



**Extract from the minutes of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee - 12
January 2023**

**WJSSC/052/22-23 Outcome of the public consultation in respect of the
locally-determined 100% one-month Council Tax
discount in respect of unoccupied & substantially
unfurnished properties**

At the meeting of the Worthing Joint Strategic Committee Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 November 2022 it was determined that a public consultation should be undertaken by Worthing Borough Council with a view to ending the one-month 100% Council Tax discount in respect of unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties.

Members were given details of the consultation responses that had been received and recommended that the one-month 100% discount should end from 1 April 2023.

Members discussed the report and had noted that the response to the consultation had been disappointing and considered that it was an area the Cabinet would like to improve for the future.

Resolved

That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee

- a) Noted the contents of the report;
- b) Recommended to Full Council that with effect from 1 April 2023 the one-month 100% discount should be discontinued.**

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee - 12 January 2023](#))



**Extract from the minutes of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee - 12
January 2023**

WJSSC/053/22-23 Memorial Gardens

The report outlined the investment required to enable the service to develop the memorial garden at Worthing Crematorium, which will add heritage value to the site through the conservation of the Muntham Court hard landscaping.

Worthing Crematorium had filled all its private garden interment plots and required investment to deliver further plots to meet demand. It was detailed for Members that sustainable design for the benefit of biodiversity lay at the heart of the garden plan. Funding would be approved and the second phase of procuring a construction partner and construction will proceed.

Members were provided details of the project and the costs and the income generating potential and why the Memorial Gardens were a heritage site of significance and why it was important to conserve some of the historic elements of the grounds in any development of the site.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment presented an update to 1.3 to the Executive Summary to the report and stated that "The policy actions in this report demonstrates the Council's commitment to address the climate and ecological emergencies. At the heart of the memorial garden plan is a sustainable design to ensure resilience to climate change impacts and for the benefit of biodiversity."

There were two amendments to recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 in the report which were proposed seconded and unanimously approved.

Resolved

The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee:

- a) **Recommended that Full Council create a new capital budget of £315,000 funded through prudential borrowing with total repayment costs of £407,940 over the lifetime of the project which will be funded from the income generated by the sales of the memorials and to delegate to the Director for Communities authority to procure and enter into all**

necessary contracts (in consultation with the Cabinet Member) for the delivery of the memorial garden and repairs to the Munthan Estate Walls as incorporated in the design providing always the spend is within the approved budget.

- b) Authorised the annual revenue growth of on average £51,061 for Bereavement Services to deliver this investment. This revenue growth will form part of the sales in the memorial garden which are estimated to provide an annual average profit margin of £151,568 or return on investment ratio of 3.96%.
- c) Noted that Worthing Crematorium has limited land available for further development after this new memorial garden and the lifespan of the garden is estimated to be limited to five years for duo gardens and 10 years for quad gardens. If this development continues to be the success it is. Further investment in additional land and landscaping will be required

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee - 12 January 2023](#))



**Extract from the minutes of the Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 24
January 2023**

JGC/051/22-23 Scheme of Allowances for Worthing Borough Council

The Joint Audit & Governance Committee was asked to consider the report and the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and make recommendations to Worthing Borough Council on the level of Members' Allowances for the municipal year 2023/24. Recommendations from the Committee on the level of allowances would be proposed at the meeting of Full Council in February.

A member proposed that the committee remove paragraph 4.2.6 from the Independent Panels recommendation, in relation to the situation where there are 21 SRAs available but only 18 Members receiving them and Members only receive one SRA each. The committee agreed to remove the aforementioned paragraphs from the recommendations.

Members also discussed removing paragraphs 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 in regards to limiting the number of SRAs that Members can receive, however, on a vote this proposal was not carried. The committee further debated the proper remuneration for Members, the fair distribution of SRAs and roles of special responsibility and the distinction between allowance and pay.

Resolved

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee

- 1. Recommended that Worthing Borough Council accept the report and recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel incorporating the following suggested amendment**
 - i) That paragraph 4.2.6 be removed from the Independent Panels recommendations.**
2. That the Chief Financial Officer assess the budgetary impact of this proposed amendment and then present to Worthing Borough Council on the Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24

Link to the report on the website e.g. [Joint Audit & Governance Committee - 24 January 2023](#))



Extract from the minutes of the Worthing Cabinet - 1 February 2023

WCAB/005/22-23 Investing in our Places - Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26

This report before Cabinet recommended the investment programmes for Worthing Borough Council which supported both the strategic ambition of the Council and the vital regular investment toward the upkeep and improvement of our public assets.

Members were asked to improve the new schemes for 2023/24. The report recommended schemes for inclusion in the programme for 2023/24 and an indicative list for schemes for 2024/25.

Cabinet was informed of the resources available for future capital investment, and updated Members about the financing of the proposed programmes.

Members welcomed the report and discussed specific projects within the plan.

Resolved

That the Cabinet

- a) Considered the General Fund Capital Investment Programmes for 2023/24 and confirmed the schemes to be included as detailed in Appendix 2 and 3;
- b) Recommended the full programme detailed at Appendix 3 for approval by Council on the 21st February 2023;**
- c) Noted the amendments and additions to the reserve lists as detailed in Appendix 5.

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Worthing Cabinet - 1 February 2023](#))

Extract from the minutes of the Worthing Cabinet - 1 February 2023

WCAB/006/22-23 Budget Estimates 2023/24 and setting of the 2023/24 Council Tax

The report before members was the final budget report of the year, the culmination of the annual budgeting exercise, and asked members to consider: final revenue estimates, an updated outline 5-year forecast and the provisional level of Council Tax for 2023/24 prior to its submission to Council for approval.

