

Minutes of a meeting of the
Worthing Council
17 December 2019
at 6.30 pm

Councillor Hazel Thorpe (Chair)
Councillor Lionel Harman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Noel Atkins	Councillor Louise Murphy
Councillor Roy Barraclough	Councillor Richard Nowak
Councillor Ferdousi Henna Chowdhury	Councillor Helen Silman
Councillor Rebecca Cooper	Councillor Jane Sim
Councillor Edward Crouch	Councillor Dawn Smith
Councillor Jim Deen	Councillor Sally Smith
Councillor Karen Harman	Councillor Robert Smytherman
Councillor Paul High	Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Margaret Howard	Councillor Val Turner
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Nicola Waight
Councillor Charles James	Councillor Steve Waight
Councillor Kevin Jenkins	Councillor Carl Walker
Councillor Martin McCabe	Councillor Steve Wills
Councillor Sean McDonald	Councillor Tim Wills
Councillor Dr Heather Mercer	Councillor Mark Withers
Councillor Richard Mulholland	

C/43/19-20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Baker, Mike Barrett, Keith Bickers and Paul Westover.

C/44/19-20 Salvington Ward - Election Result

Council noted the by-election result for the recent Salvington Ward by-election, welcoming Councillor Richard Nowak to the Chamber.

C/45/19-20 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared:-

Councillor Sally Smith declared an interest in item 8A(i) as an employee of Worthing Medical Group.

Councillor Bob Smytherman declared an interest in item 17 as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Paul High declared an interest in item 17 as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Noel Atkins declared an interest in item 17 as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Louise Murphy declared an interest in item 8 as a Non-Executive Director of Worthing Homes.

C/46/19-20 Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Mayor.

C/47/19-20 Questions from the Public

The Mayor announced that there was 1 registered question for the meeting.

Q1 - Susan Belton, a Worthing resident, asked a question in four parts:-

1. Will a Full Business Case be raised and a Public Consultation take place very shortly to include the views of stakeholders and local residents and will computer generated images of the proposed works be presented?

2. Whilst we appreciate the need to strengthen future sea defences can further consideration be given to the viability of replacement wooden groynes. Alternatively could a combination of rock and wooden groynes be Considered?

3. Can more technical detail be provided regarding the viability of replacement wooden groynes and comparative costings.

4. Has due consideration been given to the wider impact on the setting of the seafront sections of the Marine Place and Hinterland Conservation Area and the South Street Conservation Areas as per the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The wooden groynes are an important aesthetic feature contributing to the seaside character and tourist economy of the town.

The Executive Member for Regeneration replied that since the report was submitted to Joint Strategic Committee on 7th November, Officers had been in dialogue with senior colleagues at the Environment Agency (EA) and agreed the EA would lead a local partnership with Worthing Borough Council to address the key Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management challenges in Worthing.

A joint project team would be established of Council and Flood and Coastal Risk Engineers to work collaboratively on the project.

The team would carry out a re-appraisal of the scheme (the Outline Business Case) taking into account future government funding and works required in the short term (over the next 5 years) to continue to protect our coastline and a future longer term scheme to take into account climate change and changes in guidance regarding erosion protection benefits.

The joint project team would focus on community/stakeholder engagement and consultation on the schemes proposed. The consultation was planned for middle/end of 2020. Images would form part of the consultation.

The Outline Business Case (OBC) would provide technical details and comparisons of the capital and maintenance costs and life expectancy of both wooden groynes and rock. Combinations of rock and wooden groynes may form part of the OBC.

Q2 - Mr Baeza, a Worthing resident, asked a question regarding how the Council would be helping the most vulnerable after Brexit, given that Brexit would hit the vulnerable the most and that the number of food parcels required had increased by 23% since last year.

The Leader of the Council replied that there were people in society who needed the Council's help. He pointed out that West Sussex County Council had some large responsibilities but wanted to assure residents that the Worthing Borough Council was aware of its responsibilities and would push for more support from central government.

Mr Baeza asked a supplementary question regarding what alternative support or contingency plans could be activated to help.

The Leader of the Council replied that there were a number of things on the agenda to tackle the drivers whilst acknowledging that the deficit reduction programme had reduced the Council's budgets. The Council was committed to helping people where it could within its powers and to the delivery of joined up services with other partners.

Q3 - Pauline Fraser, a Worthing resident, asked a question in relation to the proposed WICC development with the NHS about the use of a fleet of electric buses for staff and patients.

