

Minutes of a meeting of the  
Worthing Council  
17 December 2024  
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Ibsha Choudhury (Chair)

Councillor Helen Abrahams	Councillor Dr Heather Mercer
Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Nigel Morgan
*Councillor Mike Barrett	Councillor Richard Nowak
*Councillor Caroline Baxter	Councillor Dale Overton
Councillor Ödül Bozkurt	Councillor Jon Roser
Councillor Henna Chowdhury	Councillor Hilary Schan
Councillor Sophie Cox	Councillor Lysanne Skinner
Councillor Ian Davey	Councillor Dawn Smith
Councillor Tom Ellum	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Dom Ford	Councillor Samuel Theodoridi
Councillor Rita Garner	Councillor John Turley
Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Josh Harris	Councillor Vicki Wells
Councillor Dan Hermitage	Councillor Andy Whight
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor Rosey Whorlow
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Luke Houghton
Councillor Claire Hunt	Councillor Thomas Taylor
Councillor Charles James	
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	

\*=absent

**C/42/24-25                      Apologies for absence**

The Mayor received apologies for absence from Councillors Barrett and Baxter.

**C/43/24-25                      Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Glynn-Davies declared an interest in Item 10 as she had family members in the licensing trade.

**C/44/24-25                      Confirmation of Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2024 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

**C/45/24-25                      Questions from the public**

1. *Question submitted by Asghar Ali, a Worthing Resident, to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration*

*Worthing is the most ethnically diverse Borough Council in the county, with a substantial number of Muslims. This ethnic minority group is particularly concerned about Halal food provision because of its cultural and religious sensitivity. There is no Halal food provision on the Worthing, Goring, Lancing, and Shoreham beaches. The provision of halal food on beaches will help communities unite. We understand that Worthing Borough Council has Commitments to Inclusion and Cohesion for all and encourages communities to collaborate and integrate to celebrate diversity, foster belonging, and promote shared responsibility in shaping a collective future.*

*On behalf of the Muslim community, may I request Worthing Borough Council make necessary arrangements to provide Halal food on the beaches?*

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration thanked Mr Ali for the question and completely agreed that seeing and experiencing foods from different cultures was a way of bringing us together, a way of uniting different communities.

The food offering on the seafront across Worthing, and Adur, was decided through an open application process and the Council welcomed and encouraged applications from all sections of the community who wished to trade on the seafront and parks.

The Council had a winter and summer programme - the next application window would open for the summer programme in the new year and it would be great if halal providers wanted to come forward. The Leader was happy to talk to Mr Ali about how the Council could encourage Halal food providers to be part of that application process.

2. *Question submitted by Rod Thick, a Worthing Resident, to the Leader*

*As a local resident and chair of the Transition Town Worthing transport group, I attended the recent workshop looking at the possibility of reducing speed limits in some of the residential streets in Goring. The workshop which was organised by the Borough Council in conjunction with Aberystwyth University was well attended and well run. The workshop considered how 'slower speeds can create safer streets, encourage more walking and cycling, improve air quality and enhance the overall sense of wellbeing for everyone'.*

*The vast majority of those who attended were in favour of proceeding with a pilot project in the area around West Park, Goring primary and Oscar Romero schools.*

*Could the Leader of the Council please say what will happen next and when we might see the start of the pilot project.*

The Leader thanked Mr Thick for attending the 20mph workshop held last month, which the Leader also attended.

The Leader advised that she had responsibility for Active Travel in her portfolio, and would be meeting with officers and the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Cllr Vicki Wells, early next year to review all the feedback and analysis from the workshop and review next steps.

There were a number of comments and ideas that were put forward in the workshop which needed further thought so the Council needed time to listen to what was discussed and raised at the workshop.

