a Food Action plan as other Councils had.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that a Food Action plan was in place and that the Council would continue to support this.

A question had been pre-submitted, in multiple parts, by a Mr Adrian Cothard and was read out by the Mayor as Mr Cothard was not present at the meeting.

2. Submitted Question from Mr Cothard, a Worthing Resident

Is it right that the fraction of CIL monies that Communities can apply for can be subject to politicians being allowed the final say on funding AFTER going through due diligence with the council's own projects team?

Is it fair that one of the highest scoring projects for a community seating shelter in a park is refused funding because the applicant's group is led by an opposition councillor?

Is it further fair or appropriate that the council refuses disappointed applicants all sight of any conversations/correspondence between councillors/officers thus depriving them of any opportunity for true scrutiny?

Would it be more appropriate to have a more accurate list as to what can and cannot be applied for via the CIL Neighbourhood pot so that community groups can avoid having their time simply wasted on applications that have no chance of being approved?

Does the council agree that the rollout of this scheme has been a shambolic mess and set up in a way that leaves it wide open to abuse by those approving and vetoing applications?

The Leader replied advising that he had spoken to the Solicitor to the Council and that as there were other matters ongoing in relation to his questions, it would not be right for any answer, verbal or written, to be given at this time, in order to ensure natural justice to these procedures.

A question had been pre-submitted by Sheila Howell and was read out by the Mayor as Ms Howell was not present at the meeting.

3. Submitted Question from Ms Sheila Howell, a Worthing Resident

Can the council confirm if any of the replies received were from any of the disabled who use the town parking.

The Leader replied that the Council, via and in partnership with West Sussex County Council, received a number of representations about the Montague Place scheme (to which the Leader presume Ms Howell was referring). The Leader confirmed these were primarily related to the re-provision of the disabled parking bays, loading for businesses and emergency access. The decision to grant the Traffic Regulation Order was agreed by West Sussex County Council as the highways authority, following the TRO public consultation period.

A question had been pre-submitted by Ms Pauline Cox and was read out by the Mayor as Ms Cox was not present at the meeting.

4. Submitted Question from Pauline Cox, a Worthing Resident

Will the Council please provide a list of all businesses and organisations consulted Re. Removal of Blue Badge Bays in Montague Place, including percentages of those who responded?

The Leader advised that the Council engaged with a number of stakeholders in relation to the Montague Place scheme ahead of the formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation period. This included local residents, local businesses, the Town Centre Initiative, Emergency Services and local access groups, including Worthing Sight Support. Following the consultation period, and after responding to a number of representations, West Sussex County Council (as the Highways Authority) made the decision to ward the TRO.

A question had been pre-submitted by Ms Maxine Lawler and was read out by the Mayor as Ms Lawler was not present at the meeting.

5. Submitted Question from Maxine Lawler, a Worthing Resident

Please tell me if the disabled spaces removed from the Montague st area will be replaced nearby? With more spaces with the ability to remove a wheelchair safely from the rear of the vehicle?

The Leader responded that the disabled spaces from Montague Place would be re-provided on Marine Parade, outside Marks & Spencers. These bays had been used temporarily as disabled bays during the covid pandemic; these were now being made permanent. These new 24/7 bays would be enlarged and new egress / access would be added to allow for wheelchair access. The Council had also put additional disabled bays into Montague Quarter Car Park (the TK Maxx Car Park) to ensure there was no loss of provision in the town centre. In fact, as a result of both interventions, 10 bays had been re-provided, an increase of 2 disabled bays, when compared to the 8 that were in Montague Place.

A question had been pre-submitted by Ms Sophie Watts and was read out by the Mayor as Ms Watts was not present at the meeting.

6. Submitted Questions from Sophie Watts, a Worthing Resident

Q: What made the council strongly agree to the closure of vital WAV disabled bays within Montague Place despite their usage being 100%, and the adequacy of alternative provision for those disabled bay users in Worthing?

Q: Councillors John Turley and Jim Deen made no mention of WOR9019MM on their media accounts, neither did Worthing Borough Council or West Sussex County Council. As with guidelines for TRO consultations, these things are meant to be made public and essentially published to media where it can be seen by all, not the few. Why is it that we have not seen evidence of this on any social media account? Furthermore, how can the councils respond and say they have done their best to make people aware? Subsequently, none of the disabled community were aware of this TRO for the bays that they use regularly, of which were at 100% capacity.

The Leader advised that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) granted by West Sussex County Council would see the disabled bays relocated to Marine Parade (outside Marks & Spencers), whilst additional bays had been added to Montague Quarter car park, increasing the provision to 10. The Council were aware the disabled bays were well used, hence why the re-provision had been made as outlined. To confirm, there was also dedicated provision of 6 disabled spaces at Buckingham MSCP, Grafton MSCP and at High St MSCP, and a further 3 disabled bays at High St surface car park. This was in addition to the on street provision that existed via West Sussex County Council.

The Council undertook consultation with local residents, businesses, access groups and emergency services following a press release in July 2021 whereby the ambition of a

pedestrianised scheme was highlighted - <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/news/pr21-103.html>. The subsequent TRO consultation was delivered in accordance with the regulations and published in the media as well as on the West Sussex County Council website - <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/traffic-regulation-orders/closed-traffic-regulation-order-consultations/worthing-closed-tro-consultations/>.

As a result of that consultation, and after addressing a number of representations, West Sussex County Council, as the Highways Authority, issued the TRO to pedestrianise Montague Place. However, to reiterate, the Council was providing alternative and new disabled bay provision as a result of this TRO as it was aware of the need to ensure provision exists for its residents who were accessing the town centre.

7. Submitted Question from Andy Whight, a Worthing Resident

Some 3 years ago Worthing Borough Council entered into a 3 year agreement to lease an area of our seafront to De Koning leisure group Ltd to provide and run the Worthing observation wheel for the three years from 2019 to 2021 .

