

# MINUTES OF COUNCIL

28 SEPTEMBER 2022

## PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Ms Watson-Merret), Councillors Mrs Brown, Mrs Crane, Daly, Douglas, Edwards, Ellis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Harrington, Miss Lawrence, Lawrence, Lewis, Ms Livesey, Lowe, Mahoney, Ms Maoudis, Mistry, Moran, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Slinger, Mrs Timms, Ward, Ms Watson-Merret, Dr Williams and Willis.

## 27. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Due to the lengthy agenda and the number of motions and possible amendments, it was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and

**RESOLVED THAT** – paragraphs 13.6 (g) and (h) of Part 3A of the Council Standing Orders be suspended.

## 28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Mrs Allanach, Mrs A'Barrow, Miss Dumbleton, Eccleson, Mrs Hassell, Rabin, Mrs Roberts, Roberts and Srivastava.

## 29. MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 19 July 2022 (adjourned to 26 July 2022) and the extraordinary meeting held on 9 September 2022 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

## 30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillor Picker (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of his employer being referred to within the motion).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillor Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a member of Healthwatch UK).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillors Ellis and Mrs O'Rourke (non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being employed within the National Health Service).

Item 8(f) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillor Mrs Timms (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture at Warwickshire County Council).

Item 8(j) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillor Mrs O'Rourke (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of a family member being employed within the taxi trade).

Item 8(k) of Part 1 – Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11 – Councillor Mrs Timms (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture at Warwickshire County Council).

### **31. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) The Mayor was delighted to announce that Rugby had been presented with a gold award in the small city category of the Heart of England in Bloom Awards.

The Mayor had attended the award ceremony at Birmingham's Tally Ho Conferencing and Banqueting Centre, where, in addition to winning the gold award, the Council's Grounds Maintenance team had been presented with a discretionary award in recognition of the hard work and dedication it displayed throughout the pandemic, which ensured the borough's parks and green spaces continue to set the gold standard.

The Mayor also paid tribute to the Friends of Dunchurch Society, which was the driving force behind the village's gold award and category winner of the Heart of England in Bloom large village category.

The borough's In Bloom entries bring the whole community together, from residents, volunteers and schools to community organisations, businesses and sponsors. It is a team effort which has now helped Rugby win 14 gold awards in a row.

The Mayor congratulated everyone involved in this year's tremendous achievements.

(b) Following the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Council had to follow a strict protocol on arrangements and procedures. On Sunday 11 September, the Council, along with all other local authorities, had to announce the Proclamation given at St James' Palace in London the previous day, which traditionally formally declared the new monarch. The Mayor had been honoured to welcome Jill Samuda, Deputy Lieutenant of Warwickshire, to deliver the Proclamation. The event was very well attended and also gave everyone the opportunity to observe the floral tributes left in Caldecott Park in memory of Her Late Majesty. The Mayor thanked all officers involved in arranging the ceremony, which had to be put into place at such short notice.

(c) On 18 September the Mayor was invited by the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, Tim Cox and the Chairman of Warwickshire County Council, Councillor David Humphreys, to attend a County Memorial Service for Her Late Majesty the Queen at the Collegiate Church of St Mary in Warwick. The church service was also attended by a number of Members, together with the Executive Director from this Council and was a moving tribute to her Late Majesty.

(d) The Mayor had been delighted to attend the Rugby Food and Drink Festival in the town centre last weekend. It had been brilliant to see a variety of organisations working in partnership to deliver a quality family event for local people as well as visitors from further afield, with local produce and goods available to try and purchase. The Mayor congratulated everyone involved in arranging such a wonderful event.

## **32. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10**

### **A. Councillor Slinger to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:**

“Further to the Leader of the Council’s response to my question at Council on 19 July with regard to HMOs:

(a) will the Leader of the Council include within the new Local Plan a radius-based policy, as described in that answer that would enable the Council to limit the number of HMOs to a certain percentage within a given area?

(b) when does the Council expect the conclusion of the review that its officers are currently undertaking to assess the “available evidence to determine if a recommendation should be made to Council for selective or additional licensing for this type of private sector housing in some of the wards with the highest numbers of HMOs”, and will the Council publish the results in full?