3. *Question submitted by Derek Prentis, a Worthing Resident, to the Leader*

*As a member of Worthing Climate Action group, we welcome the fact that the council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is taking steps to reduce carbon emissions locally. But extreme weather events are becoming more frequent & severe. It is predicted that Coastal areas of Sussex are at risk of being underwater by the end of the decade. The yearly COP climate meetings are also failing to make any progress on a global energy transition away from fossil fuels.*

*In Worthing this year our Group joined with local Global Justice members to get support from members of the public in the town & at other local events and churches for a global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty calling for a planned transition away from fossil fuels, working in cooperation with other likeminded countries. We now have 550 signatures on the petition, with a further 130 on a similar online petition to Worthing council.*

*We are now asking if Worthing council will promote the concept of this Treaty to combat the threat of increasing emergencies created by climate change & emissions from burning Fossil Fuels.*

*Will Worthing Council endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non proliferation Treaty, as many UK towns & cities and our neighbouring Councils have already done?*

The Leader thanked Mr Prentis for his question, advising that she would be listening to the debate later this evening where the Council would decide whether or not to support the Motion.

4. *The question below had been submitted in advance of the meeting by Russ Cochran, a Worthing resident, to the Leader. Mr Cochran wasn't present at the meeting and the Mayor advised that a written response to the question would be provided.*

*Is this Administration still championing that they are a council for the community?*

*The Leader provided the following written response to the question.*

The Council was absolutely still championing being a council for the Community - and had been - the Council knew how important it was to support local people, groups and organisations - and to work with them to put the community at the heart of everything we do. Sometimes this means working with our communities and other times it's taking decisions on behalf of our communities.

In the ward of Northbrook, in the last 6 months, this Council for the Community had:

1. Advocated for residents on the West Durrington estate to extract from developers a delivery plan for a community park which will be completed next summer;
2. Got the same developers to commit to the construction of a new community centre and run a community engagement exercise to hear what residents want to happen in the building;
3. Opened a new playground in the north sector;
4. Granted planning permission for a new construction trades centre at Northbrook College;
5. Worked with the College and contractors to ensure the College was a good neighbour during the construction process;
6. Installed new goalposts on Northbrook rec;
7. Commissioned a new artificial cricket pitch on Northbrook rec;
8. Provide CIL funding for Northbrook Barn;
9. Provided CIL funding for Humber Avenue allotments;
10. Provided CIL funding for a Kids cooks project at Hawthorn School;
11. Provide CIL funding for a Time to Care therapeutic project at Hawthorns School;
12. Lobbied Tesco to change their parking rules for taxis, and people using the Tesco franchises.

The Council was also investing in local ideas and projects that tackled issues such as the cost of living and cohesion. It was commissioning a delivery partner that would support projects tackling the cost of living, grow and extend their impact so more people could benefit, and would launch a community fund to enable people to develop solutions to practical needs in the spring.

There were ways the Council could improve how best it develops its aims to be a council for the community and the Council would listen as it moved forward in that ambition.

5. *The question below had been submitted in advance of the meeting by Jean Fraser, a Worthing resident, to the Leader. Ms Fraser wasn't present at the meeting and the Mayor advised that a written response to the question would be provided.*

*Will the council restore the festive spirit of Worthing to previous years, in the 2025 budget. As Worthing is lacking in seasonal cheer this year without a real Christmas tree in Chapel road and South street. If the Christmas trees cannot be included in next year's budget, will the council allow for fundraised Christmas trees in these locations.*

*This year the Council's CEO refused permission for a fundraised Christmas Tree near the town hall as she said "It was not only the cost of things like electricity but also the staff time and support needed to help make this happen."*

*Will the council make a concerted effort to restore these festive elements, which have long been an integral part of the town's Christmas celebrations.*

The Leader thanked Ms Fraser for her question - although the Leader did dispute the fact that there was no seasonal cheer in the town. There was a large Christmas Tree in the Town Centre along with the lights and series of Christmas Trees organised by the Worthing BID.

In terms of a tree outside the Town Hall, I think it's important that where we're using Council funds to pay for a Christmas Tree that we focus on a focal centre tree in Montague Place to ensure most of the visitors to the town can enjoy it and support our town centre businesses.

Chapel Road outside the Town Hall was a quieter end of town and the Council wanted to best use taxpayers money. However the Council was looking at a sustainable option of planting some new trees outside the town hall that could be enjoyed all year around and be decorated in future years. The Council would welcome crowdfunding campaigns for both these and the town centre tree to maximise what it was able to spend.