After one year it was reported in ' The Argus ' that it had attracted more than 40,000 customers'.

On 29th April 2021 John Holden reported in 'Sussex world' that after a further year more than 50,000 people had taken rides.

Seemingly an increase of only 10,000 more after the second year.

For the third and final year of the lease it was agreed to use a smaller wheel. At this point substantial foundation work was carried out to accommodate this alternate wheel.

What costs have been born by Worthing borough council (through grants or otherwise) by this enterprise as a whole and what specifically were Worthing Borough councils cost relating to the referred to foundation works.

The Leader responded that the Council had not accrued any costs associated with the installation and operation of the Observation Wheel. All the costs were borne by De Koning Leisure as part of the lease agreement, including the foundation costs. To confirm, the Council received an income from the lease agreement that went to support Council services.

8. Question from Dale Overton, a Worthing Resident

Asked a question in relation to the Proactive Team, specifically, how many people had the team helped so far?

The Executive Member for Customer Services replied that the Proactive project aimed to ensure that the councils target support and resources to those most in need, and was an important part of the Councils' Covid recovery plan. It also laid the groundwork for key frontline services to shift to a more preventative and early intervention approach, and for the Council to strengthen their capabilities for multi-disciplinary, data-led working

In January 2022, the Interim Director of Communities presented a detailed update report to the Joint Strategic Committee. This highlighted that between March and December

2021, a cross service team of officers had identified 500 low income households that it approached to offer support in how to increase household income and/or reduce household debt. Contact was made with 239 households, 164 of whom wanted to work with the team on a long term basis. The team can evidence that the financial resilience of those households had increased - details were contained at paragraph 4.22 of the January report, but monthly increases in income of between £57 and £332 had been achieved, alongside falls in household arrears. The January report also described how the team planned to scale up this work by focusing on three areas: building inhouse capacity and capability; using appropriate digital methods to engage with residents; and working with partner organisations who provided similar/supplementary support (both financial and wellbeing).

The Interim Director of Communities would be presenting a further progress report to the Joint Strategic Committee in July 2022. As an interim update, the Proactive team reports that its ambition was to contact residents who fell into the "not coping" financial risk categories described in previous reports throughout the calendar year. Work was now underway by the Councils' Housing team to purchase Telljo, a digital self service support tool, and once operational (by June 2022) this would accelerate the numbers that the Council was able to reach each month. The team's longer term ambition was to extend the model to partners and communities themselves, always holding an asset based view of the people the Council worked with.

C/59/21-22

Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Executive Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending a number of events on his behalf and for taking the lead at the Holocaust Memorial Day service on 27 January. A somber event that provided everyone with a moment to reflect on how fortunate we are to be in a free and democratic country.

The Mayor informed the Council of a number of Civic events that he had attended following his recent operation:-

- The 5th anniversary of Anytime Fitness.
- The Ground Breaking Ceremony for Worthing's Integrated Care Centre which when completed, would be a great asset for Worthing and benefit so many of its residents.
- Photoshoot of the launch of the Worthing Rotary Club Centenary commemorations; the Mayor stated that he was always happy to be in a photo.
- Care for Veterans Fire Walk where he opened the event and offered encouragement and support to all those taking part.
- Worthing Thunder game against Hemel Storm; the Mayor stated that he had never been to a basketball match and was impressed by the stamina and pace of all the players. After the game he had the opportunity to chat with the teams and to find out a little about the community works they did supporting underprivileged children.

After a 21-month delay, the Mayor advised that he had finally managed to hold his inaugural Mayoral Dinner. Despite it being a small event everyone who attended had a great evening.

The Mayor provided a brief update on his Armed Forces Champion duties, advising that 2022 was going to be a very busy year for Worthing's Armed Forces and Veterans. As well as the usual events, planning was well under way for the Queen's Jubilee, and also the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. Both were important landmarks and the Mayor hoped everyone would support them appropriately.

Following the great work of the Council in 2021 by strengthening its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, it was important that our Service Personnel and Veterans received the respect and support they deserved. He urged all Councillors to ensure that the aims of the Covenant were foremost in their thoughts when fulfilling their responsibilities when talking to residents and doing their work.

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

C/60/21-22 Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised under the urgency provisions.

C/61/21-22 Recommendations from the Executive and Committees to Council

Council had, before it, recommendations from the Licensing & Control Committee, Joint Governance Committee, the Worthing Executive and the Joint Strategic Committee.

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

Item 7A Licensing and Control Committee - 24 January 2022

Licensing Act 2005 - Statement of Licensing Gambling Act Policy

The Chairman of the Licensing and Control Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council. Members were invited to review the draft statement of Licensing Policy and adopt the updated policy.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hazel Thorpe and unanimously supported.

Resolved,

That the Council approved the Statement of Licensing Gambling Policy for adoption.

Item 7B Joint Governance Committee - 25 January 2022

Appointment of External Auditor

The Chairman of the Joint Governance Committee introduced the recommendation to the Council.

The contract for external audit was due to come to an end in 2023 and the external auditor for the audit of the Councils' accounts for 2023/24 had to be appointed before the end of December 2022.

The report set out the approach to procuring a replacement supplier for the audit of the 2023/24 accounts and sought approval to use Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) to procure a new supplier.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman and unanimously supported.

Resolved,

That the Council approved opt-in to the Appointing Person arrangements made by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors for the five years from 1st April 2023.

Item 7C Worthing Executive - 31 January 2022

Budget Estimates 2022/23 and setting of 2022/23 Council Tax

The Mayor advised that the recommendations from Worthing Executive would be considered under Item 9 on the agenda.

Item 7D(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 8 February 2021

Joint Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee held on 8 February 2021 which was seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes and debated by Council.

Following a vote (For 20, Against 0, Abstentions 16)

Resolved,

That the Council approved the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statements.

Item 7D(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 8 February 2021

Worthing Local Plan

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee held on 8 February 2021 which was seconded by Councillor Nicola Waight and supported unanimously.