The Leader of the Council replied the Sussex Transport Partnership were already providing travel to doctors surgeries and other destinations but the Council would look to support electric vehicle use through the installation of more charging points around the town.

A supplementary question was asked in relation to the number of car parking spaces provided as part of the proposed development.

The Leader of the Council replied that he didn't agree with the suggestion that there should be no parking provision for the proposed development.

Q4 - Christine McCormick, a Worthing resident, asked whether the Council could support local food banks through the provision of desperately needed premises.

The Leader of the Council replied that he was not in a position to make promises at the meeting but would be happy to sit down with the questioner to see how the Council could help.

C/48/19-20

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

It was noted that the Mayor had attended a wide range of engagements in the last couple of months, including:-

- the Worthing Business's awards;
- the induction of a new minister in East Worthing;
- Climate Change discussions with school children;
- Carol Services; and
- Christmas performances.

The Remembrance commemorations with the Lady of Sion Nursery children and the armed forces were especially touching and memorable.

The Mayor also wished to thank all staff and councillors who had participated in the official Carol Service at Offington Methodist Church.

The following forthcoming Mayor's Charity Events were highlighted:-

- Fundraising at Sainsbury's Lyons Farm (supported by the Mayor's charity team and members of the Musical community including the Council's Choir – Wednesday 18 December at 4.00pm;
- Fundraising at Tesco's Durrington with the Youth Council - Saturday 21 December 10am until 3.30pm;
- Quiz night with Karl Allison Community Chest Champion at Care for Veterans , in Boundary Road - Thursday 16 January at 7.30pm

C/49/19-20

Items raised under Urgency Provisions

There were no urgent items raised.

C/50/19-20

Recommendations from the Executive and Committee to Council

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

Extracts of these minutes had been circulated as items 8A(i) & (ii), 8B(i), 8C(i) & (ii), 8D(i), (ii), (iii), & (iv).

Item 8A(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 7 November 2019

Worthing Integrated Care Centre Development on Worthing Town Hall Car Park

The Leader of the Council presented a recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 7 November 2019.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Louise Murphy.

Councillor Jenkins advised Council that since the JSC meeting on 7 November, negotiations had continued and the proposed risk sharing agreement was now slightly different in that the Council would need to bear any aborted costs should the development fail to complete due to planning permission being refused, whereas such costs would be recoverable from the other NHS partners should the development fail to complete for any other reason.

Councillor Kevin Jenkins proposed an amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Val Turner.

During consideration of the item, Members of the Planning Committee questioned whether they could vote on the proposal. The Solicitor to the Councils advised that there were no constitutional reason why members of the Planning Committee could not vote on the proposal.

The amendment was supported on a vote: For 17, Against 0, Abstentions 16

The substantive motion as amended was supported on a vote: For 18, Against 0, Abstentions 15

Resolved

That subject to confirmation from the proposed NHS occupiers of the new WICC to execute a revised Risk Sharing Agreement with Worthing Borough Council, where the planning risk lies with the Council, (so that should the project not proceed due to planning permission being refused by the Local Planning Authority the costs would not be recoverable from the partner organisations), Worthing Borough Council approved an increase to the funding for the development of the WICC and associated car park provision to full business case to £600,000 in the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by prudential borrowing.

Item 8A(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 7 November 2019

Worthing Coastal Protection Scheme

The Leader presented a recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 7 November 2019.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Kevin Jenkins.

Members debated the merits of the proposals on aesthetic, sustainability and affordability grounds.

On a vote: For 24, Against 9, Abstain 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the provision of £500,000 within the capital investment programme for 2020/21, funded jointly by the Environment Agency £200,000 and Worthing Borough Council £300,000, for the modelling and initial design stage of the preferred option.

Item 8B(i) Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 21 November 2019

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 - Update

The JOSOC Chairman introduced a recommendation from the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 November 2019.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman.

On a vote: For 33, Against 0, Abstain 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council noted the changes made to the Work Programme since it was agreed by both Councils in April 2019.

Item 8C(i) Joint Governance Committee - 26 November 2019

Governance Arrangements for Charitable Trusts in Adur and Worthing

The JGC Chairman introduced the recommendations from the Joint Governance Committee meeting held on 26 November 2019.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Steve Wills.

On a vote: For 34, Against 0, Abstain 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council delegated to the Joint Strategic Committee the authority to act on behalf of Worthing Borough Council as sole charity trustee of Highdown Tower Garden and Pleasure Ground and Chalk Pit Charity, in all Executive matters relating to the operation of the Trusts.

