

COUNCIL

16th July 2019

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Ditta, in the Chair

Councillors Agar, Altaf, A. Amos, B. Amos, Barnes, Bayliss, Berry, Biggs, Bisset, Cawthorne, Collins, Denham, Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Griffiths, Hassan, Hodges, Mrs L. Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Johnson, Lamb, Laurenson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Roberts, Squires, Stafford, Stalker, Stanley, Stephen and Udall

The Mayor's Chaplain, Imam Molluna Moorthoza Kassim, offered prayers prior to the Council meeting

18 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Cronin.

19 Declarations of Interest

None.

20 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

21 Mayor's Communications

Charity Asian Music evening with Sabir Mirza

The Mayor informed Council that a charity Asian Music evening with Sabir Mirza is to be held at the Guildhall on Wednesday 31st July 2019. Invitations to be sent out shortly.

Legion d'honneur Presentation

The Mayor informed Council that he will be hosting a Legion d'honneur presentation at the Guildhall on Wednesday 14th August 2019.

Eid Celebration

The Mayor informed Council that he will be hosting an Eid celebration at Unity House, Worcester on Sunday 25th August 2019. Invitations to be sent out shortly.

Inaugural Banquet

The Mayor informed Council that invitations will be sent out shortly inviting Members to his Inaugural Banquet on Friday 27th September 2019.

Refreshments

The Mayor invited all those present to join him for refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour after the meeting.

22 Public Participation

None.

23 Questions

Question No. 1	
Question From:	Councillor Alan Amos
Question To:	Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council
Question:	Given that the gull problem in Lower Wick has now reached epidemic proportions and is worse than last year; and that the daily lives of hundreds of people have been made intolerable by the mess, noise, and attacks of these vicious flying rats, will the Leader of the Council ensure that the relevant officers and departments have the necessary resources and powers to implement a permanent solution and finally stop this growing danger to local residents?
Answer:	Mr Mayor, thank you very much, and thank you to my friend for that question. I happen to agree with him that I think the gull problem is a growing problem in the city. Contrary to occasionally what we've been told, I think there are more gulls in the city than I remember in previous years, and I think that we as a Council need to do more to prepare, not just in the city centre but in our outlying areas. It's not just Bedwardine, it's not just Lower Wick, but there are other areas around the city where I think the gull problem is a growing issue, and I shall be working with other colleagues across the Council to find ways, to look at what additional resources may be necessary, to tackle this issue.
Supplementary Question:	Thank you Mr Mayor, can I thank the Leader of the Council for his serious and positive response. I convened a meeting last week with residents and officers. Everybody there acknowledged that the situation this year is worse than it was last year. So, clearly, Council policy is not working. So will he join with me in a "Cull the Gull" campaign, to seek permission from the Secretary of State for a cull, and finally resolve this issue, just as they recently did in Scotland, given the danger and health hazard these flying rats now pose to people?
Answer:	I know my friend has a long-standing view on what the appropriate solution to this problem is. I am also reminded by officers of the legal impediments to the cull scenario, shall we say. I do think we need to look afresh at all options to deal with this issue. As I've said before, it's a growing problem, it's one that members of my community are asking me about, we need to do something about this, so I hope we will look at all options afresh in dealing with gulls.

Question No. 2	
Question From:	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson
Question To:	Councillor James Stanley, Chair of Communities Committee
Question:	It has been brought to my notice that Community Engagement and Cleaner and Greener have now been split and are in two different directorates. A number of residents have said this has had a real impact on "local friends of groups" and have lost their purpose and direction. As these services are closely aligned, could an explanation be given as how the right amount of support is given to ensure these groups can carry on their good work?

Answer:	<p>Thank you. Can I preface my remarks by saying to my colleague that some of the issues which she raises will cut across both Communities and Environment Committees.</p> <p>That said, just for background, the Community Services and Environmental Operations Service were created in the Spring of 2017. Across the city community engagement work focusses on community events, support to groups, including friends groups, and venues. Work with community safety and small grants also support this. Groups are supported by providing support and advice, for example tools, funding identification and administration, constitution advice and equipment, but not providing for leadership or running of these groups. Leadership would be taking the minutes, writing risk assessments and planning work programmes and drafting funding applications.</p> <p>The exception to this is within the Green Flag Parks, which have gardening groups and 'Friends of' groups. These are led by Environmental Operations, and supported in their volunteer roles by the Community Engagement Team.</p> <p>In Parish Council areas community engagement work carried out by the Parish Wardens is agreed as part of the Service Level Agreement between the City Council and the Parish Council.</p>
Supplementary Question:	Thank you for that. I'm just a little bit concerned that there's not the consistency I would expect within this service, and I do hope that the friends groups across the city are treated fairly, recognizing the health benefits of volunteering and learning new skills, and that the good work of these is recognised and supported.
Answer:	Thank you. I respond by saying that I agree with Councillor Hodgson in making her point that we need to embed proper levels of consultation across the groups that operate in these areas. The Service Level Agreement between the City and Warndon Parish Council for example covers some community engagement activities. The Parish Council has requested that consultation with residents and support at events be agreed with Parish Council.

