

COUNCIL

17th October 2022

Present: **The Mayor, Councillor Adrian Gregson, in the Chair**

Councillors Agar, Ali, Allcott, Amos, Barnes, Bayliss, Bisset, Cleary, Cockeram, Cookson, Cronin, Denham, Desayrah, A. Ditta, S. Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Hassan, Mrs L. Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Lamb, Laurenson, Lawrance, Lewing, Mackay, Mitchell, Norfolk, Piotrowski, Riaz, Roberts, Stafford, Stephen and Udall

Apologies: **Councillors Altaf and Stanley**

The Mayor gave apologies on behalf of his Orator, Ian Craigan, who was unable to attend the meeting. The Mayor read an address to the Council on his behalf before commencement of the formal business of the Council

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Altaf and Stanley.

42 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Bayliss – Minute 49 (Notice of Motion – Investment Zones) - As Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy Infrastructure and Skills

Councillor Geraghty - Minute 49 (Notice of Motion – Investment Zones) - As Leader of Worcestershire County Council

Councillor Lawrance – Minute 46 (South Worcestershire Development Plan Review: Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) and 24 – Employer is a tenant at Throckmorton Airfield. Councillor Lawrance left the meeting for consideration of this item

Councillors Gregson, Mrs L Hodgson, S Hodgson and Udall - Minute 49 (Notice of Motion – Worcester Warriors Rugby Club) - As season ticket holders at Worcester Warriors Rugby Club

Councillor Mitchell - Minute 49 (Notice of Motion – Worcester Warriors Rugby Club) - Has a hospitality box at Worcester Warriors Rugby Club.

43 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 5th July and 11th September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

44 Mayor's Communications**Ukrainian Welcome Event**

Nearly 100 Ukrainian guests and their host families were welcomed to the Guildhall on 6th August 2022. Those that attended gave thanks to the City Council for the support that is being provided.

Worcester City Run

The Mayor had taken part in the Worcester City Run on 4th September, and his team, which included Councillors Laurenson and Lewing, had raised £1,500 for his charities.

Death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II

Following the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II, both County and City Proclamations were held at the Guildhall, followed by a Memorial Service. Over 4,000 messages had been recorded in the Books of Condolence which were available at the Guildhall, and these have been placed in the County Council Archives. A letter of thanks has been received from the Royal Archives on behalf of King Charles III. The Mayor thanked all who had helped to organise these events in such a short amount of time.

Inaugural Banquet

The Mayor thanked everyone who attended the Inaugural Banquet on 23rd September 2022, all seemed to have a good time.

Forthcoming Lectures

The Mayor informed the Council that the Annual Civic Society Lecture will be taking place on Wednesday, 19th October at 7.30pm at the Guildhall. Marcus Binney, Executive President of SAVE Britain's Heritage will be delivering the lecture, which is free. The Worcestershire Archaeological Society Lecture will be taking place on Tuesday, 25th October at 7.30pm at the Guildhall. The topic will be The Building of the Guildhall.

Annual Poppy Appeal Launch and Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor announced that the Annual Poppy Launch is to take place at the Guildhall on Saturday, 29th October. Invitations for the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade scheduled for 13th November 2022 have been distributed. The Parade to be bigger this year as a large number of veterans and serving officers will be attending from The Queen's Royal Hussars.

Refreshments

The Mayor invited everyone to join him for refreshments in the Assembly Room once the meeting has finished.

45 Public Participation

None.

46 South Worcestershire Development Plan Review: Publication Consultation (Regulation 19)

The Council considered a report on proposals for the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review Publication (Regulation 19) consultation.

Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson, Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee, presented the report and explained that this is the next stage in the SWDP Review process. The Appendices to the report included the draft Plan which is proposed for consultation; a link to the SWDP website which displays in draft the substantial number of evidence studies, policies and technical assessments which support the Plan as well as an interactive map; and an easy-read summary leaflet in draft to help navigate readers through the Plan consultation stage.

