



WORTHING BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

Council  
17 December 2024

Ward(s) Affected: All

## Motion on Notice

### Report by the Director for Sustainability & Resources

#### Officer Contact Details:-

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#### Executive Summary

##### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The report before Council sets out a motion received from Councillor Rosey Whorlow.
- 1.2. Council is asked to consider, debate and determine the motion under 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 consider and 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 Rosey Whorlow, (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 There are no direct financial impacts arising from the motion as it is declaratory.

### **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:- Standing Against Abuse and Intimidation – Championing Respect, Inclusion, and Resilience**

Abuse and intimidation of councillors, officers, staff, and contractors, whether in person or online, undermine our democracy and the principles of inclusion and cohesion that Worthing Borough Council upholds. Such behaviours discourage individuals from participating in public life, prevent elected members from fully representing their communities, and erode trust in democratic processes.

Worthing Borough Council believes in fostering an environment where everyone—regardless of role, background, or political affiliation—feels safe, respected, and valued. This aligns with our commitment to inclusion, cohesion, and putting people first. As part of our adaptive, participative, and resilient approach, we recognise the need to continually challenge toxic behaviour, support those affected, and ensure robust responses to threats and intimidation.

We are also mindful that, during council meetings and wider discussions, the line between robust debate and aggressive behaviour can sometimes be crossed. To uphold our values, we call on all councillors, officers, and partners to model respectful, professional, and inclusive dialogue, reflecting our shared responsibility to nurture a culture of cohesion and collaboration. A toxic environment has no place in a democratic organisation or a thriving community, as it undermines wellbeing and the capacity to serve effectively.

**Commitments to Inclusion and Cohesion:**

**1. A Safe and Inclusive Environment for All**

Worthing Borough Council affirms its commitment to creating a space where councillors, officers, staff, contractors, and residents can participate without fear of abuse, intimidation, or discrimination. This commitment aligns with our wider principles of inclusion, which celebrate diversity, foster belonging, and promote shared responsibility.

**2. Promoting Healthy and Constructive Dialogue**

We will champion respectful and constructive debate that values different perspectives and encourages active participation. We recognise the importance of listening, learning, and adapting to meet the needs of our communities and ensure every voice is heard in shaping our collective future.

**3. Empowering Resilience and Collaboration**

We will take proactive steps to challenge abuse and intimidation, building resilience across our democratic and community structures. Through a collaborative approach, we will support councillors, staff, and residents to work together to uphold the values of mutual respect and shared accountability.

#### **4. Supporting Continuous Improvement**

The Council acknowledges that services may not always meet expectations and commits to improving through transparent and participative engagement with residents. By listening and responding to feedback, we will adapt to ensure services are delivered with fairness and excellence.

#### **Resolution:**

To demonstrate our commitment to inclusion, cohesion, and the resilience of our 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.
- Ensure all actions align with the Council's principles of being adaptive, participative, and resilient, fostering a community where everyone feels empowered to contribute and thrive.