**C/46/24-25                      Announcements by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

The Mayor informed Council that he had attended a number of events since the October Council Meeting, including:-

Remembrance Sunday;

1. A meeting hosted by the High Sheriff in Worthing to meet with community groups;
2. I have attended some wonderful Carol services at local Schools, the Salvation Army Carol Service and the St Barnabas 'light up a life' service;
3. Earlier today I attended a memorial event commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Lancaster that crashed on Worthing Beach on 17 The December 1944.

Leader:-

1. Thanked the Council's engineers and maintenance teams as well as the contractors who had worked in extremely challenging circumstances on the pier to enable its reopening on the 4th December;
2. Highlighted that ongoing investigative and planning work was taking place in relation to structures on Worthing Seafront, the outcomes of which would be shared once this activity was complete;
3. That a White Paper regarding devolution proposals had been published on the 16th December 2024;
4. Informed Council that Cllr Andy Whight was stepping down from the Planning Committee with immediate effect and was to be replaced by Cllr Dale Overton. The Leader thanked Cllr Whight for all of his work as Chair of the Planning Committee. In addition, Cllr Rosey Whorlow would replace Cllr Dom Ford on the Labour membership of the committee.

### **Decisions,**

1. The Leader proposed that Cllr Helen Abrahams be appointed as the Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Andy Whight seconded the proposal and following a vote, the motion was unanimously supported.
2. The Leader proposed that Cllr Samuel Theodoridi be appointed the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Andy Whight seconded the proposal and following a vote, the motion was unanimously supported.
3. Advised Council that Cllr Dom Ford and Cllr Tom Ellum would fill the Labour vacancies on the Joint Audit & Governance Committee membership.
4. Advised Council that Cllr Caroline Baxter would fill the Labour vacancies on the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Worthing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, updated the Council regarding the submission of a request to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for exceptional financial support. Worthing Borough Council was not the only Council in this position, as 1 in 4 Councils had told the LGA that they expected to be asking for help from the government in the next 2 years.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment made the following announcements:-

1. That refurbishment work on the Rotunda by Windsor Lawns was due to begin in the new year, transforming the venue into a new facility where local fishers could compare and sell their fresh fish.
2. The annual classifications for Worthing's 3 designated bathing waters were published by DEFRA at the end of November. The classifications were disappointing, with the newly designated beach at Beach House being designated as poor, whilst Heene and the new site at Goring Gap were both classified as satisfactory. Investigations would determine the source of bacteria and pollution to ultimately improve the classifications moving forward.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration made the following announcements:-

1. Montague Gardens - the Council had spoken to local businesses to ensure that they were aware that works would be starting in the spring and that a number of contractors who the Council expected would express an interest in the tender for work;
2. Worthing Integrated Care Centre and Car Park - the project had reached practical completion and the car park was now open. It was anticipated that Health Services would be moving in in a matter of weeks;
3. Union Place - a report would be considered by the Joint Strategic Committee in early 2025 following detailed negotiations with Roffey Homes and the Council expected works to commence onsite shortly afterwards.
4. Teville Gate - HEMICO were using half of the site in the interim as their base for the major works that were ongoing and progressing well. Homes England have completed the initial ground investigations and appointed technical consultants who will lead on the design and engagement work. Members were assured that although there was no visible activity onsite, important preparation work was continuing;
5. Heat Network - HEMICO were making good progress to connect more buildings
6. with the network reducing emissions for each connected Council building by 75% which is expected to be 300 tonnes of carbon in phase 1, increasing to 3000 tonnes once all other buildings were connected. HEMICO was actively engaging with commercial buildings and developers to deliver low carbon heat to more and more buildings, helping the Council to deliver on its 2045 area wide net zero target. The Heat Network Concession Model was also a UK first;
7. Bereavement Services - the Council's new memorial garden was under construction and the Worthing Highcrem pilot (also a world first) with a technical report expected this month. A bid had been submitted to PSDS round 4 for low carbon cremators but with the total project value in excess of £2.5m, the Council will need to do a full assessment once we know if we are successful. A major review of bereavement services has been undertaken and a detailed plan and business case will follow in the new year.

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

The Mayor used his discretion to allow the Opposition Group Leader to make the following announcements:-

1. Notified the Council that Councillor Luke Houghton would replace Councillor Richard Nowak on the Licensing & Control Committee.

**C/47/24-25                    Items raised under urgency provisions**

There were no urgent items raised under the urgency provisions.