Resolved,

The Council approved the Schedule of Modifications for consultation.

C/62/21-22

Mayor's Announcement

The County Council was forced to rearrange their budget setting meeting from Friday 18th February to the 28th February due to storm Eunice

This has an impact on the formal Council Tax determinations which are required to be approved by the Full Council. The Council is in a position to set its own budget and Council Tax as planned, however, we are required statutorily to set the overall Council Tax, including the precepts from other bodies.

As a consequence, we will not be able to set the overall Council Tax for the Borough this evening including the tax related to West Sussex County Council.

Therefore, I shall be moving agenda items 8 and 9 to the end of this evening's agenda. I have been advised that tonight's meeting will need to be adjourned at an appropriate junction, after we have fully discussed our own budget and set our own Council Tax.

It is proposed that the meeting will reconvene next week to enable us to meet our statutory duties. In consultation with the Group Leaders, it has been agreed that this will take place on Tuesday 1st March at 6.30pm.

C/63/21-22

Council Tax Support Scheme - Additional discretionary discounts

Before the Council was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 10.

The report advised that the Council had received notification from West Sussex County Council that they would like to support an extension of the Council Tax additional discounts of £150.00 per working age claimant in 2022/23

The report sought approval to replicate the additional covid related support given to working age CTS claimants in 2020/21 and 2021/22 of an additional council tax discount of up to £150.00 per household.

The Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Heather Mercer and debated.

Following a vote (**For 18, Against 0, Abstentions 18**)

Resolved,

The Council approved an additional discretionary discount of up to £150,000 per household for working age claimants and that claimants need not apply for the discount which would be automatically applied.

C/64/21-22

Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by the Executive Members and the Joint Strategic Committee since the last meeting of Council

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 11.

Questions were received in relation to the proposed activities for celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Solar Together.

C/65/21-22 Designation of Monitoring Officer

Before the Council was a report by the Head of Paid Service, a copy of which was circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 12.

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

The Leader of the Council wished to place on record his thanks to the outgoing Monitoring Officer, Maria Memoli, for all of her work in supporting the Council and proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman and unanimously supported.

Resolved,

The Council designated Geoff Wild as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 25th February 2022.

C/66/21-22 Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022

Before the Council was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources, a copy of which was circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 13.

The report sought members approval of the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22, which was a statutory requirement under Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. It was noted that the statement would be updated on an annual basis.

The Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman and debated.

Following a vote (**For 20, Against 0, Abstentions 16**)

Resolved,

The Council noted the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

C/67/21-22 Schedule of Meetings 2022/23

The Council received the schedule of meetings for the Council and other meetings from the Proper Officer, the Interim Director for Communities, a copy of which was circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 14.

Council was invited to formally approve the dates for its Meetings during this period whilst noting the proposed dates for other committees.

The motion was proposed and seconded and during debate, an amendment to the Schedule of Meetings for 2022/23 was proposed by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Noel Atkins, that the Annual Council meeting be held at 12 noon rather than 6.30pm in order to keep with tradition. The amendment was debated and passed following a vote (**For 18, Against 17, Abstentions 1**).

The substantive motion, as amended, was debated and supported following a vote (**For 18, Against 1, Abstentions 17**).

Resolved

The Council approved the Schedule of Meetings for 2022/23, as amended above.

C/68/21-22 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12

The Mayor announced that 4 questions had been received 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 3 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.

First rotation:

Question 1 from Councillor Hazel Thorpe to the Leader

The current environmental pressures are towards sustainable transport and environmentally friendly vehicles. Worthing Borough car parks are now losing money to the tune of £359,000.

What is your greater plan for the Town, are you going down the route similar to Brighton & Hove City Council and reducing on street car parks?

The Leader of the Council replied that like everywhere else, the Pandemic had meant that car parking income had dropped over the past two years. Right now, the Council's approach was about making sure that its car parks remained open and helped to support economic recovery and in particular, the health of businesses in the town centre. The aim was that the car parks should provide a welcome and clean environment for residents and visitors arriving by car.

In the future, the role played by the Council's car parks would no doubt change as it placed a greater emphasis on promoting active travel and the opportunities to walk and cycle with all of the health benefits they bring. The Council might for example, have to look toward prioritising valuable car parking spaces for those people most in need.

Whatever the Council did with its car parks, it would need to work closely with its colleagues at West Sussex County Council who looked after on-street car parking.

Question 2 from Councillor Charles James to the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing

Can the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing advise as to whether the Taxi Rank Marshalls Scheme, which has been very effective in reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, will be continuing during 2022?

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that the taxi marshal scheme was currently under review. The Council was working with stakeholders to identify suitable options to ensure this scheme could continue beyond March 2022.

The scheme had been in existence since 2005, going under various governance and funding arrangements. Until 2020, late night premises and taxi drivers contributed to the scheme which was administered and underwritten by the Safer Communities Partnership. Due to a decrease in grant contributions, the partnership was no longer in a position to underwrite the scheme.

Contributions were paused throughout lock down. As restrictions were lifted, the councils were able to fund the marshalls for the last 10 months using funds supporting covid recovery. As this funding was coming to an end, the Safer Communities Partnership was now working with Pubwatch, the taxi trade and town centre businesses to identify future options to continue the scheme.

Second Rotation:

Question 3 from Councillor Karen Harman to the Executive Member for Customer Services

Can the Executive member for Customer Services provide us with an update on the Proactive project?