The draft Plan had been considered by the Place and Economic Development Committee at its meeting on 3 October 2022 and the Committee had unanimously approved the recommendations to Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson and seconded by Councillor Norfolk and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council:

- 1. approves the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) Publication consultation (Regulation 19) set out in the Appendices, for consultation from 01 November 2022 for six weeks;**
- 2. authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor amendments to the SWDP Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) material prior to publication;**
- 3. subject to the outcome of the Regulation 19 Publication consultation raising no material issues of concern on the soundness of the Plan, authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor modifications and submit the SWDP Review for Examination, in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and**
- 4. as part of the Examination process, authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee to formally request that the appointed Inspector make recommendations to the Council for any main modifications to the SWDP Review that are considered necessary to make the Plan sound as per Regulation 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

47 South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (TTS DPD) Publication: Regulation 19

The Council considered a report on the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) Publication: Regulation 19. Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson, Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee, presented the report and explained that, whilst the SWDPR contains a policy for Travellers, it is the intention for this Travellers DPD to act as the primary policy function for new Traveller development. The DPD contains three policies, although no sites had been allocated in Worcester City.

This matter had been considered by the Place and Economic Development Committee at its meeting on 3 October 2022 and the Committee had unanimously approved the recommendations to Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson and seconded by Councillor Norfolk and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council:

- 1. approves the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document ("DPD") Publication: Regulation 19 set out at Appendix 1 for consultation from 01 November 2022 for six weeks;**
- 2. authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor amendments to the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document Publication: Regulation 19 material prior to publication;**
- 3. subject to the outcome of the Regulation 19 Publication consultation raising no material issues of concern on the soundness of the DPD, authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor modifications and submit the DPD for examination, in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and**
- 4. as part of the Examination process, authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Place and Economic Development Committee to formally request that the appointed Inspector make recommendations to the Council for any main modifications to the DPD that are considered necessary to make the DPD sound as per Regulation 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

48 Questions

Question No. 1	
Question	Councillor Alan Amos

From:	
Question To:	Councillor Marc Bayliss, Joint Leader of the Council
Question:	<p>In view of the Council's repeated commitment to openness and transparency, on what basis did an officer of the Council decide not to inform 28 Members that the Fownes Hotel was to be filled with 124 alleged asylum seekers; how much extra time and effort would have been expended had he e-mailed all 35 Councillors at the same time instead of just 7; how much extra time and effort would have been expended had the notice about it been displayed in the Members' Bulletin before it had happened rather than afterwards; and does he agree with me that all Members - being accountable to the people of Worcester and responsible for the running of the Council - should, at all times, be informed of any significant and/or highly charged event or development in their City?</p>
Answer:	<p>The gardener's shed on Fort Royal was vandalised recently. The pump on the Splashpad broke in August. The Revenues and Benefits portal went down for a day recently, and the Tree Team unfortunately smashed into a wall at St. George's Primary.</p> <p>I tell you this because it exemplifies that all Members are not, as a matter of course, informed at the same time, of exactly every event in the city. Decisions are made on a day-to-day basis as to whether matters should be brought to the attention of the Leader, the Group Leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of committees, and of course Ward Members. In fact, the City's Constitution makes reference to the "need to know" principle and officers apply that principle on a daily basis in determining what information is reasonably necessary to enable each Member to perform their duties. It was on that basis that it was decided not to inform all Members of the plan by the Home Office to place asylum seekers in the Fownes before the plan was implemented.</p> <p>All Members were informed that asylum seekers had been placed in the hotel once it had been confirmed that this would take place. This is a perfectly acceptable approach in my view to keeping Members informed of events in the city.</p>
Supplementary Question:	<p>I thank Councillor Bayliss for his answer, but isn't the truth that there appear to be those who think the people, and the people of Worcester, and most of their elected representatives, cannot be trusted to know what is going on in their city?</p> <p>Therefore, can Councillor Bayliss – and I'm sure he can - give me two assurances? Firstly, that there aren't, and will not be, two classes of councillor, those who are allowed to know what is going on in their city, and those who may not? And secondly, that the people of Worcester should at all times be informed of major developments - those which are highly</p>