**C/48/24-25                    Recommendations from the Cabinet and Committees to Council**

Council had, before it, a recommendation from the Joint Audit & Governance Committee, Joint Strategic Committee, the Licensing and Control Committee and the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Extracts of these minutes had been circulated as item 9A.

## **Item 7A                      Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 26 September 2024**

### **Amendments to the Constitution**

The Chair of the Joint Governance Committee, Councillor Dan Hermitage, proposed the recommendations from the meeting held on 26 September 2024. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Sophie Cox and unanimously supported by the Council:

**Resolved:** That Worthing Borough Council approved the amendment to the Constitutions proposed by the Monitoring Officer at Paragraph 5.

## **Item 7B                      Joint Strategic Committee - 12 November 2024**

### **Proposal to continue the Council Tax Support Scheme for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2025/26**

The Leader proposed the recommendations from the meeting held on 12 November 2024 which were seconded by Councillor Vicki Wells and supported by the Council following a vote:

**Resolved:** That Worthing Borough Council approved that the Council Tax Support scheme in respect of working age customers for 2025/26 should:

- A. Be based upon the current Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25 with no restrictions; and
- B. Not be further altered with any other changes beyond necessary technical amendments required to keep the scheme consistent with the national rules in respect of Housing Benefit.

## **Item 7C                      Licensing & Control Committee - 25 November 2024**

### **Gambling Act 2005 - Review of Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy**

The Chair of the Licensing & Control Committee, Councillor Cathy Glynn-Davies, proposed the recommendations from the meeting held on 25 November 2024. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Lysanne Skinner and unanimously supported by the Council:

**Resolved:** That Worthing Borough Council approved the adoption of the updated policy to come into force on 31 January 2025.

## **Item 7D                      Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 3 December 2024**

### **Review of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2024/25**

The Chair of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Heather Mercer, proposed the recommendations from the meeting held on 3 December 2024. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Samuel Theodoridi and unanimously supported by the Council:



**Resolved:** That Worthing Borough Council noted the changes made to the JOSOC Work Programme since it was agreed by both Councils in July 2024.

## **Item 7E                      Joint Strategic Committee - 10 December 2024**

### **Joint Mid Year Treasury Management Review 2024/25**

The Leader proposed the recommendations from the meeting held on 10 December 2024 which were seconded by Councillor John Turley and supported by the Council following a vote:

**Resolved:** That Worthing Borough Council noted the content of the report.

### **C/49/24-25                      Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by the Cabinet**

The Leader of the Council presented their report on decisions taken by the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council, which were detailed in Item 8.

Questions were received in relation to the Asset Management Plan, the Procurement Strategy, Brookland Avenue Car Park and Ownership of the Pier.

### **C/50/24-25                      Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12**

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 14 questions from Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12. He advised that one supplementary question could be asked which must arise out of the original question, or, the reply.

Questions would be asked in rotation of the Groups represented in the Chamber and there were 30 minutes allowed for questions with 7 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 Davey, Hunt, James, Jenkins, Schan, Smith and Walker.

#### **First rotation:**

#### **Question 1 from Councillor Kevin Jenkins to the Leader**

*In opening can I first express my thanks to the Council staff and contractors who worked tirelessly to get our award winning pier open again. Now that it is open, can the leader please supply an update on the direct and indirect costs incurred to date?*

The Leader thanked Councillor Jenkins for his question and echoed his thanks to the staff and contractors who worked around the clock in difficult weather conditions to get the Pier back open again.

The direct costs of the works carried out including the design, installation and sign off of the stabilising trusses to date was £314,280.80. There may be some final costs yet to be presented by suppliers and therefore this and the below figures remain subject to some change.

Indirect costs incurred are currently identified as follows:

- Additional Security Patrols £792.00
- Additional Entry Denial Measures: £1,388.77
- Lost Rental Income of £13,041.10
- Unrecovered Energy Bills (Closure Period) £5,150.00 *Estimated: Pending Bills*

Unfortunately the council also incurred costs in repairing damage caused by vandalism to the glazed central panels during the closure. Rectifying this damage was estimated to have cost the council £2,500.

