



Council
18 July 2023

WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ward(s) Affected: All

Motion on Notice

Report by the Director for Sustainability & Resources

Officer Contact Details:-

Neil Terry

Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

01903 221073

neil.terry@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The report before Council sets out a motion received from Councillor Carl Walker which has been seconded by Councillor Emma Taylor-Beal.
- 1.2. Council is asked to consider, debate and determine the motion under the provisions set out in Paragraph 14 of the Council Procedure Rules (part 4 of the Council Constitution - Rules of Procedure).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Council is asked to determine the motion as set out in Annex A to this report.

3. Context

- 3.1 A motion on notice has been received from Councillor Carl Walker, (attached as Annex A).
- 3.2 The content of the motion is relevant to a matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties and which specifically affects the Borough.

4. Issues for consideration

- 4.1 Motions considered by Full Council are done so under part 14 of the Council's Procedure Rules and are debated under rules set out under part 16 of the Council Procedure Rules.
- 4.2 The Council is asked to consider, debate and determine the motion under these rules accordingly.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial impact of the motion will result in future savings from the non-replacement or hiring of robes.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Rules concerning motions are set out in the Council's Constitution under section 14 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

Background Papers

None.

Motion to desist with the use of ceremonial robes in all public engagements

Worthing Borough Council has an ambitious agenda for changing the way that we work with our residents. Working effectively in partnership and co-production with our communities, our citizens and our partners is the only way in which the full extent of these aims can be realised. The Council's strategy is therefore to, wherever possible, pass power and control over what happens within communities, to communities, making them in the long term stronger and more resilient.

A Council for the Community needs to create inclusive spaces where everybody is able to have their voice heard as equal participants in public debates about the future of our town. However, research and experience suggests that many see politicians as 'out of touch', reducing their willingness to participate in local democracy. We want to remove every barrier to this, believing 21st-century democracy must evolve and re-establish its mandate as a true reflection of how people feel and think about our society.

In recent years several councils and other institutions have elected to remove some of the traditions that they feel place a distance between themselves and the people they serve. The Church of England for example has ruled that clergy can wear less formal clothes since traditional garb, such as surplices and albs have been seen to put people – and especially young people - off going to church. After publication of our Young Person's strategy for the town, it is crucially important that, if we want to give young people in Worthing a real say in how our town takes shape, then they need to be able to see the council as a welcoming, relatable space.

Worthing Borough Council therefore believes that the use of ceremonial robes is incompatible with this modernisation agenda, is outdated and sends the wrong impression to our communities and residents. We should give a clear message that whatever their background, residents should be able to imagine themselves in the chamber as a public representative. We believe that ceremonial robes make this harder to achieve and given the wide range of challenges our residents face, from housing shortages and homelessness to the cost of living and the climate emergency, our politicians should be judged on how we address these key issues rather than on what we wear.

Therefore, with the exception of the mayoral badges and chains of office, we resolve to desist in the use of all ceremonial robes and accessories, in all council and public engagements.

Proposer - Councillor Carl Walker

Seconder - Councillor Emma Taylor-Beal