	<p>charged, I'm not talking about routine matters – in their city, are informed either directly or through their elected representatives, whether it's about asylum seekers, or indeed anything else?</p>
Answer:	<p>I certainly don't believe that there should be two classes of councillor, although certain roles do come with additional responsibilities and that is why people get additional responsibility allowances, and it's a long-established system. In your role as a County Council Cabinet Member, you will have been aware of matters that other Members of the County Council wouldn't have known.</p> <p>We all have roles and responsibilities, sometimes you get privy to additional information in those roles that you have to keep private for a period of time. My general belief is though that Members should be told as much as is possible and that we have a general duty to share information.</p> <p>On this specific one, I think the right decision was made, to be perfectly honest. We were not a decision maker here, we were simply informed of a proposal at that time, which the Government, and the Home Office, implemented, and as soon as it became de facto that they were going to do that, Members were told. I don't think anybody was sought to be kept in the dark, and I believe that Officers acted in a responsible way on this occasion. I would say, however, that my general view is that we should tell people as quickly and as openly as possible when information is available to the Council.</p>

Question No. 2	
Question From:	Councillor Laurenson
Question To:	Councillor Marc Bayliss, Joint Leader of the Council
Question:	<p>The government has announced plans to lift the ban on fracking and to ban solar projects on farms. Last week, the climate minister claimed that fracking and oil drilling are good for the environment. Having given a well-received welcome speech at the City Council's inaugural Sustainability Summit on 30th September, what are your views on the government's recent statements about the environment?</p>
Answer:	<p>You're inviting my own personal view on these matters. I think the government had it right previously in terms of fracking. Personally, I think the policy of the previous administration was the correct one.</p> <p>As for solar projects on farms, I think there are competing objectives here. I mean, we certainly do not support ourselves in food, we're not sustainable and self-reliant in food production, so agricultural land on farms I'd want to be used</p>

	<p>for food production primarily, but certainly supporting solar projects as an initiative is something that I wholeheartedly agree with, and I'd like us to go even faster.</p> <p>I mean in terms of wind, you asked me about the government's statements about the environment. I think I'm right in saying that we have something like between 60 and 70% of the entire offshore energy from wind production in the European Union and I think that that is something we should be proud of, and we should continue absolutely to find the most renewable sources of electricity and their generation. So, I hope that gives him some sense of my perspective on those matters.</p>
Supplementary Question:	The Green Party Member of the House of Lords, Jenny Jones, recently asked Lord Callanan whether the Government would accept that fracking would not happen in areas where local people and councillors object. In response, Lord Callanan merely said that local support for fracking would be taken into account. If fracking is ever proposed to take place in or near Worcester, what level of local consultation do you think would be acceptable, and would you object to the proposal?
Answer:	I think I can provide him with absolute reassurance on this. I understand that, geologically, there's absolutely no chance of fracking in Worcestershire, so I think it highly, highly unlikely that that question would ever arise, just given our geological base. It's not my area of specialism, but certainly I believe communities should always be supported and engaged, and consulted on any major planning changes, and that would be a very major one. But I think I can reassure him that there's no realistic danger of that in Worcester or Worcestershire.

Question No. 3	
Question From:	Councillor Barnes
Question To:	Councillor Andy Stafford, Chair of Environment Committee
Question:	<p>In November last year my motion asked about hosting Car Club spaces in our car parks. The motion as passed asked that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Club be considered by the Environment Committee; and • that the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan be updated to include an action with the objective to encourage and support the introduction of car clubs in Worcester. <p>Could you confirm either of these things have happened?</p>