## **Question 2 from Councillor Hilary Schan to the Chair of the Licensing**

*On 1st April this year pavement licenses for tables and chairs outside local businesses became a permanent function of district and borough councils following temporary measures introduced during the pandemic. Accordingly all local licenses were set to expire on 30th September 2024.*

*The scheduled June meeting of the licensing committee was cancelled due to 'no business' and meanwhile no consultation took place with local business owners between April and September. Why?*

The Chair of the Licensing Committee, Cllr Cathy Glynn-Davies thanked Cllr Schan for her question regarding Central Government proposals for charges for the licensing of tables and chairs on pavements.

Following the transfer to responsibility from the county council to the borough council, officers had worked up proposals to be considered by the Licensing Committee on 23 September. This included engagement through the Sussex Licensing Liaison group, which consisted of senior licensing officers from across the county, and other stakeholders including police and fire services. This group reviewed new legislation and worked to share best practice and ensure a level playing field and achieve consistency in approach where appropriate.

Officers had held informal conversations with many business stakeholders, advising them of the forthcoming changes, and responded to questions regarding the scheme. You'll be aware that these changes had been pending, and that charges were waived during the pandemic. Licensing officers had a good working relationship with those premises with a licence to sell alcohol, but many other premises such as snack bars, coffee shops and ice-cream parlours may now require a licence to trade from our pavements.

The Chair of the Licensing Committee was grateful for constructive suggestions tabled at the Committee's meeting in September. It was great to see our businesses and their representatives questioning the process and influencing the Council's practice.

Having listened to representations from the business community, the Licensing Committee concluded that more detailed engagement with businesses and the public was appropriate.

Cllr Glynn-Davies was pleased to say officers had now delivered a more detailed engagement process which gave all businesses and the public the opportunity to feed back to the Council on a range of specific proposals.

Between 16 October and 12 November 2024 members of the public and local business were engaged via an online survey. Businesses were contacted by email referring them to the survey. This included 84 current and previous pavement licence holders, Worthing BID, Adur & Worthing Chamber of Commerce, Worthing Pubwatch and other local businesses.

A total of 6 responses were received in Adur and 20 responses in Worthing. These had been collated and would be presented to the licensing committees in January.

### **Question 3 from Councillor Ian Davey to the Leader**

*Brighton & Hove has a population of under 300,000. In 2019 before the pandemic there were 50m bus passenger journeys. That was 177 journeys per person per year. The highest in the country outside of London. In West Sussex with a population of just under 900,000 there were 27m bus passenger journeys in 2019. A mere 30 journeys per person per year. Not the worst authority in the country but not very good.*

*Bus usage in Brighton & Hove has just about recovered to pre pandemic levels whereas here in West Sussex it still has a long way to go.*

*Bus operators have told us that they fear that the Labour government's 50% increase in the bus fare cap from £2 to £3 per trip will have a serious detrimental impact on bus usage and services in the area.*

*Our MP Beccy Cooper says the "solution lies in granting more local control over transport issues."*

*What local control does the leader of the council anticipate being granted that will help improve bus services in Worthing and the surrounding area?*

The Leader thanked Cllr Davey for his question.

In relation to 'local control' this felt more a question for MPs Beccy Cooper and Tom Rutland or West Sussex County Council than the Leader of Worthing Borough Council, but what I can say is the Council had been facilitating a Bus Partnership for the last 12 -

18 months with local bus operators, West Sussex County Council and the Council coming together to look to solve local issues.

It had been great to have WSCC in the room as they were leading on a series of improvements across Worthing, with the Council's guidance, as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Things like improved signalling and real-time bus signs at bus stops had come into place in the last 12 months through that partnership - and we were now looking at accessibility and future roll outs of the real-time signs. There was more to be done and the Leader was pleased to say that some of the operators were now back to pre-pandemic levels in Worthing, which was great news.

Finally, again as a result of the partnership, the Council had been having open and frank conversations with Stagecoach in relation to the new service at West Durrington which would be delivered in the new year.

#### **Question 4 from Councillor Dawn Smith to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Citizen Services**

*The draft housing and homelessness strategy 2025-30 strategy refers to providing affordable homes for our citizens in Mission 2 of the document. What, if any expectations will be placed upon our current social housing providers to provide any future housing to increase their capacities? As a council we are committed to expanding our number of homes for our citizens, so I would like to know what role our existing or any new potential providers of social housing will have in this strategy too.*

The Cabinet Member thanked Cllr Smith for the question.