(c) has this Council contacted other local authorities that have used various mechanisms, as outlined in the cross-party Planning Services Working Party (PSWP) to which he referred, that have been able to limit the percentage of HMOs in a given area, with a view to understanding what mechanisms may be available to the Council?

(d) has the Council ever commissioned research into the opinions of residents in roads where the Council has data suggesting a high percentage of HMOs?”

### **Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:**

(a) Yes, the Council will introduce a radius based policy in the new Local Plan which would allow the Council greater control over the number of HMOs in a given area.

(b) The review involves a number of partners and views of residents. While we cannot give a date, as we need to ensure we have the most important information that members will need, officers will produce a report for

consideration by councillors and it will be published, though we will ensure we meet data protection responsibilities so data will be anonymised.

(c) Yes, the Council has contacted other authorities about the use of various mechanisms outlined to PSWP. In drafting policies as part of a new Local Plan, the Council will draw on best practice from other local authorities which share the characteristics of the town of Rugby.

(d) Residents in the Benn Ward, where we are piloting a new initiative called area action where we coordinate tackling local issues, will be surveyed regarding a number of issues affecting their community as part of the pilot. The Benn Ward is a priority as it has the highest number of HMOs (approximately 50% of the licensed HMOs in the borough)."

Councillor Slinger then asked if the Leader of the Council could guarantee that New Bilton would also be included in the area action pilot initiative and if measures could be put in place prior to the implementation of the new Local Plan to include reference to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Councillor Lowe was happy for the pilot to be extended to include New Bilton. The Leader of the Council would consult with officers concerning measures relating to HMOs and the Local Plan and write to Councillor Slinger.

### **33. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 JULY 2022**

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report of Scrutiny Committee be approved and adopted.

### **56. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

#### **(a) Customer Access Strategy**

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Digital and Communications (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning a proposed Customer Access Strategy.

#### **RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Customer Access Strategy for 2022-24, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted; and
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Digital and Communications to make any non-material amendments.

#### **(b) Openreach Infrastructure Proposal**

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Digital and Communications (Part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning the delivery of fibre network by Openreach within the borough.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the continued delivery of a fibre network by Openreach within the Borough, as set out in the report, be approved and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director to put in place the necessary arrangements to facilitate this scheme of investment in Rugby;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance to negotiate and enter a Master Wayleave Agreement and associated resourcing Service Agreement with Openreach on appropriate terms to support the scheme of investment in Rugby; and
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance to agree a process for approving wayleave applications which will form part of the Master Wayleave Agreement and as noted above forms part of this Scheme of investment. The applications will be submitted in stages and the routes considered pursuant to this process.

**(c) Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan**

Council considered the report of the Deputy Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 7(c)) concerning a proposed Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan be adopted, subject to the amendments in Appendix B to the report;
- (2) all actions from the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan be added to the Corporate Strategy Delivery Plan; and
- (3) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Executive Director, in consultation with the Councillor Climate Change Champion, to make non-material amendments prior to design work and publication.

**(d) Localism Act – Pay Policy Statement**

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance (Part 1 – agenda item 7(d)) concerning the Council’s annual Pay Policy Statement.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the new Pay Policy Statement, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted with immediate effect;

- (2) the title of both the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director being changed, with immediate effect to Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive; and
- (3) delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution relating to the above recommendation.

#### **(e) Additional Resources – Bid Officer**

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Growth and Investment (Part 1 – agenda item 7(e)), together with a supplementary report, concerning additional resources within the Council’s Economic Development team.

#### **RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the establishment of a new 3-year fixed term post of Bid Officer, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (2) a budget of £43,620 over 2022/23 and 2023/24 as detailed in table 1 section 3 be established to fund the post in the first year which will be funded by:
  - a supplementary budget in 2022/23 of £10,178 and in 2023/24 of £20,346 to be financed from the Town Centre Improvement Reserve; and
  - a supplementary budget in 2022/23 of £4,362 and in 2023/24 of £8,724 to be financed from the Climate Change reserve; and
- (3) a supplementary budget of £14,540 in 2023/24, £43,620 in 2024/25 and £29,080 in 2025/26 be approved to be picked up as part of the annual budget setting process.