Answer:	<p>Our Environmental Sustainability officers have been working in partnership with Enterprise Cars, with the first car club vehicle now set up in the Arboretum, and Enterprise Cars have also made it clear that they are keen to expand the scheme. A detailed press release was issued just a few days ago and I'm happy to send you a copy if you haven't seen it.</p> <p>In terms of your second point, an action with the objective to encourage and support the introduction of car clubs in Worcester has been included in the Sustainability Action Plan for 2023/24, and this is on the agenda for the next Environment Committee.</p>
Supplementary Question:	So, at the moment there's just a paper going to the next meeting about our car parks being used – is that correct?
Answer:	It's an update to the Sustainability Action Plan, which happens every year, so the intentions of the motion that was agreed last year is going to be included within the Plan in its entirety, as well as the ongoing works that the officers have already undertaken with Enterprise Cars.

Question No. 4	
Question From:	Councillor Piotrowski
Question To:	Councillor Marc Bayliss, Joint Leader of the Council
Question:	Could the Joint Leader seek urgent clarification from West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner who recently stated on BBC Hereford and Worcester Radio that low numbers of police officers, i.e. understaffing is irrelevant to solving crime and putting victims of crime first?
Answer:	I don't know why he might be asking me this question, but just by chance I happen to have found out the information for him. I don't believe the Commissioner was, I think he was disputing the premise of the question that there was a low number of police officers. I'm delighted to report that the total number of police officers in West Mercia is 2,456, which is 524 up on when the Commissioner took office in 2016. It is also approximately 100 more than when Labour was last in charge in 2010, when the number was 2,364. So, I think he was disputing the premise of the question that there was a low number of police officers in West Mercia.
Supplementary Question:	I think people who come along to the PACT meetings, residents in Battenhall, who suffered this series of burglaries, would be appreciative of understanding why the police numbers on the beat are irrelevant to solving crime? I think they deserve this explanation.

Answer:	I don't think they are irrelevant. I don't think the Commissioner was saying that either. It's just the numbers have risen. There has been a significant - one of the 2019 manifesto commitments was an additional 20,000 additional police officers - there has been a massive uplift in officers across the country and as I said we are now at 2,456 officers, which is 524 more than when the Commissioner took office, and is as I said greater than at any level in the period up to 2010. So, this is very good news and hopefully will reassure the people of Worcester, Worcestershire and West Mercia that there are significant numbers of police officers available to support the policing initiatives in those areas.
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Question No. 5	
Question From:	Councillor Lawrance
Question To:	Councillor Chris Mitchell, Chair of Planning
Question:	The City recently hosted a Sustainability Summit, I attended a Workshop with a panel of local people including the RSPB, WWT and the Environment Agency. At the workshop the Environment Agency said that the laws had changed to support increasing wildlife numbers by 10%. Further I received assurance that the City was in the process of reviewing its local planning regulations in support of this endeavour. In light of the recent change of PM will the City be continuing with its pledged commitment to increasing wildlife numbers and protect habitat within our beautiful City?
Answer:	<p>The City Council will stand by its commitment that has been given to increasing wildlife numbers and protect habitat within our beautiful City.</p> <p>As many of you will already be aware, Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development and land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better way than it was beforehand. Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England, with a few exemptions, will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain, but as yet a date has not been confirmed for implementation of the requirement. It is expected to be November 2023.</p> <p>Biodiversity Net Gain is about more than just planning, it will impact a range of Council services and it is important that we approach its introduction in a joined-up way. Biodiversity Net Gain links a range of agendas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing the climate emergency • place-making • green infrastructure • access to greenspace and nature

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mental and physical health and wellbeing • flood resilience; and • improving air quality <p>It is likely that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be produced at county level and there will be other opportunities to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain by working with neighbouring authorities, local communities, landowners and farmers.</p> <p>Defra and Natural England are developing policy and secondary legislation on BNG and we shouldn't be surprised to see BNG given even greater emphasis in the next iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>I'm pleased to note that the review of the SWDP includes a revised policy SWDPR27 on Biodiversity and Geodiversity – this includes specific reference to BNG.</p> <p>Although currently SWDPR27 doesn't specify a 10% requirement, a percentage may be added to the policy once secondary legislation has been passed, this could be a proposed modification when the draft plan is submitted to the Inspectorate for examination, or an amendment recommended by the Inspector during the examination itself. It is all matter of timing that we will need to see what secondary legislation is passed and what the next version of the NPPF says about the implementation of BNG.</p> <p>I do apologise for the all the abbreviations, but I did read them out first.</p>
Supplementary Question:	None.