The report outlined the medium term financial challenge through to 2027/28, discussed the impact the current high inflation was having on the budget over the next year, and set out performance in the key strategic areas of commercialisation, digital transformation and strategic asset management. This had been updated to include the latest information regarding the impact of the inflation on the Council's financial position. The current budget strategy was having a significant effect on how the Council would be funded in the future with increasing income generated from commercial income and rents. Following the delay to the fairer funding review, the challenge still remained significant for 2024/25, however the delivery of the budget strategy would ensure that this was met.

These budgets reflected the Council's ambitions set out in the JSC Sub-Committee report 'New Priorities for Worthing', supported by 'Our Plan' and agreed savings proposals contributing to the financial sustainability of the Councils.

The major points raised within the report included:

- A full update on the impact of settlement. The Council should prepare itself for a continuation of the reduction in Government resources for 2023/24 and beyond (see section 4);
- Highlighted the proposed funding for initiatives to support the Councils' ambitions;
- Details the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 2;
- The Cabinet would need to consider whether to increase Council Tax by 2.99% or by a lower amount (section 5.10).

The budget was analysed by Cabinet Member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2023/24 have been prepared, as always, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had been informed that the referendum criteria for this year was an increase of £15.00 per Band D property which would be equivalent to an increase of 6.67% and a further £10.00 in 2024/25. The proposed 2023/24 budget was due to be considered by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 27th January 2023. If the proposals were vetoed by the PCP, revised proposals would be considered by the Panel on the 20th February 2023 at which point the Commissioner will be in a position to confirm the Council Tax for 2023/34 in time for Council on the 21st February 2023.

The draft Local Government Settlement allowed Councils to increase core Council Tax by up to 2.99%. Those Councils with responsibility for Adult Social Care could increase Council Tax by up to a further 2%. Therefore a Council Tax increase of 4.99% for Councils with social care responsibilities was allowed for 2023/24.

The precept for West Sussex County Council had not yet been finalised and will not be confirmed until 17th February 2023. The formal detailed resolution setting the overall Council Tax for next year would be presented directly to the Council Meeting on 21st February 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report to the committee and laid out the main points therein including the severe financial pressures being placed upon the council. The Cabinet Member detailed the measures taken to meet the necessary savings, however there was some pressure placed on reserves which had been the case for previous years. It was the intention to strengthen the reserve position.

It was noted that the Local Government Settlement allowed Councils to increase core Council Tax by up to 2.99% from 1.99% the previous year. Due to the severe financial pressures it was recommended that the increase in Council Tax be 2.99% enabling the Council to meet its target of delivering high quality frontline services and supporting those in need. A 2.99% increase in Council tax amounted to a yearly increase of about £7 per year for a band D property and £6 for a Band C property.

Members discussed the issue and acknowledged the difficult position the Council was in. It was noted that just 12.4% of Council tax went to the Borough even though the Council provided essential services. Steps had been taken to lighten the load on those who faced financial hardship and programmes to address the cost of living emergency.

The Cabinet took a recorded vote on the individual recommendations before it

For: (recommendations a,b,c,d) - Councillors Cooper, Garner, McCabe, Taylor, Turley, Walker, Wells

Against: (0)

Abstentions: (0)

Resolved

That the Cabinet

- a) approved, the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 2;
- b) recommended to Council the draft budgets for 2023/24 and the transfer to Reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £14,188,940 which included provision for the proposals in Appendix 2, subject to any agreed amendments;**
- c) recommended to Council an increase of 2.99% in Council Tax, making Band D £259.92 per annum for Worthing Borough Council's requirements in 2023/24, as set out in paragraph 5.10; and**
- d) Approved the Council Tax base of 39,364.6 for 2023/24 as set out in paragraph 12.3.

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Worthing Cabinet - 1 February 2023](#))

Extract from the minutes of the Joint Strategic Committee - 7 February 2023

JSC/041/22-23 Council Tax Support Fund in respect of 2023/24

Following the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24, on 23 December 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities wrote to local authorities and issued guidance in respect of the Council Tax Support Fund.

Each council would be provided with funding to award a maximum of £25.00 additional Council Tax Support to both working age and pensioner households in respect of 2023/24. Councils could utilise their remaining funding allocation as they saw fit to support vulnerable households with Council Tax bills. The Committee was told that further funding opportunities would allow the maximum of £25 to be raised to £80

This report recommended the criteria to be adopted by Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council in respect of the Council Tax Support Fund.

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Resolved

That the Joint Strategic Committee

1. Noted the content of the report;
2. **Recommended to the respective Full Councils that the criteria to be adopted in respect of Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/24 should be those detailed in paragraph 4.8 and in accordance with the government guidelines;**
3. Approved a budget virement in 2023/24 of £94,900 for Adur District Council and £146,400 for Worthing Borough Council to create the budgets required to implement this new scheme; and
4. In the event that the Government amends the scheme, delegated authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to make minor and non-consequential adjustments to the scheme in consultation with both Leaders.

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Joint Strategic Committee - 7 February 2023](#))

Extract from the minutes of the Joint Strategic Committee - 7 February 2023

JSC/043/22-23 Joint Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26, Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council

The report asked Members to approve and adopt the contents of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26 for Adur and Worthing Councils, as required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Members discussed the addition of new liability benchmarks and the change to reporting requirements.

Resolved

That the Joint Strategic Committee

1. Approved and adopted the TMSS and AIS for 2023/24 to 2025/26, incorporating the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements;
2. **Recommended the Prudential Indicators and Limits, and MRP Statements for approval by Worthing Council at its meeting on 21 February 2023, and by Adur Council at its meeting on 23 February 2023.**

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Joint Strategic Committee - 7 February 2023](#))