#### **34. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11**

Council considered the following Motions, notice of which had been given pursuant to Standing Order 11.

- (a) Councillor Daly moved and Councillor Ward seconded the motion as set out below.

*“Following the recent publication of the 2021 Census, which shows that Rugby Borough grew by 14.4% compared to the 2011 Census data, it is clear that the population growth needs to be matched by appropriate infrastructure growth. This has been achieved in employment capacity, but regrettably health provision has not kept pace with the town’s growth.*

*Council notes and welcomes the recent work of Mark Pawsey MP in highlighting this in Westminster, including during a recent Parliamentary debate, and calls on the Leader of the Council to write on behalf of the people of the Borough to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and to the*

*Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System in support of additional urgent and emergency care provision at the local Hospital of St Cross.”*

Councillor Roodhouse moved and Councillor Mrs New seconded the following amendment to the motion:

*“Following the recent publication of the 2021 Census, which shows that Rugby Borough grew by 14.4% compared to the 2011 Census data, it is clear that the population growth needs to be matched by appropriate infrastructure growth. This has been achieved in employment capacity, but regrettably health provision has not kept pace with the town’s growth.*

*Council notes and welcomes the cross party working, including the work of Mark Pawsey MP highlighting this, including during a recent Parliamentary debate, and calls on the Leader of the Council to write on behalf of the people of the Borough to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and to the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System in support of additional ambulance cover, dentistry provision alongside urgent and emergency care provision at the local Hospital of St Cross.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

(b) Councillor Mrs Brown, in the absence of Councillor Srivastava, moved and Councillor Ellis seconded the motion as set out below.

*“Volunteering and a strong voluntary sector, lie at the very heart of thriving communities, they empower and connect both the individual volunteer and the wider community.*

*This Council has a key role to play in supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector. Many people living in the borough are experiencing falling incomes, increases in energy prices and a general increase in the cost of living. This will lead to our volunteer sector be stretched far more than ever before.*

*We would therefore ask this Council to arrange a lead local summit with all of the key stakeholders to identify how we, the Council, can best support the local voluntary sector.”*

Further to the proposer and seconder speaking and in accordance with paragraph 11.2(d) of Council Standing Orders, the motion stood referred to Scrutiny Committee.

(c) Councillor Ms Livesey moved and Councillor Harrington seconded the motion as set out below.

*“Like all concerned citizens, the Labour Group is very worried about the impact of the new energy price cap on low-income households in Rugby. Many will not be able to heat their homes. The Last JSNA found that 13.4% of households in North Rugby were classed as fuel poor. That was in 2019 – one year before the pandemic, two years before we started to see rises in energy costs and three years before Putin invaded Ukraine and threatened*

*Europe's gas supplies. We accept that there is little the Council can do to alter these global economic shocks that will hit our residents this winter, but there are things it can do to help alleviate the effects.*

*The Labour Group therefore calls on the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homes to:*

- *instruct officers to find out as a matter of urgency how many households in the borough are likely to have difficulty heating their home this winter (this will include council tenants, tenants in private rented accommodation including HMOs and those who own their own home either through a mortgage or outright)*
- *instruct officers to undertake an urgent survey of council owned buildings to see which could be made available to residents unable to heat their homes as a "warm bank"*
- *promote the scheme to other organisations who own large publicly accessible buildings such as the FE college, and leisure centres and for officers to work with villages and parish councils to see what can be done in rural areas*
- *instruct officers to undertake a publicity campaign aimed at vulnerable residents to make them aware of where they can go to keep warm during the winter, alerting them to sources of help with heating bills such as the Warm Homes Discount and signposting to organisations who can help with fuel debt and supported payments such as CAB and other advice organisations*
- *instruct officers to conduct an evaluation of the scheme and report back to full council next spring/summer on the effectiveness of the publicity campaign and the use of the scheme, how many children under 18 were impacted, how many adults under 65 and how many people over 65."*

Further to debate, Councillor Lowe moved and Councillor Poole seconded the following amendment (in bold):

