

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

13 MARCH 2024

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs O'Rourke), Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Barnett, Bennett, Mrs Brown, Daly, Miss Dumbleton, Edwards, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Harrington, Mrs Hassell, Karadiar, D Keeling, Lewis, Ms Livesey, Mrs Maoudis, Mrs McKenzie, Mistry, Moran, Mrs New, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Rabin, Ms Robbins, Mrs Robinson, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Russell, Sandison, Mrs Sayani, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Slinger, Srivastava, Mrs Timms, Ward and Ms Watson-Merret.

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Douglas, Hassell, J Keeling, Lawrence and Willis.

94. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a)(1) – UK Share Prosperity Fund – Year 3 Spend – Councillor Moran (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being Chair of Rugby Swimming Club).

Item 6(a)(2) – Swimming Pool Fund: Phase 2 - Councillor Lewis (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a member of Rugby Sport for the Disabled).

96. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members had been informed of the sudden death of a much-loved colleague and friend, who had worked at the Council for nearly 10 years across several teams, most recently as a Customer Service Advisor.

Members' thoughts were with her family, friends and colleagues at this difficult time. The Mayor along with everyone present at the meeting stood in a moment's silence in her memory.

Rugby Borough Council will be 50 years old in April. The Council was formed by a merger between the Rugby Urban District Council and the Rugby Rural District Council which came into effect in 1974, when the Council was also allowed to use the "borough" name.

The Mayor announced that there would be a number of projects and events during the Council's golden anniversary year and more details would be announced in the coming weeks. The Mayor encouraged all Members and officers to join in with these and celebrate this Council's service to its communities and the contributions of our residents.

The Mayor provided an update on events to raise money for local charities:

- The Mayor had hosted a charity quiz at The Bell public house, Hillmorton, in memory of her husband, Brendan. £400 was raised at the event which would be donated to her mayoral charity, Rugby Myton Hospice.
- The Mayor attended a quiz at The Seven Stars public house in memory of Brendan which raised £800. This money would be donated to Hope4.
- On 26 April 2024, the Mayor would be hosting a beach bingo night in memory of Brendan at Rugby Railway Club, Tickets would be available from the Democratic Services team and the Railway Club. The Mayor encouraged everyone to attend.

97. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

A. Councillor Mrs McKenzie asked the Leader of the Council and Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Poole:

"There is considerable fly tipping of food packaging such as drink bottles where the trucks queue to get into the Veolia Ling Hall Quarry tip on Coalpit Lane, Lawford Heath and it is also too dangerous for the Rugby Litter Busters group to clear it up (nor should they have to). Could the Leader of the Council please write to the manager of the tip reminding him of his responsibilities to ensure customers and his drivers accessing the site do not litter or fly tip and furthermore, to remind him to ensure that all loads entering are secure and are not depositing waste on the verges on their journey to the tip. Could he also investigate installing monitoring at this location to fine those found littering and fly tipping?"

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council and Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, provided the following response:

"I would like to thank Cllr McKenzie for her question as it gives me an opportunity to give Council an update. I am aware of these littering issues as I am a member of the site community liaison committee, along with Cllr Heather Timms, and we have been working with officers from the council (Community Safety and Environmental Health; and Works Services) and other organisations to resolve this issue. I have noted your comments and I will continue to work them to find the right solution."

Councillor Mrs McKenzie then asked if best practice at other councils could be obtained. Councillor Poole informed Councillor Mrs McKenzie

that the Council looked at other council's practices as well as appropriate enforcement measures and would continue to do so.

B. Councillor Alison Livesey asked the Communities, Home, Digital and Communication Portfolio Holder, Councillor Tim Willis:

"How many children aged under 10 and specifically, babies aged under one have been housed in temporary accommodation by RBC (broken down by inside and outside the borough) since March 2023, how many of their families have been found permanent accommodation and how many children remain in temporary accommodation in March 2024? What out of borough locations have been used?"

Councillor Tim Willis, Communities, Home, Digital and Communication Portfolio Holder, provided the following response:

"Thank you for your question, Councillor Livesey.

Between March 2023 and March 2024, 196 children under the age of 10 have been accommodated in interim accommodation by the Council. This includes 3 children under the age of one. This is from a total of 57 households with children that were accommodated during that time, with 18 of these families each having three or more children.

We utilise a range of suitable temporary accommodation, which includes our own stock and privately leased properties. Bed & Breakfast will only be used as a last resort, and I can confirm that no children are temporarily accommodated in HMOs.

Of the 57 households, 43 households were supported to secure permanent accommodation.

There are currently 14 households, with 39 children aged under 10 (including one aged under 1-year old) in temporary accommodation, whilst their application in respect of homelessness is being assessed to determine the duty owed by the council under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

During the same period, the Council has temporarily accommodated families including 4 children under the age of 10, outside of the borough. None of these children were under the age of 1-year. These placements were split across Northampton, Nuneaton and Lutterworth and ranged from between 2 and 5 days."