In respect of this mission there were a number of areas to explore as more and more responses to the consultation were received. As part of the Local Plan process the Council needed to ensure it was pushing for maximum on site provision, alongside this the Council needed to ensure it was having meaningful, constructive conversations with the huge number of Registered Providers across the borough. This may include how the Council enabled connections between developers and providers led by a real understanding of key partners aspirations and needs.

The Council had included providers in the draft strategy consultation and had been working on joint projects to support schemes which the Council envisaged developing as it moved through the strategy period.

Alongside this, the Council also needed to ensure it was making the best use of the homes already available within the borough and again there were a number of areas to investigate here too. These may include our allocation policies, empty homes work,

security of tenure within the private rented sector, supporting households underoccupying homes or needing adapted homes.

This was a complex mission but one where the Council could have an impact working in collaboration with partners.

## **Second Rotation**

### **Question 5 from Councillor Kevin Jenkins to the Cabinet Member for Resources**

*Can you please give an update on the disposal progress of the council owned land at the old Caravan and Motorhome site in Titnore Way?*

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked Cllr Jenkins for his question and advised that commercial negotiations were progressing and he was confident that he would be able to share a positive conclusion with Council early in the new year.

### **Question 6 from Councillor Carl Walker to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure**

*Adur and Worthing's Healthy AW strategy for Health and wellbeing 2021-2024 has expired. Can the relevant cabinet lead give us an update on the progress with the follow-up strategy?*

The Cabinet Member thanked Cllr Walker for his question, which was timely as it followed submission of the Council's detailed well-being plan for 2025/26 to commissioners.

The current version of the strategy was developed at a particular point in time, as we started to come out of the pandemic, since when the Council had developed Our Plan, which included the mission of Thriving People, with the overall objective that 'People are healthy, resilient and resourceful; they can access the right help when they need it'.

The Well-being, Social Prescribing, Proactive and Homelessness Prevention Teams increasingly worked together to deliver this objective with a focus on targeted preventative and early interventions including people with low-level mental health issues and focusing more on people living in temporary accommodation.

With changes to the external context, including the development of the new NHS plan, and the implementation of Integrated Community Teams, bringing together NHS, Local Authority and voluntary sector partners, it was timely to take stock of our approach, building on the excellent work of our teams to date.

A full update on the progress made through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be prepared in the new year, which would set out the planned approach and its relation with Our Plan, with the intention to continue to develop and deepen the Council's work in this critical area.

### **Question 7 from Councillor Claire Hunt to the Leader**

*This council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, an Ecological emergency in 2023, and in the same year also supported a motion for Sustainable Marine Recovery. Climate and nature were declared to be a 'golden thread' running through all portfolios, but there was also a dedicated Cabinet post for Climate Emergency and one for the Environment. At a scrutiny meeting in March 2024, Cllr Cox, who was the Climate Emergency portfolio lead at that time, convincingly argued for there being a dedicated portfolio. So can the Leader explain the thinking that has led to the current position where there is no dedicated portfolio for the Climate Emergency and in fact no mention of any kind of emergency in the title or the description of the 'super-sized' portfolio that now covers climate, nature and Environmental Services.*

The Leader replied that as Cllr Hunt was aware there had been some changes to the Cabinet. The purpose of the Climate Emergency portfolio had been reviewed in July and whilst this had been a useful way to ensure diligence on projects such as the Worthing Heat Network, it was felt that with the Heat Network moving into the delivery phase, it was best moved into the Regeneration portfolio. Therefore, at this point, and with the number of cross-cutting projects and portfolios that the Climate Emergency and carbon reduction projects cover, we embed it as a golden thread with Cllr Wells taking the responsibility for carbon reduction.

### **Third Rotation**

### **Question 8 from Councillor Charles James to the Leader**

*When the Labour Group took control of the council they were at pains to emphasise their commitment to the youth of the town. Even going so far as banning the wearing of robes in case young people found it off-putting and intimidating.*

*Therefore can the Leader please explain why there is no longer a Youth Mayor and Deputy; nor are there Mayor's Cadets representing our Armed Forces.*

The Leader thanked Cllr James for his question. As a mum of three young children and in my previous role, having worked for charities supporting young people, this was an area that I too share as a passion.