*"Like all concerned citizens, the Labour Group is very worried about the impact of the new energy price cap on low-income households in Rugby. Many will not be able to heat their homes. The Last JSNA found that 13.4% of households in North Rugby were classed as fuel poor. That was in 2019 – one year before the pandemic, two years before we started to see rises in energy costs and three years before Putin invaded Ukraine and threatened Europe's gas supplies. We accept that there is little the Council can do to alter these global economic shocks that will hit our residents this winter, but there are things it can do to help alleviate the effects.*

*The Labour Group therefore calls on **Scrutiny Committee** to:*

- *instruct officers to find out as a matter of urgency how many households in the borough are likely to have difficulty heating their home this winter (this will include council tenants, tenants in private rented accommodation including HMOs and those who own their own home either through a mortgage or outright)*

- *instruct officers to undertake an urgent survey of council owned buildings to see which could be made available to residents unable to heat their homes as a “warm bank”*
- *promote the scheme to other organisations who own large publicly accessible buildings such at the FE college, and leisure centres and for officers to work with villages and parish councils to see what can be done in rural areas*
- *instruct officers to undertake a publicity campaign aimed at vulnerable residents to make them aware of where they can go to keep warm during the winter, alerting them to sources of help with heating bills such as the Warm Homes Discount and signposting to organisations who can help with fuel debt and supported payments such as CAB and other advice organisations*
- *instruct officers to conduct an evaluation of the scheme and report back to full council next spring/summer on the effectiveness of the publicity campaign and the use of the scheme, how many children under 18 were impacted, how many adults under 65 and how many people over 65.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

(d) Councillor Ms Livesey moved and Councillor Mrs Brown seconded the motion as set out below.

*“The Labour Group is delighted that ground has been broken on the site of the new Griffin School and Nursery in Eden Park. The benefits a new school building will bring to our youngest residents cannot be overstated. We believe very strongly that children in Rugby deserve the best education, local to the area in which they live.*

*We are concerned, however, at the lack of action by the County Council over the delivery of a new secondary school in north Rugby. All our secondary provision is full and there is an urgent need to build more capacity. Secondary school pupils in Coton and Boughton have to make long and sometimes dangerous journeys across town or even out of the borough to access their education. This encourages additional traffic in town at peak times and adding to congestion and lowering air quality.*

*We, therefore, call upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families at Warwickshire County Council asking him to speed up the development of this much needed new school as a matter of urgency.”*

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

(e) Councillor Ms Livesey moved and Councillor Mrs O'Rourke seconded the motion as set out below.

*“The Labour Group, like most concerned citizens, is appalled at the pictures and films we have seen of raw sewage being dumped in rivers, lakes and onto out beaches. In Rugby we are privileged to have the Rivers Avon and Swift flowing through the town. Both rivers provide valuable habitats for wildlife and are enjoyed by many people. We also have a sewage treatment works right next to the river Avon. We note that in 2021 Severn Trent was responsible for three serious pollution incidents involving sewage and a total of 204 incidents overall. While this gives them a green rating, it is nevertheless a cause for concern. No untreated sewage should be getting into our waterways or seas.*

*We, therefore, call upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Chair and Chief Executive of Severn Trent asking:*

- *how many pollution incidents have taken place at Rugby in the last year (August 2021-August 2022) broken down by the Environment Agency's categories 1-3*
- *what was the origin of these incidents (Combined sewer overflow, foul sewer, pumping station etc)*
- *how many such incidents (broken down in the same way) have taken place in the same period upstream of Rugby resulting in polluted water flowing through our town and where these incidents took place;*
- *what steps are they taking to reduce such pollution incidents by the provision (planned and in development) of additional infrastructure both in Rugby and upstream;*
- *what steps are they taking (in conjunction with partners or not) to alleviate the threat of overflowing sewers in Rugby in the event of severe rainfall leading to serious flooding;*
- *for information on the number of fines and the amounts they have received in relation to these incidents*
- *that Severn Trent provides this information on an annual basis.*

*In addition, we call upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Environment Agency asking it to share the monitoring activity that it undertakes on the sewage treatment works at Rugby and whether there has been any detriment to wildlife in the River Avon in Rugby because of pollution incidents.”*