Councillor Ms Livesey then asked the Leader of the Council, in the absence of the Portfolio Holder, what is the longest period of time a child under 10 has been housed in temporary accommodation. The Leader of the Council would provide Councillor Ms Livesey with a written response.

C. Councillor Slinger to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole:

“What progress has been made of the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group regarding its work streams, particularly as regards delivery of specific tangible projects so that residents can know when to expect the town centre to be revitalised?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council, provided the following response:

“As Councillor Slinger will be aware as a member of the cross party working group, the working group was created to shape and oversee the regeneration of the town centre. Chaired by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, the group has agreed a set of 19 workstreams to deliver the regeneration of the town centre. Councillor Slinger will also be aware that the working group agreed an action plan for the current year 23/24. An update report is provided twice a year to Cabinet and Council on progress. The first report is scheduled for June which is the first available Council following the end of the financial year. Members and the public can find out more about the town centre and the workstreams on the new dedicated webpages [Rugby town centre regeneration strategy - Rugby Borough Council](#). These webpages are constantly updated and are the best place to keep abreast of the works underway.

Ahead of the report in June, I will set out a few of the schemes that are already underway:

Public Realm

A consultant team called Planit have been employed to design public realm masterplan to deliver a high quality public realm including

- Creating an accessible environment
- Opportunities to mitigate the impact of climate change and support a low carbon town centre
- Providing reasons to pause, dwell and enjoy the town centre
- Encouraging people to explore and discover the town centre
- Considering how public space can be activated and used to encourage social connections and grow and encourage new experiences in the town centre
- Promote links between high quality environments such as our beautiful parks and green spaces with consideration of people’s health and wellbeing; and
- Promote and enhance Rugby’s heritage

The working group has already received and initial presentation from the consultants and public consultation is planned for June. More details can be found here [Public realm - Rugby Borough Council](#) which also includes details of public realm schemes already underway like St Andrews Gardens.

Meanwhile Uses

CJ Events have been employed to take over the running of the market in Rugby. CJ Events bring significant experience at running markets across Warwickshire and the West Midlands for both Councils and private organisations such as Warwick Castle. Members of the working group have recently been discussing with CJ Events how we can further improve and expand the market in Rugby.

A vacant shop audit is underway which will identify the reasons for vacancy rates within the Town Centre and provide an action plan to decrease the vacancy rates in Rugby and also opportunities for shop front dressing.

A Shop Front Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved for consultation at Cabinet on the 11th March which will provide guidance for shop front design, especially within the Town Centre Conservation Area. A report to Council on the 13th March also recommends that a grant scheme be established using UK Shared Prosperity Funds to allow business to bid for funds to upgrade the appearance of their shopfronts in line with this guidance.

Asset Strategy and Catalyst Sites

The Council has employed CBRE to conduct options appraisals of all council assets within the town centre to explore their optimal use and to ensure that the Council's sites can facilitate physical change which will transform the town centre.

Discussions are also ongoing with the landowners of Rugby Central a catalyst site which occupies a 5 acre plot in the town centre about their plans for redevelopment.

Creative and Marketing

The Council has employed Hemmingway Design to create a coherent strategy to create pride in place and which

- Promotes Rugby town centre as a place to visit, live, do business and invest.
- Positively markets Rugby as an investment opportunity.
- Positively influences people's perception of and association with Rugby and its town centre.
- Provide confidence to the public and potential investors that Rugby Borough Council can deliver on its aspirations and is a successful partner to collaborate with.
- Supports Rugby town centre retailers in promoting their businesses.

Business Hub

On the Council Agenda on the 13th March is report for allocating UK Shared Prosperity Funds which includes initial funding for a business hub. To trial the concept this hub is designed to create a physical hub for business and community support with private and public sector partners and provide a space for start-ups and early-stage businesses with support and resource and also provides a collaborative ecosystem that fosters innovation, drives economic growth and creates a sustainable and prosperous business environment for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainable Travel

Discussions have been taking place with Warwickshire County Council across their highways and transportation team and the working group to focus on improving travel to and from and within the town centre.

More details on the workstreams and the progress can be found here [Workstreams - Rugby Borough Council](#) .“

Councillor Slinger then asked the Leader of the Council when the people of Rugby would see regeneration and tangible change to deliver on the workstreams of the Working Group.

Councillor Picker, as Growth and Investment Portfolio Holder, responded that the next meeting of the Working Group would look at proposals from CBRE to move projects forward for delivery.

D. Councillor Moran asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole:

“What progress has been made on the important work of developing an economic development policy for the Borough and what expectations are being set for this work to energise the future economic growth of the town and its villages?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council, provided the following response:

“As Councillor Moran will be aware, a cross party member Economic Strategy Working Group has been established to shape the new economic strategy for the Borough. This strategy is currently in the data gathering stage and it is expected that a draft strategy will be made available for consultation in the summer.

Work is also being undertaken in collaboration at a regional level with both Warwickshire County Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority who are developing county and regional economic strategies, whilst our economic strategy will focus on the Borough.

The development of an Economic Strategy is vital as it will inform the Council's review of the Local Plan as a key evidence base to support employment policy development and site allocations."