That Worthing Borough Council delegated to the Joint Governance Committee the authority to act on behalf of Worthing Borough Council as sole charity trustee of Highdown Tower Garden and Pleasure Ground and Chalk Pit Charity, in all non-Executive matters other than those requiring Charity Commission consent or notification, and that they be required to bring an annual report to full Council each year on activity during the previous year.

That Worthing Borough Council approved the Scheme of Delegations to Officers being amended to delegate authority to the Council's Head of Environmental Services to act on behalf of Worthing Borough Council as sole charity Trustee of Highdown Tower Gardens and Pleasure Ground and Chalk Pit Charity in respect of all day to day management activities and administrative matters.

Item 8C(ii) Joint Governance Committee - 26 November 2019

Scheme of Allowances for Worthing Borough Council 2020/21 - 2022/23

The JGC Chairman introduced the recommendations from the meeting held on 26 November 2019.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Steve Wills.

On a vote: For 34, Against 0, Abstain 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the adoption of the members scheme of allowances in line with the Panel's proposals (as set out below) and noted its comments surrounding the claiming of Childcare Allowance / Carers Allowance / Travel and Subsistence Allowance.

- i. that the basic allowance be referenced to the outcome of the Officers' NJC Pay bargaining agreement (currently assumed as 2%) for a period of two years from March 2020/21;
- ii. that a Special Responsibility Allowance multiplier of (x 0.25) be introduced for the Deputy Mayor for their work associated with full council.

Item 8D(i) Joint Strategic Committee - 3 December 2019

Platforms for our Places - Going Further (2020-2022) : Unlocking the Power of People, Communities and our Local Geographies

The Leader of the Council introduced the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 3 December 2019 and invited questions from members.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins.

Members considered the language used in the document, the number of commitments outlined and acknowledged the scale of ambition contained therein.

On a vote: For 24, Against 9, Abstain 0

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the Platforms for our Places : Going Further approach, as a key core strategic document for the next three years.

Item 8D(ii) Joint Strategic Committee - 3 December 2019

Financially Sustainable Councils: Update to the 2020/21 - 2024/25 budget forecast and savings proposals for 2020/21

The Leader of the Council introduced the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 3 December 2019 and invited questions from members.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins.

On a vote: For 21, Against 0, Abstain 12

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the use of capital flexibilities to fund the costs associated with delivering the initiatives outlined in Appendix 4.

Item 8D(iii) Joint Strategic Committee - 3 December 2019

Investing for the future: Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

The Leader of the Council introduced the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 3 December 2019 and invited questions from members.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Val Turner.

On a vote: For 23, Against 0, Abstain 10

Resolved

That Worthing Borough Council approved the Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2022/23.

Item 8D(iv) Joint Strategic Committee - 3 December 2019

Mid Year Review of Treasury Management 2019-20, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

The Leader of the Council introduced the recommendation from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 3 December 2019 and invited questions from members.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes.

The Leader of the Council proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Steve Waight.

On a vote the amendment was supported.

Following a vote on the substantive proposal, as amended - For 23, Against 0, Abstain 10

Resolved

That Worthing Councils approved an amendment of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement removing the limit of 30% of investments to be placed in Money Markets for more than 7 days whilst increasing the limit to £9m of investments to be placed in Money Markets for more than 7 days.

C/51/19-20 Report of the Leader on Decisions taken by the Executive

The Leader of the Council presented his report on decisions taken by the Executive since the last Ordinary meeting of the Council; which were detailed in Item 9.

Questions were asked in relation to the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Carbon Neutral Plan, the Housing Allocation Policy and the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change.

C/52/19-20 Decision making by Worthing Borough Council in 2019/20

Before the Council was a report by the Director for Communities and the Solicitor to the Councils, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 10.

The changes to political balance and Committee memberships were proposed, seconded and, on a vote, supported unanimously.

Resolved, That Worthing Borough Council

- a) noted the revised political balance of the Council as per paragraph 3.4;
- b) confirmed the political groups, the number and proportion of seats as set out in Appendix A to this report;
- c) appointed to the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups on the Council as detailed in Appendix B.

C/53/19-20 Members Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12

The Mayor announced that the Proper Officer had received 2 questions from Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12. She 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 was 30 minutes allowed for questions with 1 rotation of speakers possible. At the end of 30 minutes the Mayor explained that she would extend the time to conclude the current rotation of questions.

