

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

25 AUGUST 2021

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Deepah Brojohomun-Roberts), Councillors Mrs Allanach, Mrs A'Barrow, Bearne, Brader, Mrs Brown, Mrs Crane, Daly, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Eccleson, Ellis, Gillias, Mrs Hassell, Miss Lawrence, Lewis, Lowe, Mahoney, Mrs Maoudis, Mistry, Mrs O'Rourke, Picker, Poole, Rabin, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Srivastava, Ms Watson-Merret and Willis.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Cade, Mrs Garcia, Keeling, McQueen, Mrs New, Mrs Parker, Roberts, Shera, Mrs Timms and Dr Williams.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20 July 2021 were approved.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a) of Part 1 – Park Connector Network – Whinfield Woods Pathway – Councillor Sandison (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a Ward Councillor).

Item 6(e) of Part 1 - Additional Restrictions Grant - Business Recovery Support – Councillor Lewis (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a trustee of Rugby Bareboards Trust).

Mrs C Waleczek (Democratic Services Team Leader) left the meeting for item 1(b) of Part 2 – Legal and Governance Restructure by virtue of her post being directly affected by the proposal.

37. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) The Council had recently joined the Thrive at Work initiative which was a commitment that organisations could sign up to with criteria and guidelines to help create a workplace that promotes employee health and wellbeing. The Mayor was pleased to announce that the Council had achieved the first level - Foundation level. The foundation level WAS an important part of the Thrive at Work award, giving a comprehensive understanding of the current position of the organisation, the mental and physical wellbeing of the workforce and any lasting impacts as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. The Mayor thanked all officers for their work in this initiative.

(b) Earlier this month the borough had briefly become Rugby-on-Sea, when a beach took pride of place in the heart of the town centre as part of the Council's summer programme of free family events.

Rugby Summertime forms part of the Council's efforts to bring residents back to the town centre following the easing of Covid restrictions, delivering a welcome boost to the economy and offering residents the opportunity to rediscover all the town centre had to offer. So far, the response from the public had been extremely positive.

The council's successful bids for funding from the Government's Return to the High Street Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund had given a great opportunity to kickstart the town centre's pandemic recovery and offer businesses support, both in practical terms and through events such as Rugby Summertime. There were more planned initiatives for later in the year.

On Saturday 30 August 2021, Rugby Summertime would draw to a close with a celebration of the borough's rich and varied musical talent, with bands and solo artists performing at a number of locations in the town centre, including Caldecott Park, St Andrew's Church gardens, and outside Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.

(c) The country was now a month on from the lifting of most Covid legal restrictions on social contact and while residents could welcome a gradual return to a more normal way of life, caution must remain everyone's watchword going forward.

The borough, like the country, had made significant strides in terms of delivering vaccinations and weakening the link between Covid infection and hospitalisation. However, it was important to note case numbers in Rugby continue to rise and remain above the national average.

The council was continuing to work with partners and communities to increase the take-up of vaccinations and encouraged residents to carry out regular testing. The Mayor, once again, paid tribute to the team at the vaccination centre at Locke House, who have played such a vital role in ensuring 80% of adults* in Rugby have now received a first dose of a vaccine, and 69% both doses*. (*figures as at 15 August - to be updated prior to meeting)

The Mayor also placed on record her sincere gratitude to everyone in Rugby who had been vaccinated. Vaccination remains the key to overcoming Covid and the Mayor urged all Members to continue to encourage vaccine take-up in our communities in order that the borough could build on the progress it had made so far and move forward on the path to pandemic recovery.

38. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

There were no questions.

39. REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Parks Connector Network – Whinfield Woods Pathway Improvements

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer for Leisure and Wellbeing (Part 1 – agenda item 6(a)) concerning the proposed improvements to Whinfield Woods pathway as part of the Park Connector network.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) a supplementary capital budget request of £0.065m be approved for 2021/22, to be met from capital receipts, in order to secure the conditional grant offer of £0.075m from Veolia Environmental Trust, towards the pathway improvements at Whinfield Woods as part of the Park Connector Network; and

(2) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Legal & Governance to enter into any necessary agreements relating to the grant funding as detailed within the report.

(b) Update to Councillor Code of Conduct

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance (Part 1 – agenda item 6(b)) concerning an update to the Councillor Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED THAT – the contents of the report be noted and be referred to Audit and Ethics Committee for further consideration to put forward a future recommendation to Full Council.

(c) Grievance and Appeals Committees

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance (Part 1 – agenda item 6(c)) concerning appointments to Appeals and Grievance Committees.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) paragraph 7 of Part 2A of Rugby Borough Council's Constitution be amended as detailed in the report;

(2) an additional appendix be included in Part 3H (Officer Employment Standing Orders) of Rugby Borough Council's Constitution as detailed in the report;

(3) appointments to the Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee be made in accordance with the arrangements set out in this report; and

(4) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance (in consultation with the relevant Group Leader) to appoint substitute members to the Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee.

(d) Urgent Decision under Delegated Powers – Welcome Back Fund - Planned Activities

Council considered the report of the Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 6(d)) concerning an urgent decision taken under delegated powers with regard to funding for planned activities as part of the Welcome Back Fund.

The Executive Director informed the meeting that paragraph 2.2 of the report referred to the consultation with the main opposition. There was feedback relating to the overall process from Councillor Roodhouse as Leader of the main opposition group and Councillor Mrs O'Rourke as Leader of the Labour Group. This was through a meeting with officers.

RESOLVED THAT – the report be noted.

(e) Additional Restrictions Grant – Business Recovery Support

Council considered the report of the Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 6(e)) concerning a proposed policy for additional restrictions grants with regard to business recovery support from the pandemic.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the proposed Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Scheme Policy for deployment of the Additional Restrictions Grant, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted;
- (2) a supplementary budget of £85,000 financed from the ARG Fund be approved for payment to the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub for administering applications to the Fund; and
- (3) a supplementary budget of the ARG Fund balance of £831,176 be approved for the deployment of grants from the Fund.

40. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

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

(a) Councillor Ms Watson-Merret moved and Councillor Willis seconded the motion as set out below.

“This Council:

- is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels in England and notes the issue predominantly concerns goldfish*
- is concerned for the welfare of those animals that are being given as prizes*
- recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year*
- supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Rugby Borough Council land.*

This Council, therefore, agrees to:

- (1) ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Rugby Borough Council land; and*
- (2) write to the UK Government urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.”*

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

RESOLVED THAT - this Council:

- (1) bans outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Rugby Borough Council land; and
- (2) writes to the UK Government urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

41. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

42. COMMON SEAL

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Leader of the Council 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.

43. 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 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

44. PRIVATE REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Reshaping of Finance and Performance team

Council considered the private report of the Chief Officer – Finance and Performance (Part 2 – agenda item 1(a)) concerning a proposed restructure of the Council's Finance and Performance services.

RESOLVED THAT – the proposed structure for the Finance and Performance Team, as at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

(b) Legal and Governance restructure

Council considered the private report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance (Part 2 – agenda item 1(b)) concerning a proposed restructure of the Council's Legal and Governance services.

RESOLVED THAT – the proposed structure, as detailed within Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

(c) Urgent Decision under Delegated Powers – Sale of land at Market Quarter

Council considered the private report of the Executive Director (Part 2 – agenda item 1(c)) concerning an urgent decision taken under delegated powers with regard to the sale of land at Market Quarter.

RESOLVED THAT - the report be noted.

MAYOR