In response to your particular questions, the Youth Mayor was not something that was being organised or run by the Council and was reliant on volunteers outside of the Council, in particular a local charity which had sadly closed.

The Leader had recently met with a number of youth organisations across the town, with all feeling there was more that needed to be done for our young people, and only by working together with the voluntary and community sector organisations, could we make the biggest impacts. The Leader advised that the Cabinet Member for Communities would be looking at this when we look at future CIL funding rounds to be able to support projects for young people.

Council received a motion on notice proposed by Councillor Ian Davey which was seconded by Councillor Claire Hunt.

In accordance with the constitution, the motion was debated and the following amendment was, proposed by Cllr Wells, seconded by Cllr Cox and supported following a vote:-

This Council:

- endorses the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty on behalf of the people of Worthing and commits to make that endorsement public;
- In endorsing the Motion, highlight the actions already taken by this Council in response to the climate emergency declared in 2019 including:-
  - decarbonising civic buildings, Worthing Hospital and the potential for future developments by working in partnership with Hemiko on the Worthing District Heat Network;
  - Commitments in the agreed Worthing Local Plan 2023 under Strategic Policy 2 for Climate Change include various measures for new planning developments including carbon reduction, maximising carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation and adaptation that should take place through sustainable planning policies and initiatives;
  - collaborating with local organisations through our Community Infrastructure Levy fund to promote community-led environmental projects across the town;
  - Is working with Trees for Streets to increase the amount of trees in our neighbourhoods across the borough;
  - Is working with partners on Sussex Energy, a newly launched mission to directly contribute to government priorities to transition to a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030;
  - Is supporting national initiatives such as the creation of GB Energy and UK-wide scaling up of solar panels for homes and businesses.
- Continues to showcase its actions to date and engage with local residents to raise awareness about the importance of cooperation with the principles of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, and how local actions contribute to global goals.

This Council asks the Leader to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requesting that he visit the Worthing Borough to see how much progress that this Council is leading the way on nationally in our decarbonisation strategy.

A motion without notice, under CPR 15.1 (I), was proposed, seconded and supported following a vote.

The substantive motion as amended was then supported following a vote.

**Resolved:**

That this Council:-

- endorses the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty on behalf of the people of Worthing and commits to make that endorsement public;
- In endorsing the Motion, highlight the actions already taken by this Council in response to the climate emergency declared in 2019 including:-
  - decarbonising civic buildings, Worthing Hospital and the potential for future developments by working in partnership with Hemiko on the Worthing District Heat Network;
  - Commitments in the agreed Worthing Local Plan 2023 under Strategic Policy 2 for Climate Change include various measures for new planning developments including carbon reduction, maximising carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation and adaptation that should take place through sustainable planning policies and initiatives;
  - collaborating with local organisations through our Community Infrastructure Levy fund to promote community-led environmental projects across the town;
  - Is working with Trees for Streets to increase the amount of trees in our neighbourhoods across the borough;
  - Is working with partners on Sussex Energy, a newly launched mission to directly contribute to government priorities to transition to a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030;
  - Is supporting national initiatives such as the creation of GB Energy and UK-wide scaling up of solar panels for homes and businesses.
- Continues to showcase its actions to date and engage with local residents to raise awareness about the importance of cooperation with the principles of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, and how local actions contribute to global goals.

That this Council asks the Leader to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requesting that he visit the Worthing Borough to see how much progress that this Council is leading the way on nationally in our decarbonisation strategy.

#### **C/52/24-25                      Motion on Notice (RW)**

Council received a motion on notice proposed by Councillor Rosey Whorlow and seconded by Councillor Lysanne Skinner.

In accordance with the constitution, the motion was considered and debated and following a vote, was supported.

#### **Resolved:**

To demonstrate commitment to inclusion, cohesion, and the resilience of democratic processes, Worthing Borough Council will:

- Sign up to the Local Government Association's (LGA) "Debate Not Hate" campaign, raising public awareness of the role of councillors and staff, encouraging healthy debate, and enhancing responses to abuse and intimidation.
- Work collaboratively with partners, residents, and organisations to challenge the normalisation of abuse in public life and promote positive, inclusive engagement.

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The meeting ended at 9.21 pm



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