The Executive Member for Customer Services replied that the Proactive project aimed to ensure that the councils target support and resources to those most in need, and was an important part of the Councils' Covid recovery plan. It also laid the groundwork for key frontline services to shift to a more preventative and early intervention approach, and for the Council to strengthen their capabilities for multi-disciplinary, data-led working

In January 2022, the Interim Director of Communities presented a detailed update report to the Joint Strategic Committee. This highlighted that between March and December 2021, a cross service team of officers had identified 500 low income households that it approached to offer support in how to increase household income and/or reduce household debt. Contact was made with 239 households, 164 of whom wanted to work with the team on a long term basis. The team can evidence that the financial resilience of those households had increased - details were contained at paragraph 4.22 of the January report, but monthly increases in income of between £57 and £332 had been achieved, alongside falls in household arrears. The January report also described how the team planned to scale up this work by focusing on three areas: building inhouse capacity and capability; using appropriate digital methods to engage with residents; and working with partner organisations who provided similar/supplementary support (both financial and wellbeing).

The Interim Director of Communities would be presenting a further progress report to the Joint Strategic Committee in July 2022. As an interim update, the Proactive team reports that its ambition was to contact residents who fell into the "not coping" financial risk categories described in previous reports throughout the calendar year. Work was now underway by the Councils' Housing team to purchase Telljo, a digital self service support tool, and once operational (by June 2022) this would accelerate the numbers that the Council was able to reach each month. The team's longer term ambition was to extend the model to partners and communities themselves, always holding an asset based view of the people the Council worked with.

Third Rotation

Question 4 from Councillor Noel Atkins to the Executive Member for Regeneration

Can the Executive member for Regeneration give us an update on the works in Montague Place?

The Leader replied that as noted as the vision at the Joint Strategic Committee last July (2021), the Council had worked in partnership with West Sussex County Council and local stakeholders over the last 6 months to move to a position whereby work had begun on a temporary scheme to pedestrianise Montague Place.

As Members would recall, Montague Place had been closed, and partially closed, over the last 18 months in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to observing how people were using the space, and that Montague Place had been earmarked for improvements under the Public Realm Programme, consultation was undertaken and subsequently a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was raised by WSCC to remove vehicles from this area.

The TRO was issued a few weeks ago and the Executive Member was delighted to say that the Council's contractor, Landbuild, were now onsite and works had begun. The most significant change would be seen at the southern end with new loading bays being established, whilst the northern end would see a levelled surface with new planting, seating and lighting. The Council was also minded to re-provide the disabled bays, therefore 6 would be now permanently outside Marks & Spencers on Marine Parade whilst a further 4 bays had already been installed at Montague Quarter car park.

The temporary works would take approximately 8 weeks to complete, therefore the Council was anticipating the work to be completed by Easter. In that same period, the Council would be commissioning the next phase, which would see the permanent design of Montague Place be established over the course of this year. The main design would be influenced by how the temporary scheme was used, whilst this would also be informed by extensive community consultation over the Summer / Autumn.

With Montague Place now up and running, Portland Road completing in the summer and Railway Approach into detailed design, the Executive Member was delighted that this Council was investing and delivering in better spaces in the town centre for its residents, businesses and visitors.

C/69/21-22

Motion on Notice

Before the Council was a motion proposed by Councillor Russ Cochran and seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman.

Resolved,

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

C/70/21-22 Motion on Notice

Before the Council was a motion proposed by Councillor Jon Roser and seconded by Councillor Emma Taylor.

Resolved,

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

C/71/21-22 Motion on Notice

Before the Council was a motion proposed by Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies and seconded by Councillor Vicki Wells.

Resolved,

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

C/72/21-22 Motion on Notice

Before the Council was a motion proposed by Councillor Edward Crouch and seconded by Councillor Hazel Thorpe.

Resolved,

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

*** The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8.37pm and reconvened it again at 8.50pm**

C/73/21-22 Suspension of Council Procedure Rules

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

Having been proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman the Council unanimously agreed to suspend Council Procedure Rules for the consideration of Item 9 on the agenda.

The Mayor introduced the item explaining that item 7C, the recommendation from the Executive, would be considered as part of this discussion with the full proposed recommendation being contained in the papers circulated with the agenda.

As required by the Regulations there would be a recorded vote on any amendments to the proposed budget together with a final vote.

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

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

The Leader of the Council introduced the budget and setting of the council tax to members and a copy of the Leaders budget speech is appended to these minutes as Appendix A.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes.

The Leader of the Labour Group on the Council, Councillor Beccy Cooper, addressed the Council and proposed 8 amendments to the budget, appended to these minutes as Appendix B, which she proposed grouping together for the purpose of voting as follows:-

- Vote 1 - Amendment 2
- Vote 2 - Amendment 5
- Vote 3 - Amendments 1, 3 & 7
- Vote 4 - Amendments 4 & 6
- Vote 5 - Amendment 8

The proposed amendments were seconded by Councillor Carl Walker.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group on the Council, Councillor Hazel Thorpe, addressed the Council.

Members in the Chamber debated the proposed budget and budget amendments.

** During the debate (10.25pm), in accordance with the constitution, the Mayor sought approval to extend the time of the meeting beyond four hours. Councillor Smytherman proposed that the meeting be extended in order to conclude the item of business. The motion was seconded by Councillor Cochran and unanimously supported.

In accordance with Budget Procedure Rules, the Leader of the Opposition and the Executive Leader were given rights of reply.

The Mayor put each of the amendments to the Council for a vote. Recorded votes were taken, the results of which, are set out below:-

Vote 1 - Amendment 2

For (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Against (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved that amendment 2 was not supported.

Vote 2 - Amendment 5

For (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Against (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved that amendment 5 was not supported.

Vote 3 - Amendments 1, 3 & 7

For (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Against (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved that amendments 1, 3 & 7 were not supported.

Vote 4 - Amendments 4 & 6

For (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Against (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved that amendments 4 & 6 were not supported.

Vote 5 - Amendment 8

For (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Against (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved that amendment 8 was not supported.