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

(f) Councillor Slinger moved and Councillor Mrs O'Rourke seconded the following motion:

*"We note that Rugby Borough Council has, to date, not met its obligation to provide a full 61 permanent pitches for the Gypsy and Traveller community, as required for the period between 2017/18 and 2031/32 in Policy DS2 of the adopted Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011- 2031. We note that assessing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs when carrying out a periodical review of housing needs under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 is a statutory requirement under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004. We further note that 41 pitches were still required as at 1 November 2021 and that no planning permission has been granted for pitches since 1 April 2021 that would contribute to the 5-year supply in the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026. We call on this Council to fulfil urgently its duties in respect of the allocation of sites for gypsy and traveller community and call on the Leader of the Council to write immediately to the Leader of Warwickshire County Council to coordinate with all Borough and District Councils, and all other stakeholders, with a view to holding a Warwickshire-wide summit to ensure that Warwickshire is providing its full allocation as required by the Government."*

Further to the proposer and seconder speaking and in accordance with paragraph 11.2(d) of Council Standing Orders, the motion stood referred to Scrutiny Committee.

(g) Councillor Slinger moved and Councillor Mrs O'Rourke seconded the following motion:

*"We call upon the Council to seek to attract partners such as Plus X to build business hubs in Rugby town centre wards. We note that Plus X create inspiring workspaces designed to unlock the potential of local businesses and entrepreneurs, "unlock potential, drive business growth and innovation, community collaboration and positive social impact". We further note that Plus X's first hub was built in an area of social deprivation. We urge the Council to seek to work with partners such as Plus X to provide more opportunities for Rugby's talented entrepreneurs and innovators."*

Further to the proposer and seconder speaking and in accordance with paragraph 11.2(d) of Council Standing Orders, the motion stood referred to Scrutiny Committee.

(h) Councillor Slinger moved and Councillor Mrs O'Rourke seconded the following motion:

*"We call upon the Council to carry out a representative survey of young people in the Borough from the age of 11-25, designed to inform how the Council plans its service delivery, particularly regarding how young people's needs and aspirations can be best addressed by the Council."*

Further to the proposer and seconder speaking and in accordance with paragraph 11.2(d) of Council Standing Orders, the motion stood referred to Scrutiny Committee.

(i) Councillor Roodhouse moved and Councillor Sandison seconded the following motion:

*“Council requests that the Leader and Executive Director ensure that all strategies drive towards helping residents and reduce fuel poverty in the Borough.*

*This will be achieved by:*

- 1. continuing to improve the energy efficiency of all the Borough’s housing stock*
- 2. stronger enforcement of existing regulations on energy efficiency and property standards, particularly in the private rented sector*
- 3. publishing a statement of intent and setting locally appropriate eligibility criteria to access Energy Company Obligation funding via the Local Authority Flexibility arrangements (as managed by Ofgem)*
- 4. seeking and leveraging in extra funds to improve the energy efficiency standards of all housing*
- 5. maximising the incomes of low-income households through the efficient delivery of Council-administered benefits, sensitive recovery of debt and the provision of advice and support*
- 6. holding a summit with all partners including other local authorities to put in place an action plan that supports residents who are struggling with the increased costs.*
- 7. working in partnership with local community groups in supporting vulnerable residents.*

*We also request that the Leader and Executive Director report on progress on tackling the cost-of-living increases on residents monthly to all Members.”*

Councillor Lowe then moved and Councillor Poole seconded the following amendment:

*“Council requests that the **Scrutiny Committee** considers all strategies drive towards helping residents and reduce fuel poverty in the Borough.*

*This **could** be achieved by:*

- 1. continuing to improve the energy efficiency of all the Borough’s housing stock*
- 2. stronger enforcement of existing regulations on energy efficiency and property standards, particularly in the private rented sector*
- 3. publishing a statement of intent and setting locally appropriate eligibility criteria to access Energy Company Obligation funding via the Local Authority Flexibility arrangements (as managed by Ofgem)*