49 **Notice of Motion**

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

1. Bulky Waste Collection

Council is concerned about the cost-of-living crisis having a new impact on fly tipping, with the cost of bulky waste collection becoming a disincentive for many residents. Council calls upon the Managing Director to bring reports to the relevant Council Committees, to consider the costs, consequences and benefits of a universal, pre-booked, free household bulky waste collection service for Worcester residents, which will enable elected councillors to consider options and determine what action, if any, to take.

The proposer, Councillor Udall and the seconder, Councillor Desayrah, both spoke in support of the Motion. Other Members spoke in on the Motion, where a range of views were expressed across the Chamber, following which the Motion was put to the vote. The Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to instruct the Managing Director to bring reports to the relevant Council Committees, to consider the costs, consequences and benefits of a universal, pre-booked, free household bulky waste collection service for Worcester residents.

2. Bus Services Within the City Boundaries

Council calls upon the Managing Director to bring reports to relevant Council Committees to enable City Councillors to consider costs and options for either free or reduced price bus services within the city boundaries during December, including weekends and evenings, which would help promote bus use and support key workers, local retailers and their employees, and businesses.

The proposer, Councillor Norfolk and the seconder, Councillor Barnes, both spoke in support of the Motion, following which the Motion was put to the vote. The Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to instruct the Managing Director to bring reports to relevant Council Committees to enable City Councillors to consider costs and options for either free or reduced price bus services within the city boundaries during December, including weekends and evenings.

3. Proportional Representation for General Elections

First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men. In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. Meanwhile, internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect parliaments in more than 80 countries. Those countries tend to be more equal, freer and greener.

PR ensures all votes count, have equal value, and those seats won match votes cast. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of local communities and the nation.

MPs better reflecting their communities leads to improved decision-making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.

PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. PR also prevents 'wrong winner' elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. So why not Westminster?

Council therefore resolves to mandate the Managing Director to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for general elections.

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

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Bisset and seconded by Councillor Stephen:

Add the following paragraph before the final paragraph: "PR is also sorely needed at local elections."

Add the following words at the end of the final paragraph: "...to be used for general and local elections."

A vote on this amendment was carried. Members then entered into a debate, where a range of views were expressed across the Chamber. On being put to the vote the Motion, as amended, was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to instruct the Managing Director to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for Parliamentary General and Local Elections.

4. Worcester Warriors Rugby Club

This Council notes with dismay the financial mismanagement of the Worcester Warriors Rugby Club that has come to light in recent months and has led to the ownership of the club being taken away and transferred to the Joint Administrators of Julie Palmer, Julian Pitts and Andrew Hook all of Begbies Traynor (Central) LLP.

Since the WRFC Trading Limited entered administration on 27th September horror stories have emerged of a complicated series of financial dealings that have transferred the property assets of WRFC Trading into the hands of a tangled web of Third Parties including Militibus Quanco (subsequently renamed Worcester Sport in August 2020), MQ Properties, and Link Corporate Trustees. It has also emerged that the players and staff are employed by yet another company WRFC Players Limited, that was wound up by the High Court on 5th October leaving the playing staff unemployed.

In a rapidly developing situation welcome news was received on 6th October that the Joint administrators have confirmed they have seized Sixways land from club's co-owners and would be included as part the future sale of the Worcester Warriors Rugby Club. On the same day Premiership Rugby has confirmed that the club are suspended for remainder of the 2022/23 season and will be relegated to the Championship for the 2023/24 season.