Question No. 3	
Question From:	Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson
Question To:	Councillor James Stanley, Chair of Communities Committee
Question:	I have discovered that charges for council equipment and services are being introduced for Community events. It is that time of year for local community fetes and it is has come as quite a surprise about the levels being charges. Could it be explained what these charges are, where they have been agreed and where they are advertised.
Answer:	Essentially, the answer is that any charges levied for works in the Parish Council areas are agreed with the Parish Councils as part of the SLA between the City Council and Parish Councils. Charges are made for waste collection from community events across the city. These have been in place for a number of years. These charges are not currently within the agreed fees and charges plan as a separate item for community organisations and are based on commercial waste charges. This will be corrected at the earliest available opportunity. There are no other charges made for supporting community events.
Supplementary Question:	Thank you for that. This was brought to my attention at the Lyppards fete, and there was confusion over how these charges are listed, where they are, there was no warning to community groups that they might be introduced, and m concern is that we need to maker sure, these are community groups, they're raising money for local good causes, what we don't want to be doing is that they are paying twice for services. So I would like to see some clear charges laid down.
Answer:	I think the answer is essentially along the lines of the answer to your question 2, which is that we'll always seek to build in that level of consultation between all the various groups that are active in these areas. If there are any shortfalls in these areas, that will need to be addressed. Clearly that discourse, that dialogue is essential to make this an effective arm of the Council service.

24 Notice of Motion

The Council considered the following 4 Notices of Motion, which had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8:

Motion 1 - Worcester Plan to be Carbon Neutral by 2030

Full Council notes:

1. Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

2. In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Heating and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;¹
3. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;
4. Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;
5. Worcester City Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown by investing in energy reduction measures at the Guildhall and solar PV panels on top of St Martin's Gate car park.
6. Unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050;
7. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published last year, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;
8. City Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.

Full Council believes that:

1. All governments (national and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Worcester and the UK that cities commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
2. Cities are uniquely placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions, as they are in many ways easier to decarbonise than rural areas – for example because of their capacity for heat networks and mass transit;
3. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,
4. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).

The Council will:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
2. Pledge to make the city of Worcester carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3)*;
3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
4. Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Heating to less than 1.5°C;
5. Continue to work with partners across the city and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
6. Appoint the already budgeted new Environmental Sustainability Officer in a timely way, create a cross-party steering group and report to Environment Committee on 28th January 2020 on actions the Council will take with key stakeholders to address this emergency. This work will be led by the Chair of the Environment Committee.

*<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions>

The proposer, Councillor Laurenson and the seconder, Councillor Bisset both spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution, Councillor Bayliss proposed an amendment to the Motion to change the proposed date from 2030 to 2050 and to mandate the Environment Committee to consider and bring a report to Full Council rather than creating a cross party steering group.

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Griffiths.

Members then entered into a debate on the amendment to the Motion, where support and opposition was expressed across the Chamber. On being put to the vote the proposed amendment was lost.

Members then proceeded to vote on the Motion and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7.2 a named vote was requested and supported by four Members. On being put to the vote, the Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council

- 1. declare a 'Climate Emergency';**
- 2. pledge to make the city of Worcester carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3)*;**
- 3. call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;**
- 4. work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Heating to less than 1.5°C;**
- 5. continue to work with partners across the city and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans; and**
- 6. appoint the already budgeted new Environmental Sustainability Officer in a timely way, create a cross-party steering group and report to Environment Committee on 28th January 2020 on actions the Council will take with key stakeholders to address this emergency. This work will be led by the Chair of the Environment Committee.**

Record of Voting

For: Councillors	Against: Councillors	Abstention: Councillor
Agar, Barnes, Berry, Biggs, Bisset, Cawthorne, Collins, Denham, Gregson, Hodges, Lamb, Laurenson, Riaz, J. Squires, Stalker, Stephen and Udall	A. Amos, Geraghty, Mrs L Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Johnson, Mackay and Roberts	Altaf, B. Amos, Bayliss, Ditta, Griffiths, Hassan, Mitchell, Stafford and Stanley
Total: 17	Total: 7	Total: 9

Motion 2 - Future Options to Develop Community Gardens/Orchards/Open Space

Worcester City Council recognises the value of community gardens, community orchards and open spaces to the health and well being of local communities and wildlife and commends the volunteers who have worked so hard to develop these beautiful spaces. Council resolves to identify further opportunities to develop similar initiatives, on its own land and working with partners.