Councillor Moran then asked the Leader of the Council if the delivery timetable was achievable when the first meeting of the Working Group had yet to meet. He also asked the Leader if he considered that the Council had been negligent in the delivery of the last Local Plan without an Economic Development Policy.

Councillor Picker, as Growth and Investment Portfolio Holder, considered that the Council should be ambitious in its delivery of the policy and that, with the first meeting of the Working Group being held on 14 March, consultation on the strategy in the summer was achievable. He did not consider that the Council had been negligent in the delivery of the last Local Plan without an Economic Development Policy.

98. REPORT OF CABINET – 11 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED THAT – the report of Cabinet be confirmed and adopted.

99. REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Use of Councillor Suffixes

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning the use of Councillor suffixes.

RESOLVED THAT – the removal of all suffixes in addressing all Councillors, unless requested by any individual Councillor, be approved.

(b) Elections - Resources

The Mayor informed the meeting that this item had been withdrawn.

100. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

(a) Councillor Ms Livesey moved and Councillor Mrs Brown seconded the following motion, notice of which had been given under Standing Order 11:

“Following a recent answer to a question which revealed Rugby Borough Council has little information on the social value of initiatives it undertakes, the Labour Group call on the Council to adopt as a matter of urgency:

- *A best practice Social Value policy as promoted by the LGA and The Social Value Portal in their Social Value for District Authorities toolkit, incorporating the TOMs set out in the toolkit.*

- *The embedding of social value into all procurement and require all contractors on report on social value in line with the requirements of the policy. Typically, this might mean jobs for those furthest from the job market, spend with local SMEs, opportunities for voluntary organisations, environmental improvements, and volunteering in the community.*
- *A social value calculator so that a financial value of the impact of the work can be calculated.*
- *An annual report to council on the social value of all initiatives in the previous financial/municipal year whichever is deemed appropriate.*

Councillor Mrs McKenzie then moved and Councillor Bennett seconded the following amendment (in bold font) which was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the original motion:

“Following a recent answer to a question which revealed Rugby Borough Council has little information on the social value of initiatives it undertakes, the Labour Group call on the Council to adopt as a matter of urgency:

- *A best practice Social Value policy as promoted by the LGA and The Social Value Portal in their Social Value for District Authorities toolkit, incorporating the TOMs set out in the toolkit.*
- *The embedding of social value into all procurement and require all contractors on report on social value in line with the requirements of the policy. Typically, this might mean jobs for those furthest from the job market, spend with local SMEs, opportunities for voluntary organisations, environmental improvements, and volunteering in the community.*
- ***An implementation plan from the Chief Executive setting out how Social Value will be implemented and monitored throughout the organisation***
- *A social value calculator so that a financial value of the impact of the work can be calculated.*
- *An annual report to council on the social value of all initiatives in the previous financial/municipal year whichever is deemed appropriate.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it carried. The Mayor then put the substantive motion to the vote and declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT - the Council to adopt as a matter of urgency:

- A best practice Social Value policy as promoted by the LGA and The Social Value Portal in their Social Value for District Authorities toolkit, incorporating the TOMs set out in the toolkit.
- The embedding of social value into all procurement and require all contractors on report on social value in line with the requirements of the policy. Typically, this might mean jobs for those furthest from the job market, spend with local SMEs, opportunities for voluntary organisations, environmental improvements, and volunteering in the community.
- An implementation plan from the Chief Executive setting out how Social Value will be implemented and monitored throughout the organisation
- A social value calculator so that a financial value of the impact of the work can be calculated.
- An annual report to council on the social value of all initiatives in the previous financial/municipal year whichever is deemed appropriate.

(b) Councillor Mrs Robinson moved and Councillor Harrington seconded the following motion, notice of which had been given under Standing Order 11:

“Starting with Caldecott Park in 2024, this Council commits to improving inclusivity across all Council-run parks for children with mobility problems, physical disabilities and special educational needs and disabilities by:

- 1. Hosting a focus group to engage children with lived experience, their carers, families, and relevant community groups. The scope of the focus group will include coproduction of the design of the planned inclusive play area in Caldecott Park and coproduction of a list of inclusive design principles.*
- 2. Ensuring the coproduction process considers intersectionality, such as gender, therefore maximising the opportunities to improve inclusion.*
- 3. Publishing the coproduced list of inclusive design principles on the Council website and using the list in the contracting processes for all future play area installations, maintenance, and upgrades.*
- 4. Creating a ‘community of interest’ constituted of people with lived experience and relevant community groups to routinely consult through the Council's rolling process of play area instalments, maintenance, and upgrades.”*

Following debate, the Mayor put the motion to the vote and declared it carried.

101. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT - under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

102. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 11 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED THAT – the report of Cabinet be confirmed and adopted.

103. PRIVATE REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Election Fees and Charges

Council considered the report of the Returning Officer (Part 2– agenda item 2(a)) concerning fees and charges for staffing of elections.

RESOLVED THAT – the Scale of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

MAYOR