The Mayor announced that the following Councillors had submitted questions:

Councillors Martin McCabe and Sally Smith

The order would be

First rotation: Councillors Sally Smith and Martin McCabe

First rotation:

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

The Labour Group welcomed the decision to accept funds of up to £60,000 from WSCC as a short-term funding measure to address risks associated with young people who may be drawn into serious violence. As we understand that a plan needed to be made within a short timescale, could the Executive Member provide us with an update on this important issue.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that a plan for this work was being developed with the Council's partners to utilise this short-term funding, focusing on three areas:

- *Parents and their awareness of serious violence and tools to prevent this;*
- *Multi-agency professionals - focusing on developing awareness and skills to enable them to work with young people in short-term ways*
- *Young people at risk of serious violence- referred by the Schools - who will receive short-term brief interventions.*

The funding had to be spent by the end of March and therefore it was likely that not all of it would be spent within the time period. The Council was working closely with WSCC, the CCG, the Voluntary Sector, Police and Schools to develop and implement various strands of work within the timescales and to learn from this work.

It was important to note this formed one small part of the work the Council was doing around young people that was currently under development on a longer-term basis.

Councillor Smith's asked what plans there were for preventative work in relation to knife crime as a supplementary question.

The Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing replied that it was a complex issue and required a lot of work by the Community Safety Team.

Question from Councillor Martin McCabe to the Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services

"To help combat climate change, will you join me in supporting the doubling of tree cover in Worthing by 2045 at the latest?"

The Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services replied that there were a variety of projects and aspects connected to tree planting that the Council was exploring and working with partners on that had the aim of increasing tree cover, diversifying the tree stock to help towards bio-security and adaptation to climate change, looking at connectivity of our landscapes and green corridors as part of this process as well as

ensuring that the existing woodland areas were healthy, productive woodlands from an ecosystem service point of view.

The Council also needed to be mindful of some of the other valued ecosystems within the area such as chalk grassland to ensure that the Council did not have a detrimental effect on other habitats and ecosystems as part of its approach to tree planting.

Councillor McCabe's supplementary question asked whether the Executive Member for Digital & Environmental Services would meet with Councillor McCabe to take this forward.

The Executive Member for Digital and Environmental Services replied that he would.

C/54/19-20 Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

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

Council considered the motion noting that a similar motion, which had been received by Adur District Council in October 2019, had been debated by the Joint Staff Committee in November.

On a vote: For 11, Against 19, Abstain 1

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council did not support the motion.

C/55/19-20 Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Tom Wills and seconded by Councillor Jane Sim.

During consideration of the motion, an amendment to the wording of paragraph (iv) of the motion, see below, was proposed by Councillor Daniel Humphreys and seconded by Councillor Bob Smytherman.

*(iv) accordingly resolves to support the **aims of the Local Electricity Bill, which was supported by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply***

The motion, as amended, was approved unanimously.

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council

(i) acknowledged the efforts that the council had made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;

(ii) recognised that councils can play a central role in creating sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated renewable electricity;

(iii) further recognised

- that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers resulted in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,
- that making those financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, and
- that revenues received by councils that became local renewable electricity providers could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities;

(iv) accordingly resolved to support the aims of the Local Electricity Bill, which was supported by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply.

C/56/19-20

Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

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

Resolved,

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

C/57/19-20

Motion on Notice

Before the Council was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Louise Murphy and seconded by Councillor Sean McDonald.

Council debated the motion, generally expressing support and on a vote:

For 28, Against 0, Abstain 4

Resolved,

This Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and has worked hard to create a robust Carbon Reduction Plan to work towards carbon neutrality for the Council by 2030. The Council has created a new Sustainable AW Framework to steer and guide a range of activities so that Council, businesses, community groups and individuals can work well together to take this agenda forward. We are putting our own house in order.

This Council now calls upon the Trustees of the West Sussex County Council Local Authority Pension Fund (of which the Councils employees are members) to divest that fund of all investments in fossil fuel stocks, equities and funds and it instructs the Councils Chief Executive to write to the Trustees of the fund with a copy of this Motion on Notice and asking them to take action.

C/58/19-20 Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Carl Walker and seconded by Councillor Sally Smith.

Resolved,

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

C/59/19-20 Motion on Notice

Before the Committee was a report by the Director of Communities, which had been circulated to all members and a copy of which is attached to the signed version of these minutes.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Jim Deen and seconded by Councillor Beccy Cooper.

Council debated the motion and on a vote:

For 11, Against 20, Abstain 1

Resolved,

That Worthing Borough Council did not support the motion.

The meeting ended at 9.39 pm