As none of the amendments were supported, the Mayor put Appendix A of the substantive motion to the Council for a vote. A recorded vote was taken, the results of which, are set out below:-

For (18): Councillors Atkins, Barraclough, Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, K Harman, L Harman, Humphreys, James, Jenkins, McDonald, Mercer, Murphy, Nowak, Sparkes, N Waight, S Waight & Wills

Against (16): Councillors Barrett, Chowdhury, Cooper, Deen, Glynn-Davies, Howard, McCabe, Mulholland, Roser, Silman, D Smith, S Smith, Taylor, Turley, Walker & Wells

Abstentions (2): Councillors Smytherman and Thorpe

Resolved

- 1) That it be noted that on 31st January 2022, the Executive calculated the Council Tax Base 2022/23 as **39,610.50** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];
- 2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 was **£9,996,110**.
- 3) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a) **£75,437,575** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
 - b) **£65,441,465** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - c) **£9,996,110** being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R), in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - d) **£252.36** being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

- e) **£0.00** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- f) **£252.36** being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

Having been proposed by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and unanimously supported, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 11.14pm.

The meeting reconvened at 6.30pm on 1 March 2022.

Having reconvened the evening, the Mayor advised Members that they were required to determine the matters referred to in Appendix B of the substantive motion as had been proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor Sparkes and debated by the Council at its meeting on the 22nd February. The Mayor confirmed that the figures included in Appendix B of the agenda pack had not changed following West Sussex County Council's meeting on the 28th February.

A recorded vote was taken, the results of which, are set out below:-

For (9): Councillors Cochran, Coxhill, Crouch, L Harman, Jenkins, McDonald, Sparkes, Thorpe and N Waight

Against (0):

Abstentions (4): Councillors Cooper, Deen, Mulholland and S Smith

Resolved

See Appendix C

Appendix A
Appendix B
Appendix C

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 6.39pm

Mayor

This page is intentionally left blank

Budget Speech 2022

This time last year we were discussing our annual council budget remotely using online technology. Tonight as the full lifting of Covid restrictions comes ever closer, we are again meeting in unusual circumstances here in the Assembly Hall with us all not yet able to be back in the Council Chamber.

Since that time last year there have been over 139 million vaccinations given, over 48.5 million people are fully vaccinated and over 37 million booster vaccines, a remarkable achievement by any standard. I would like again to pay tribute to all those who have led on these vaccination schemes, from the scientists, the NHS staff and the army of volunteers up and down the country and especially here in Worthing who have stepped up and helped out. Without all of them this collective effort would not have been successful.

Firstly I wish to put on record my thanks for the work of the officers in preparing this budget and to Cllr Sparkes for her microscopic interrogation of it.

I would also like to pay tribute to the work of my executive, fellow councillors and all the council staff who have continued through another pandemic year providing a quality service to residents across Worthing. Despite the challenges they have adapted, innovated and delivered; and that is across the board from our very visible front line staff providing refuse and street cleaning, parks and garden, right across to our not so visible, but just as important, areas of service delivery. Not to forget the residents and businesses themselves, for continuing to work together when times have been difficult.

As we all know not everything is the same, how we work and how we live has changed. One of the largest changes in 'how we work', has been seen here at the Council as staff are, where possible, still working remotely and this has allowed us to review and re-shape how our buildings are managed.

In the last year we have seen a change in our Chief Executive Officer with Alex Bailey retiring and Catherine Howe now at the helm.

As we near closing the 2021/22 financial year we are still facing a number of challenges, but our position remains good with the projected overspend currently showing at about £14,000 pounds, remarkable in the current situation. Our planned work has continued and the vast majority of our projects are on track and many have accelerated. Proof, if proof is needed, that home working can be just as or even more productive.

But we are not out of the woods yet, the pandemic has left its pressures on our fees and charges income, particularly in relation to car parks, is reduced. Whilst throughout 2020/21 and in the first quarter of 2021/22 the Government committed to providing 75% funding for any lost income, that support is no longer available. Consequently all future losses will have to be funded by the Council and must be factored into our financial planning.

The human cost from the impact of the pandemic is clear, not more so than on our homelessness, as caseloads continue to rise, there remains an ever present risk that demand and associated costs may increase further over the coming year.

To address the known, and as yet unknown pressures, and to realise our ambitions we have in place several strategic programmes delivering new income and savings for the next 5 years.

These include the Strategic Asset Management programme, delivering the income growth especially from the Strategic Property Investment Fund. The Commercial programme to promote income growth from commercial services and seeks to improve our customer experience. The Affordable Homes Working Group leads on improving the supply of affordable homes and on reducing the cost of temporary and emergency accommodation and our Corporate Landlord programme seeks to rationalise our own council accommodation, generating capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets.

Alongside those strategic programmes, this budget identifies savings proposals that amount to £1,136,000 pounds. Savings managed through prudent fiscal management, digitalisation, successful investment and commercial management.

National and locally, economic recovery is happening with signs of strong growth. The number of people in work continues to grow, rates of pay are rising and the number of people claiming out of work benefits are showing signs of decreasing. With the Chancellors support we have benefitted from unprecedented support for residents, businesses and the public sector during the pandemic; Furlough, homelessness prevention, loan schemes, grants and business rates holidays and hardship grants.

But as we all learn to live with Covid we recognise that families and businesses are facing their own cost of living pressures and in this budget we will set out how we can help.

Recently we have seen the government provide £200 support on fuel bills and a further £150 payment reduction for Council Tax for households in bands A - D with additional arrangements for those that fall outside of this. In addition, a new WSCC arrangement to provide £150 support for households in receipt of council tax reduction relief is proposed, plus our own £100,000 pounds discretionary hardship fund support. All of these will go a long way to helping those who are most at risk in our community.

To support these needs we are investing nearly £2,000,000 pounds through our Health and Wellbeing budget that will support the delivery not only of our New Health and Wellbeing Plan, but work with our Wellbeing Hubs and Social Prescribing teams, helping residents to access support and advice around mental health, weight management, addiction and social isolation. Continued support for the third sector including local charities and community groups helping the most vulnerable. Continued work to address food poverty and support the Food Partnerships. Linked to this work we will be continuing our support for residents struggling with their finances. Our Proactive Project is a key part of this work that aims to identify households and help them increase household income, reduce household debt and also address depression, anxiety and loneliness that often accompany financial exclusion. The work of the OneStop 'Money Coaches' support service, along with our investment in Citizens Advice is all part of this approach.