The proposer, Councillor Biggs and the seconder, Councillor Stanley both spoke in support of the Motion.

Members then entered into a debate on the Motion where support was expressed across the Chamber.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council resolves to identify further opportunities to develop similar initiatives, on its own land and to work with partners.

Motion 3 - Land to the east of Sanctuary Close – Dedication of open space as a Park of Peace

On 3rd October 1940, a lone German plane bombed St John's and killed seven people at the Mecco works in Bromyard Road, fifty people were injured and a number of houses were damaged in neighbouring streets. No public memorial exists to mark this tragic event. Land to the east of Sanctuary Close, owned by the Council, is to be retained by the Council as public open space as a condition of the planning consent for the social housing development on the adjacent land and was due to be a natural habitat with public access. While recognising the important ecology implications, the local community want a space which they can also use for a range of recreational facilities. In memory of the dead and injured of the Mecco bombing, Council resolves to dedicate the open space as a Park of Peace, with recreational space being designed and provided for the wellbeing of the local residents as well as the local ecology, and calls upon the Managing Director to co-ordinate with officers, local Members, potential funding bodies and other partners to ensure that this park is established.

The proposer, Councillor Udall and the seconder, Councillor Lamb both spoke in support of the Motion.

Members then entered into a debate on the Motion where support was expressed across the Chamber.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council request the Managing Director to co-ordinate with officers, local Members, potential funding bodies and other partners to ensure that this park is established.

Motion 4 - Environment and Climate Emergency

This Council declares an environment and climate emergency. Furthermore Council will work with all stakeholders towards achieving a carbon neutral city of Worcester by 2030.

Council requests the Managing Director to:

1. review the Council's investment strategy with the aim of reducing any involvement in fossil fuels and increasing investment in renewables and green jobs; and
2. direct the Council's business, skills and economic development programme towards a transformative Green New Deal, supporting local opportunities in the low carbon economy and green job creation.

The proposer, Councillor Denham and the seconder, Councillor Gregson both spoke in support of the Motion.

Members then entered into a debate on the Motion where support and opposition was expressed across the Chamber.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council:

1. **requests the Managing Director to review the Council's investment strategy with the aim of reducing any involvement in fossil fuels and increasing investment in renewables and greens job; and**
2. **direct the Council's business, skills and economic development programme towards a transformative Green New Deal, supporting local opportunities in the low carbon economy and green job creation.**

25 Appointment of Members to Committees

The Council considered a report on the appointment of Members to Committees.

Following Annual Council on 14th May 2019 whereby the appointment of Members to Policy Committees, Regulatory Committees, Joint Committees and Other Bodies had been approved, Councillor Gregson had requested that Councillor Hodges be appointed as a member of Policy and Resources Committee in place of Councillor Lamb.

In accordance with Part 2, Article 4.2 of the Constitution, appointing and removing Members to and from Committees is a matter reserved to full Council, unless delegated by the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Gregson and seconded by Councillor Bayliss and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to the removal of Councillor Lamb as a member of the Policy and Resources Committee and appoint Councillor Hodges.

26 Report from the Relevant Committee on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision

Referral Report from Policy and Resources – Worcester City Centre Masterplan Adoption

The Council considered a referral report from the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee to consider the adoption of the Worcester City Centre Masterplan.

At its meeting on 4th June 2019, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended that the Worcester City Centre Masterplan, attached as Appendix 1, be referred to the Council for adoption.

A briefing session for all Members took place on the 13th June 2019, this enabled Officers to update Members on the changes to the Masterplan. A copy of the presentation was attached as Appendix 2.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen and seconded by Councillor Gregson and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council adopt the Worcester City Centre Masterplan in accordance with the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Referral Report from Standards Committee – Standards Committee Annual Report 2018/19

The Council considered a referral report from the Chairman of Standards Committee to receive the Standards Committee Annual Report 2018/19.

The Annual Report was considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 26th June 2019 and provided a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee in 2018/19 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Lamb and seconded by Councillor Roberts and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council receive the Standards Committee Annual Report 2018/19.

27 Report from the Leader of the Council on any matters which he is of the opinion require urgent consideration by The Council

None.

28 Items Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information

None.

29 Any Exempt Issues

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 9.20p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
22nd October 2019