4. *seeking and leveraging in extra funds to improve the energy efficiency standards of all housing*
5. *maximising the incomes of low-income households through the efficient delivery of Council-administered benefits, sensitive recovery of debt and the provision of advice and support*
6. *holding a summit with all partners including other local authorities to put in place an action plan that supports residents who are struggling with the increased costs.*
7. *working in partnership with local community groups in supporting vulnerable residents.*

*We also request that the **Scrutiny Committee** reports on progress on tackling the cost-of-living increases on residents to all Members.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

(j) Councillor Moran moved and Councillor Slinger seconded the following motion:

*“This motion calls on this Council to:*

- *Urgently undertake a comprehensive review of taxi licensing fees in Rugby;*
- *Notwithstanding the above review to urgently consider ways in which it can assist in mitigating the impact of the recent dramatic increase in fees which will otherwise cause hardship for many taxi drivers; and*
- *Review the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and consider whether any requirements can be relaxed or suspended during the current economic climate.*

*The increase to taxi licensing fees was adopted by Full Council at its July meeting, with the new fees being introduced on 1 August 2022. The basis for the new fee regime was to achieve “cost neutrality” for the licensing service within Rugby.*

*During the July Full Council meeting, the Labour Group expressed concerns relating to the scale of the proposed fee increases and the potential impact on the town. Since that meeting, Labour members have been contacted by a significant number of members of the local trade body, all expressing concern at the level of the new fees, the speed with which they were brought in and the impact this will have on the trade and the town centre.*

*The local trade body has also expressed concerns about the process by which the new fees were introduced and feel that real and meaningful consultation was not undertaken and they have expressed their intention to transfer their private hire licensing business to an alternative authority as a result. This could then have an impact on the Council achieving “cost neutrality” for its licensing service.*

*The local trade body has a real concern that the level of increase (e.g 114% increase for an operator licence for 1-4 vehicles or 38% for a 1-year vehicle licence) will have a detrimental effect on a key local business sector that only recently was lauded for its key worker status during the Covid pandemic. Rugby's fees are now significantly higher than other local authorities. In a cost of living crisis and a challenging vehicle market, operators and drivers are telling us that it is unviable to operate. On top of this, the requirements in Rugby's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy around the age of vehicles and adaptations for disability and access requirements, are placing significant financial burdens on drivers and operators in complying with them. We must work together to ensure Rugby retains a viable taxi trade. As such, we also ask that the Leader of the Council makes public both the invitations to participants for the review as well as the finding and outcomes of the review."*

Further to debate, 3 members requested a recorded vote under Standing Order 3A Paragraph 15.4 on the motion.

**For the motion:** Councillors Mrs Brown, Ellis, Harrington, Ms Livesey, Mahoney, Mistry, Moran, Mrs O'Rourke, Slinger – **9 votes**

**Against the motion:** Councillors Mrs Crane, Daly, Douglas, Edwards, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Miss Lawrence, Lawrence, Lewis, Lowe, Ms Maoudis, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Mrs Timms, Ward, Ms Watson-Merret, Dr Williams, Willis – **23 votes**

**Abstentions from the motion:** Councillor Mrs New – **1 vote**

The Mayor declared the motion lost.

(k) Councillor Lowe moved and Councillor Ms Robbins the following motion.

*"Recognising the Leader of the Council has written to Warwickshire County Council (WCC) on the matter of secondary school provision in the north of the borough on a number of occasions recently, Rugby Borough Council urges Warwickshire County Council to work with us regarding a financial feasibility plan for the urgently needed and proposed secondary school on Coton Park East. Both local authorities agreed to a Climate Emergency and the impact of secondary school children being unable to walk to school and having to use transport flies in the face of that policy so this has to happen. As South West Rugby and Houlton develop, the schools in those areas will increasingly take children from their immediate area, thus adversely impacting children in the north of the town, not just in Coton Park, but Eden Park and Brownsover as well. We urge the Executive Director to write to WCC officers to start this process."*

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

**35. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**36. COMMON SEAL**

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and

**RESOLVED THAT** - the Common Seal be affixed to the various orders, deeds and documents to be made or entered into for carrying into effect the several decisions, matters and things approved by the Council and more particularly set out in the reports adopted at this meeting.

**MAYOR**