Worthing's economy and communities are getting stronger with the plans we have put in place to protect families and support businesses; our economic bounce back has been stronger and more successful than many other areas across the UK. But we can and must go further, so tonight alongside all these budget proposals I am announcing that in order to help accelerate that bounce back, to help encourage residents and visitors back into our town, to visit, to stay local, to shop local, to eat local, from the 28th March until the end of 2022 we plan to reduce the cost of parking for the second hour in our multi storey car parks down, to £1.00. This is what residents and businesses have told us is the help they would like we have listened.

Throughout 2021/22 we delivered Covid grants and support for businesses, in Worthing 8502 applications processed and over £39.6 million distributed. Our Good Work programme is supporting people into employment and skills development - addressing health and wellbeing at the same time so that they can sustain employment. The Youth Hub has opened, focussing on helping young people to secure employment opportunities.

In November the Worthing Local Plan was subject to examination, in there it identified the creation of new sustainable homes that our residents need, on brownfield sites such as Teville Gate and Union Place, while large open spaces, such as Brooklands Park, Goring Gap and Chatsmore Farm, will be preserved and enhanced for generations to come.

Going into 2022/23 we will continue to invest in our town, to support residents, businesses and create jobs, and much needed homes.

We will invest £480,000 on economic development and tourism. Investing this year nearly £300,000 to secure a long term plan for the Lido and investment in the pier and southern pavilion.

We have made a multi million pound intervention at Teville Gate to deliver a scheme fit for Worthing, its residents, visitors and businesses. Driven by a need to provide affordable homes, with nomination rights for Worthing residents on the council housing register.

At Union Place we have identified a key delivery partner to create 186 new homes, securing affordable housing which will also be offered to people on Worthing's housing register. The car park will be replaced with more than 250 spaces, commercial units and a potential cinema extension for the Connaught Theatre, much welcomed by the Worthing Theatres and Museum trust.

Our plans for an extended creative and digital hub at Colonnade House have been approved.

Worthing is changing, changing fast and changing for the better under this Conservative administration, a view that is reflected in a plethora of surveys and media articles over the last 12 months.

As Conservatives *we are delivering* - at Decoy Farm - A £4.8 million pound decontamination has been completed and we will now directly build out the site directly and bring forward high

quality employment space, as part of this approach we are actively exploring the concept of a 'net zero business park'.

We are delivering - Montague Place - Work to transform this area into a more attractive place for shoppers and tourists has begun. The current road surface will be raised and decorated so that the whole of Montague Place is level, extra lighting will be provided and new planters will be installed, as well as parklets - seating surrounded by plants and shrubs. This is the start of a much wider scheme, that everyone will be able to contribute their views on.

We are delivering - The groundbreaking £34 million Worthing Integrated Care Centre as part of a new Civic Quarter has started. Opening in Summer 2023 it will bring a variety of much needed health services together under one roof in a state-of-the-art facility.

We are delivering - The new public realm for Portland Road is progressing - the scheme includes free public Wi-Fi, better lighting, comfortable seating areas and landscape planting.

We are delivering - The Boklok scheme at Fulbeck Avenue will deliver 150 high quality modular homes has started. In phase 1, 91% of purchasers were first time buyers, 91% local to the area and 75% were able to access the government 'Help to Buy' scheme.

We are delivering - our pioneering investment in gigabit ultrafast infrastructure is progressing well, now reaching 32,000 homes, and is making the area one of the most digitally connected places in the south east.

We are delivering - Our increased investment in housing providing a total budget of nearly £2.5 million pounds - local new homes in Worthing and increased investment to tackle homelessness.

We are delivering - Our Digital and Environment Budget has been significantly increased to £ 3,754,000 pounds. It will see increases in investment in refuse and recycling - responding to opportunities provided by the Environment Act and other pressures.

We are delivering - A 10% increase in the street cleaning including graffiti removal budget to £796,000.

We are delivering - a budget that includes investment and support in leisure provision of £1,334,500, across our leisure centre and an improved offer in all our local parks throughout the town, so important as we all learn to live, work and play locally. Alongside this will be a £400,000 investment in public conveniences.

Our investment in the Environment continues. Our carbon reduction team is driving a programme of works to decarbonise our buildings and fleet as a critical part of meeting our carbon neutral 2030 target. This Council was recently awarded a £5m grant from central government (BEIS) for the delivery of the Worthing Heat Network, a UK leading district heat network scheme to connect 23 buildings including the NHS, Councils and the police in Worthing centre using a sewer source heat pump.

We've completed significant community engagement work, building on the success of the Climate Assembly. The community section of the SustainableAW shared climate and nature plan was completed following engagement with over 200 organisations and our budget proposals will support this work.

We are continuing to work with the Greater Brighton Economic Board supporting Hydrogen Sussex and Shoreham Harbour to establish this part of Sussex as a future provider of low carbon hydrogen fuel.

Let us not forget only recently the Clean Cities Index - it found Worthing is the second cleanest town in the country, according to its in-depth environmental study. Worthing also ranked highly on climate in the study. According to the data, the town has the highest volume of installed renewable electricity capacity per 10,000 households of any of England's primary urban areas, and the second lowest CO2 emissions per capita.

I cannot fail to mention our work to create a local marine and estuarine reserve called Sussex Bay, restoring kelp habitats and improving local fishing stock, goes from strength to strength, supported by another Defra grant fund. Our project is the only marine project funded by the scheme in the UK.

This budget enables us to go further and kickstart Worthing in what is fast becoming a post pandemic world.

This budget enables Worthing to grow, it gives capacity and enables this council to support those in our community who are at most at risk of economic, health or financial exclusion, whilst at the same time supporting business, nurturing the creation of jobs and life opportunities.