Therefore, the Council agrees to:

1. Request the Managing Director to write to Julie Palmer and her fellow Administrators at Begbies Traynor (Central) LLP to thank them for their work in the handling the administration process.
2. Request the Managing Director to write to Simon Massie-Taylor, the Chief Executive of Premiership Rugby to reconsider the decision to demote Worcester Warriors to the Championship for the 2023/24 season, and to allow the option of any future owners to field a team in the current playing season.

3. Provide encouragement in supporting any potential investors to find a positive outcome for the future of Worcester Warriors.
4. Request the Managing Director to write to Robin Walker MP to ask the DCMS to extend the scope of the proposed independent football regulator, to cover other professional spectator team sports including Rugby Union.
5. Request the Managing Director to write to Steve Diamond, the Director of Rugby at the Worcester Warriors, to thank him for his efforts in helping the playing staff in these difficult times.
6. That Worcester City Council will engage in some commercial activity to financially assist the club that is appropriate; this could include hiring club owned facilities, advertising boards at Sixways, advertisement in the matchday programme or on the big screens.

The proposer, Councillor Stephen Hodgson and the seconder, Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson, both spoke in support of the Motion.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Denham and seconded by Councillor Udall:

7. Council agrees to recognise the contribution of Worcester Warriors Foundation to many aspects of health and well-being in our city communities and seek ways to co-operate with the Foundation to facilitate the sustainability of their projects in Worcester.

A vote on this amendment was carried, following which the Motion, as amended, was put to the vote. The Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees the actions set out in items 1-7 above.

The Mayor then proposed a short adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9.20p.m. and reconvened at 9.30p.m.

5. Climate and Ecology Bill

Worcester City Council resolves to:

1. Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
2. Mandate the Managing Director to write to our local MP Robin Walker informing him that the motion has been passed and urging him to sign up to support the Bill;
3. Mandate the Managing Director to write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing the Council's support for the Climate and Ecology Bill.

The proposer, Councillor Lewing and the seconder, Councillor Laurenson, both spoke in support of the Motion. Other Members spoke in support of the Motion, where a range of views were expressed across the Chamber, following which the Motion was put to the vote. The Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agree to instruct the Managing Director to:

1. **write to Robin Walker, MP informing him that a motion has been passed by the Council to support the Climate and Ecology Bill and urging him to sign up to support the Bill; and**
2. **write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing the Council's support for the Climate and Ecology Bill.**

6. Investment Zones

This Council believes a transition to a fairer, greener local economy can be achieved with targeted investment in renewable energy, building insulation, public transport and nature recovery. We are concerned that Government plans for Investment Zones, far from supporting such a transition, could actually set them back, whilst undermining local control of planning. We note the Open Letter to the Prime Minister signed by 78 leaders of nature, conservation and humanitarian organisations and charities, which states that "proposals to weaken environmental planning rules in "Investment Zones" around the country would be... misconceived".

This Council therefore resolves to call on Worcestershire County Council to:

- Make plain their commitment to local control of planning.
- Make plain that they will continue to insist on existing environmental protections and nature recovery rules – as a minimum.

Where council leaders insist on submitting 'Expressions of Interest' forms, we call on them to declare that they will:

- Not accept a reduction in affordable housing as a percentage of overall development in their area.
- Refuse to provide a simple 'Yes' to the question "Do you agree in principle to ensure outstanding planning matters impeding early delivery are brought to resolution to an accelerated timetable (enabling additional delivery within the next two years)?"
- Refuse to provide a simple 'Yes' to the request to "confirm whether you will agree in principle to using a new streamlined overarching planning system".

