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WS – Divest! Secures Major Win as West Sussex Council Agrees to Debate Pension Fund Investments

CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX — December 2025

WS – Divest! has achieved a significant campaign victory, successfully **securing a formal debate** at the upcoming full West Sussex County Council meeting on **Friday 12th December at 10:30am**. Councillors will, for the first time, be required to publicly examine the county's pension fund investments in companies complicit in the Israeli government's occupation of Palestine and war crimes in Gaza.

This marks a major step forward for campaigners, following months of public pressure and growing cross-party concern about the council's refusal to review its investments in ten companies linked to Israel's system of apartheid.

"More than 3,000 West Sussex residents have now signed our petition calling for divestment," said **Gill Poole**, convenor of WS – Divest!. "Securing this debate is a clear win for everyone who refuses to see their pensions and public money invested in companies enabling human rights abuses. The council must now divest."

The Companies in Question

WS – Divest! highlights evidence that the WSCC Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is currently invested in ten companies implicated in enabling or profiting from violations of international law. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign estimates approximately **£219.6 million** in investments linked to companies accused of sustaining Israel's system of apartheid and military occupation.

These include:

- **Ford Motor Company** – vehicles adapted for Israeli military use
- **Maersk** – ships military equipment to Israel
- **Siemens** – rail infrastructure crossing into occupied land
- **Cisco, Amazon & Alphabet (Google)** – tech services for surveillance and cloud military infrastructure
- **Teva Pharmaceuticals** – benefits from a captive market under occupation
- **Barclays & HSBC** – provide billions in financing and services to arms manufacturers supplying Israel

This list is based on FOI-obtained investment data verified by **AFSC Investigate** and **Who Profits**, both used and recommended by **London CIV**.

Legal Responsibility

A legal notice recently issued by the **Palestine Solidarity Campaign** argues that LGPS-administering authorities now have an immediate legal obligation to divest from companies enabling Israel's military occupation, apartheid, and acts of genocide.

WS – Divest! says the notice underscores the urgency of action. **Twenty-four councils** across the UK have already taken steps towards divestment, including **Brighton & Hove City Council**, which voted overwhelmingly on **13th October** to investigate its own investment exposure.

Councillors to Submit Proposition Backing the Petition

With the debate now secured, councillors will have a formal opportunity to raise concerns that were previously unable to progress. At the 12th December meeting, **supportive councillors will put forward a proposition endorsing the WS – Divest! petition**, calling for the council to review and address its investment links to companies implicated in human rights abuses.

“At the last council meeting, elected representatives raised serious ethical and legal concerns about where pension funds are invested,” said **Mark Record**, WS – Divest! member. “This debate is a win for transparency and public accountability. We urge the council to act in line with the values and concerns of West Sussex residents.”

— **Mark Record, WS – Divest!**

Debate Details

Location: County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

Time: 10:30am, Friday 12th December 2025

WS – Divest! representatives will be present and available for interviews.

About WS - Divest!

WS - Divest! is a grassroots group of West Sussex residents calling for the County Council to divest its pension fund from companies complicit in breaches of international law and human rights abuses in Palestine. The campaign is citizen-led and supported by residents, students, workers, and pension holders across the county.

High-resolution image of campaigners is available here:

<https://wsdivest.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/13thOct03-scaled.jpg>

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