Worthing is changing, and it is changing under this Conservative administration, by us showing strong leadership of place, creating the right environment for people and commerce to flourish, whilst being there to make those important interventions at the right time. We will continue to promote Worthing to central government under the Levelling Up agenda and explore how we can maximise our opportunities from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

None of this however can be achieved without strong financial governance and planning. By using local residents council tax money wisely. But there are many uncertainties still ahead.

So looking at our budget, our planned spending and our reserves and given the relatively low level of reserves, with no guarantee of future government support for loss of income, now or in the future; it is now critical that these reserves be used only as a funding resource of last resort until such time as the reserve level has recovered.. The Council has over the past year minimised new calls on such resources, utilising the ability to use capital receipts to fund initiatives to generate budget savings where possible and we will follow that practice to protect and improve local services.

Colleagues, we have a great deal to be proud of and much more that we plan to do and I commend this budget to this chamber.

This page is intentionally left blank



Worthing Labour Group – Budget Speech 22/23

Our Labour Group budget presentation this year is, in effect, a game of two halves.

As outlined, we have put forward a number of amendments to the current administration's proposed budget for 2022/23 and in the debate which will follow, the Labour team will provide more details about what these amendments will deliver for the residents of Worthing.

However, it is important that these amendments are seen in the much broader context of a significant change in direction for our town. We are confident that the elections this May **will** deliver an historic Labour-led Council in Worthing. That's just a few months away, so this budget speech will also set out the strategic change that will come with that political change. And looking forward, as we should do, that will be reflected in **our** 2022/23 budget.

Over the last five years in opposition, we have been engaging with and listening to our local communities. Our group of 17 Councillors, working alongside a team of passionate and engaged Labour activists, have come to a clear understanding on the key changes we need to make to ensure this Council can serve our residents and communities better.

First and foremost, we need a new Social Contract between our communities and the Council. There is an enormous enthusiasm and capacity across our communities, to get involved with the Council and the services it provides. This was seen at its best during the Pandemic. But all too often, residents have told us just how hard this is in practice. They can't put a bench in their local park, run a campaign to encourage children to walk to their local school, or green their local high street. It's just so much hard work and, not surprisingly, their enthusiasm wanes in the face of convoluted processes and timelines that stretch into the distant future.

A Labour-led Council will transfer responsibility for community specific decisions to the communities that live every day with the results of these decisions. We will review our Council budget to identify the funding that communities can spend directly in their neighbourhoods so that their decisions can become a reality ... and at a pace that matches the need.

As Leader of the Council, I don't think that it should be my prerogative to sign off on a bench that I will rarely sit on, or a community event that I may not be able to get to. Those are decisions for the community itself. Ward Councillors are likely to play a key role in working with neighbourhood communities, making this a Council-wide initiative, whatever the political persuasion of the Councillors. Our Council will work with and for all our communities.

We do not underestimate the enormity of this change in the way our Council works and we are currently drawing on the best guidance we can get on community participatory decision



making. We are committed to moving forward with this new model and rebuilding the relationship between our Communities and our Council.

There are parts of our town that are local to us all, most notably the town centre and our seafront. These are areas where some of our best assets are located, including the Pier, the Lido building and the Dome. But this area also epitomises what can only be described as the managed decline of our beautiful coastal town. Where there should be green, community-friendly spaces, we find too often concrete and dirty walls.

The demise of the high street is not a phenomenon unique to Worthing, but we have found many fantastic examples of Councils up and down the country that have faced up to the challenge and embraced the opportunity to build back fair, green and local!

Our amendments ask for funding for a listening campaign and a big clean up. We are determined that the listening relationship that we have built with our constituents should continue and become a key feature of our Council culture. In the big clean up, we will bring together Councillors, Officers, local businesses and community volunteers to breathe new life into our town centre, the beating heart of our Borough. We want to celebrate all that the town can be, and work with our residents to deliver this.

We are ready to write a new narrative for our Town Centre and Sea Front. Regenerating our town should be holistic, developed in partnership with our local residents, rather than the piecemeal approach we have seen for so many years. Our urban design budget amendment will allow us to create a cohesive visual plan, jointly with our communities.

Teville Gate, Union Place, Montague Square and the seafront all need to reflect the beauty, creativity and heritage of Worthing, as well as providing the housing and amenities that our town requires. This does not have to be an either/or choice. Great architecture, green spaces and practical solutions can work seamlessly together – we just need new ideas and a willingness to do things differently.

Our built and natural environment can and should go hand in hand. Sitting on the top of the Worthing wheel last summer, I was struck by the stunning blue of the sea to the south and the green of the Downs to the north, and the contrast of the mostly grey area that runs between them. Worthing residents spend most of their time living and working in our built-up areas and, as the Council, it is our responsibility - and our privilege - to lead the charge in repainting the grey with the blues and greens that surround us.

In our Labour Team, we have created a new Councillor post solely responsible for responding to the Climate Emergency. Cllr Silman will work across all directorates to make sure that we are greening our town in a sustainable, responsible manner at the quickest pace we are able to. We will restructure Council strategy to ensure that the climate emergency response is a golden thread that runs through everything we do and spend, in partnership with ensuring the health and wellbeing of our communities. Greening our town



is going to look stunning, will be great for the planet and has countless benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing.

Currently health and wellbeing is unevenly spread across our town, with an average **eight year difference** in life expectancy between those living in our most and least affluent wards. We are all aware of the cost of living crisis, with increasing numbers of people having to make the unacceptable “heat or eat” choice.

Worthing residents are particularly vulnerable as our average house prices are 12 times higher than average wages, one of the biggest gaps in the South East and a gap which is increasing – those keyworkers that we clapped on our doorsteps during lockdown are struggling to feed their children. This has been highlighted again this evening with the issues raised by the Worthing Food Partnership – our inequality gap is growing at an alarming and unacceptable rate.