Open Letter to the Prime Minister: <https://www.wcl.org.uk/open-letter-to-pm-on-environmental-deregulation.asp>

The proposer, Councillor Bisset and the seconder, Councillor Stephen, both spoke in support of the Motion. Other Members spoke in support of the Motion, where a range of views were expressed across the Chamber, following which the Motion was put to the vote. The Motion was agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council agree to instruct the Managing Director to:

1. **write to Worcestershire County Council, calling them to:**
 - **Make plain their commitment to local control of planning.**
 - **Make plain that they will continue to insist on existing environmental protections and nature recovery rules – as a minimum; and**
2. **where council leaders insist on submitting 'Expressions of Interest' forms, write to them, calling them to declare that they will:**

- **Not accept a reduction in affordable housing as a percentage of overall development in their area.**
- **Refuse to provide a simple 'Yes' to the question "Do you agree in principle to ensure outstanding planning matters impeding early delivery are brought to resolution to an accelerated timetable (enabling additional delivery within the next two years)?"**
- **Refuse to provide a simple 'Yes' to the request to "confirm whether you will agree in principle to using a new streamlined overarching planning system".**

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

The Council received reports on matters which by law or in accordance with the Constitution are referred to Council for decision.

51 Referral Report from Standards Committee - Standards Committee Annual Report

The Council considered a referral report from the Chair of Standards Committee on the Annual Report of the Committee, which provided a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee in the 2021/22 municipal year.

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

RESOLVED: That the Council receives the Standards Committee Annual Report 2021/22.

52 Referral Report from Income Generation Sub-Committee - Electrical Vehicle Charging Prices

The Council considered a referral report from the Chair of the Income Generation Sub-Committee on proposed changes to the tariff for the EV charge points installed in St Martin's Gate car park.

At the meeting on 27th July 2022, the Sub-Committee had considered a report which explained that the Council's electricity costs had increased by 22% since the current charge was set in 2021. Officers had reviewed information on the pricing of other electric vehicle charging facilities locally, as a result of which it was recommended that the charge is set at 39p per kWh incl. VAT for the 22kW chargers and 49p incl. VAT per kWh for the 50kW chargers. This was recommended as a market rate which will also cover the cost of service provision.

It was proposed by Councillor Riaz and seconded by Councillor Mackay and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the proposed charges set out above.

53 Amendments to the Constitution

The Council considered a report on proposed amendments to the Constitution. The Joint Leader presented the report and explained that the amendments were to provide clarity on a number of points where the Constitution does not reflect the Council's preferred operating arrangements. The amendments were:

Issue	Proposed amendment
Name of the Income Generation Sub-Committee does not fully capture its purpose/remit bearing in mind its role in the scrutiny of fees and management of income and the constraints on Council investment activity.	Change name to: Income Management Sub-Committee.
Recognising inflationary pressures and the regular fluctuation in fees and charges for review, the Members of the Income Generation Sub-Committee propose increasing the level of authority that the s151 Officer has to approve in-year variations themselves, without recourse to a Member body.	In the Council's financial procedure rules, add: "the Corporate Director Finance and Resources to approve any variation to fees and charges which is not estimated to result in an increase or decrease in income of more or less than £10,000." Delete references to £5,000 accordingly.
The function of financial hardship and welfare of residents is not clearly the responsibility of any one Committee. Where financial support relates to residents' welfare, it is an area of interest to the Health and Wellbeing Committee.	In Part 3, to the functions of Health and Wellbeing Committee, add: "Financial Hardship and Support relating to the Welfare of Residents"
The function of museums, heritage and culture is currently assigned in the Constitution to the Communities Committee, whereas in practice it is an area of interest to the Place and Economic Development Committee	In Part 3, to the functions of the Place and Economic Development Committee add: • "Museums, heritage and culture" and delete from the functions of the Communities Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Bayliss and seconded by Councillor Denham and upon being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That Council approves, with immediate effect, the amendments to the Constitution set out in this report and authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to make the necessary drafting changes to the Constitution.

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

The Joint Leader informed Members that this would be his last meeting as Joint Leader of the Council. He reflected on his time in the role and noted various achievements of the Council during that period. He thanked members of the Conservative Group, residents of Bedwardine Ward and Officers of the Council for their support. He thanked Members and the Mayor expressed his thanks in return on behalf of the Council.

55 Items Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information

None.

56 Any Exempt Issues

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 10.20p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
29th November 2022

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