The reasons for these social and economic injustices are not going to be solved overnight by one Borough Council, but we owe it to all our residents to use whatever levers we have at our disposal to reduce these atrocious inequalities. As a Labour Council, we will declare a Poverty Emergency for Worthing and put together a plan to begin to combat some of the issues that people face.

Our budget amendments make clear that a £5 minimum Council Tax charge remains as unacceptable now as it was when we first came into the Chamber and asked the Conservative administration to scrap it. We have allocated an additional £100,000 to the hardship funding already proposed, to make sure that as many people as possible do not have to pay this potentially crippling charge. In addition to the £150 Council Tax Support fund, this total hardship fund of £200,000 will give the Council a good financial base to do this.

However, a Labour administration will not be complacent about how many people may need this fund in 2022/23 and if the fund becomes seriously depleted and the need remains high, we will replenish the fund from our reserves. Reserves are of course there to be used sparingly and generally only in emergency situations. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable people in Worthing have been on an emergency footing for far too long.

This emergency is one particularly stark reminder of the crisis we face in housing across Worthing. Far too many of our residents don't earn enough to buy or rent a home that meets their needs. This Council transferred its Council Housing stock to Worthing Homes, and now, more than two decades later, it is difficult to identify the value for tax payers' money that this Housing Association delivers.

It is time to make good on that £10 million account for our local residents.



A Labour Council will hold Worthing Homes to account for the deliverables in social housing that we expect to see from this public money. And if we do not see results, we will reconsider this partnership. Alongside which, we will also prioritise the identification of the best way to directly deliver Council Housing in Worthing.

We have spoken to many Councils across the Country who are delivering sustainable, beautiful Council housing which compliments and works with the natural environment. There is no reason at all why Worthing cannot learn from these models and adapt them to work for the benefit of our residents in our Green, Coastal Town. We just need new ideas and a willingness to do things differently.

A willingness to do things differently extends into Worthing's businesses and cultural offer. Our local businesses are an essential part of our local economy, providing opportunities for young people training in our Further Education establishments, and delivering valued services, hospitality, retail and leisure opportunities to our town. A Labour-led Council will listen to businesses large and small, to understand how we can best support them to grow, thrive and develop.

We have a vibrant cultural scene that is made up of many different organisations. As a Council we will do all we can to encourage this cultural offer. We will review the current contract with WTAM to ensure that the Council Tax we hand over to this organisation is giving the best value for our residents. And we will work to support the myriad of other individuals, groups and businesses involved in providing a wealth of cultural activities across the town, including increasing events in our public spaces, that bring so much richness and wellbeing to our local communities.

The wellbeing of our local communities would not be possible without a clean environment. Our waste disposal service is the area that is most often identified by residents as "what the Council does," and we need an ongoing conversation with them about how we do this job. What is clear is that Worthing is well down the league table of the percentage of waste we recycle. Too much of what goes to landfill should be recycled and a Labour Council will tackle this with a vigorous education and information campaign.

Alongside this, we also need to tackle the issue of food waste. In 2022/23, we will prioritise a plan to trial and implement weekly food waste collections at the earliest date that we are able to. This will require partnership working with the County Council, resource identification and planning to ensure that our valued waste disposal workforce are fully supported to be able to deliver this service.

Partnership working with the County Council will also help us to address the issue of being able to travel safely and well in Worthing. For too many of us, walking and cycling are unsafe, either because the pavements are in poor condition (particularly for people with a disability) or the roads are too busy and traffic congested for cycling. Worthing is a largely flat town (Salvington Hill excepted!), with a generally temperate climate – perfect



conditions for short walking and cycling journeys (and longer if you are feeling very energetic!). A Labour Council will work with the County, local residents and other key partners to turn Worthing into a walking and cycling town. We will also review our currently inadequate public transport networks, planning to provide an affordable, regular bus service around our town.

A Labour Council will marry our environment and climate emergency work by creating Nature Corridors between the Downs and the Sea. There are many unloved greenish, brownish patches in Worthing that could become well loved community green spaces. The wilding project of verges is a great example of how the Borough could work much more closely with the County to naturalise parts of our highways and byways.

So many residents have contacted us to express their dismay that trees have been removed in their streets, never to be replaced. We will implement a 4-year tree planting programme across the town. We will identify locations where there is no tree planting currently and where trees have been removed and not replaced.

The greenness of our streets will be matched with the clean blueness of our waters. For too long, Southern Water has polluted our sea with little consequence for the company or its profits. We will ensure effective scrutiny of Southern Water and will apply to measure and achieve Bathing Water status at two key seafront locations – Beach House and Sea Lane. We will work hard to make sure that our coast is a clean and healthy habitat.

This budget speech has given a broad overview of the strategic direction of a Labour-led Worthing Council and how we will shape the budget to deliver this fresh thinking and positive approach. Our budget amendments today are modest by comparison, but they give an indication of our optimism for this amazing town. We are passionate about the place that we live and the people who we live alongside. It is possible to take where we are today and breathe new life and ideas into our green seaside town. Worthing – Change is Coming.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix C

4. That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the West Sussex County Council and The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:-

All of the Council's Area 2022/23	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Worthing Borough Council	168.24	196.28	224.32	252.36	308.44	364.52	420.60	504.72
West Sussex County Council Total as split below:	1,037.16	1,210.02	1,382.88	1,555.74	1,901.46	2,247.18	2,592.90	3,111.48
West Sussex Council – Core	913.96	1,066.29	1,218.61	1,370.94	1,675.59	1,980.25	2,284.90	2,741.88
West Sussex County Council – Adults Social Care element	123.20	143.73	164.27	184.80	225.87	266.93	308.00	369.60
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex	149.94	174.93	199.92	224.91	274.89	324.87	374.85	449.82

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in table shown above, as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
All of the Council's Area	1,355.34	1,581.23	1,807.12	2,033.01	2,484.79	2,936.57	3,388.35	4,066.02

This page is intentionally left blank