

# MINUTES OF COUNCIL

26 NOVEMBER 2020

## PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Lewis), Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Allanach, Bearne, Brader, Mrs Bragg, Mrs Brown, Brown, Cade, Mrs Crane, Cranham, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Eccleson, Ellis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Leigh Hunt, Keeling, Miss Lawrence, Lowe, McQueen, Mahoney, Mistry, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Ms Robbins, Mrs Roberts, Roberts, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Shera, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Srivastava, Stokes and Mrs Timms.

## 36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Butlin and Pacey-Day.

## 37. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24 September 2020 were approved.

## 38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 39. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed the meeting that the current restrictions on the size of gatherings and the social distancing requirements meant that the usual service and march-past for Remembrance Sunday could not be held this year. Instead, a small number of civic guests were able to attend a brief ceremony at the Memorial Gates.

The service was led by Rev. Canon Edmund Newey, Rector of St Andrew's Church, our civic church and attended by the Royal British Legion standard bearer, a bugler from the Salvation Army band, the Council's Armed Forces Champion and Executive Director. In addition, wreaths were laid representing the county of Warwickshire, the citizens of Rugby and the constituency of Rugby. The ceremony was live streamed on the Council's website and our two local newspapers published excellent photographs recording the event.

Later, after the ceremony had finished, members of the public and representatives of various organisations were very pleased to have an opportunity to lay wreaths of their own. They went individually or in small groups during the afternoon being careful to obey the prevailing lockdown requirements.

There was no formal civic or councillor attendance at Caldecott Park for the sounding of the maroons at 11am on 11<sup>th</sup> November, Armistice Day. A number of members of the public stood safely outside the park fence to witness the event and to observe the national two minutes' silence.

The Executive Director had already thanked all those council staff and workmen who made these two events possible and the Mayor echoed her thanks to them. The Mayor also thanked the public for heeding the council's requests not to attend the Memorial Gates as a large crowd and the organisations that usually attend on Remembrance Sunday but were not able to do so this year for their cooperation and patience in these very unusual times.

It was hoped next year's Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day would be back to normal and everyone would be able to honour in the usual way all those who had lost their lives or had been affected by war over the years.

The government had made an announcement today that Rugby would be under "Tier 3" restrictions at the end of lockdown on 2 December. This would be unwelcome news for many people, and especially our hospitality businesses that would need to remain closed. The Council was providing a range of support grants to help these businesses and the Mayor hoped this would help them through this difficult time.

The Mayor urged all residents of the Borough to follow the rules in order that the infection rate can be reduced, most importantly by washing our hands, wearing a face covering and keeping our distance. The Mayor stressed it was everyone's duty as responsible citizens to do everything we can to get the rate of infection down and protect our more vulnerable residents.

The Mayor thanked all officers for their immense work that they were doing, and all fellow councillors for their supporting role they continue to play.

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

##### **(a) Councillor Sandison asked the Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ms Robbins:**

Covid has highlighted the importance of websites and using social media and the need for extra communication in these times. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that all reports that require consultation are placed on the RBC web site and linked to social media?

##### **Councillor Ms Robbins, Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, replied as follows:**

Cllr Sandison is correct to identify social media and digital communications as being vital for our communications and community engagement, as specified in our communications strategy.

Our communications team was quick to act at the start of the pandemic and thanks to their commitment and dedication Rugby Borough Council has the largest social media reach and level of engagement of any authority in the county.

All reports that require consultation are posted to the council's website. Public notices, where required, are published online as well as via the local newspapers. Other consultations are promoted on social media, where we can target residents by postcode or ward using for example Facebook or Nextdoor. Such targeted communications have been particularly effective in reaching residents with very local public health messaging in response to Covid-19.

Councillor Sandison then asked if the Portfolio Holder would be working with the Scrutiny Committee when it undertook a review of community engagement. Councillor Ms Robbins would be working with the Scrutiny Committee and officers to ensure that the Council had effective community engagement on all matters.

**(b) Councillor Douglas asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:**

Black History Month took place in October and was founded to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to the UK over many generations. Can the Leader outline what Rugby Borough Council did to mark Black History Month?"

**Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, replied as follows:**

The Council is committed to recognising the contributions to the UK from people of African, Caribbean and other diverse backgrounds. Much of this work is done through the arts, heritage and visitor services team at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. This year, pupils at Brooke School explored the town's historic Redding Collection during a workshop to mark Black History Month.

The workshop held by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's learning and outreach team was inspired by the collection of nearly 26,000 glass plates and cellulose acetate negatives taken at Rugby's Redding Photographic Studio between 1958 and 1972.

The studio captured Rugby and its residents on camera during a time of rapid social change, with the boom in the town's engineering industry and railways attracting migrant workers from across the globe, particularly Asia and the West Indies. The collection includes photographs of migrant workers posing for portraits to send to family and friends at home - celebrating successful 'new' lives in Rugby.

The workshop explored the stories behind the photographs, supporting Brooke School's programme of lessons to mark Black History Month. Pupils were encouraged to imagine living in the West Indies before travelling to Rugby to start a new life and experience the change in culture - from the cold weather to food and drink.

The Council believes that the diverse histories of Rugby residents should not be just celebrated during October but be part of the ongoing and permanent culture and history of the borough. During lockdown, Rugby Art Gallery and Museum has been collecting stories, photographs and objects about contemporary life in Rugby, including items from the Rugby Black Lives Matter group. Officers have been working with the group to support their development and voice. The group are supporting officers with a major project about the diverse histories of Rugby planned from summer 2021. Subject to Arts Council England funding the project will see more of the Redding Collection becoming accessible through digitisation, workshops, displays and collaborative projects as the museum becomes 'in residence' at the Benn Partnership Centre.

Councillor Douglas then asked how the Council would improve the reach of this activity and engage with other organisations who were not directly linked to groups affected by the Black Lives Matter campaign. Councillor Lowe assured Councillor Douglas that the Council was committed to engaging with anyone on any issue which affected the residents of the Borough.

**41. REPORT OF CABINET – 9 NOVEMBER 2020**

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be confirmed and adopted.

**42. LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 13 OCTOBER 2020**

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be confirmed and adopted.

**43. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

**(a) Membership of Licensing and Safety Committee 2020/21 – proposed changes**

Council considered the report of the Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning the proposed changes to the membership of the Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

**RESOLVED THAT** – Councillor Leigh Hunt be replaced by Councillor Bearne as a member of Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

**(b) Local Plan Key Diagram and Rugby Borough Local Plan Rural Settlement Maps 2019 Amendments**

Council considered the report of the Head of Growth and Investment (Part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning proposed amendments to the Local Plan Key Diagram and Rugby Borough Local Plan Rural Settlement Maps 2019.

**RESOLVED THAT** - Council agree to correct the text on the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2019 Key Diagram from ‘Churchover’ to ‘Church Lawford’ (appendix 1) and adopt the amended Policies Maps (Rural Settlements Maps) for Clifton-Upon-Dunsmore (appendix 2) and Marton (appendix 3).

**44. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11**

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

The Mayor considered it advisable and convenient to deal with the Motion on the agenda at the meeting.

(a) Councillor Sandison moved and Councillor Douglas seconded the following motion set out at item 8(a) of the agenda.

*“Rent Now Buy Later New Homes and small site self-build affordable community homes. This Council recognises the acute shortage of social and affordable housing currently being delivered by developers in the Rugby housing market through the approved development plan.*

*This is in part is due to the viability assessments carried out independently prior to approval of applications by the Council. This is having a negative impact on the delivery of social and affordable housing. Council also notes that its assets*

*are a valuable resource and could enable this Council to deliver socially affordable homes in line with existing policy to rent. Considering this, Council urgently requests that the Executive Director carry out research into:*

*(1) the feasibility of a modern rent now buy later option based on using the “Rent Plus” model which could also entitle tenants to take up the option of home purchase at a later date;*

*(2) brownfield sites in the urban area which may be an attractive option for “Community led Land Trusts” along with self-build trusts which can aid the regeneration of these long-neglected sites and help level up those communities; and*

*(3) a report be brought back to Council at the commencement of the new municipal year 2021 with recommendations.”*

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

#### **45. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

#### **46. 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 Cabinet and Committee reports adopted at this meeting.

#### **47. 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 item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of information as defined in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

#### **48. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 9 NOVEMBER 2020**

**RESOLVED THAT** - the report be confirmed and adopted.

#### **49. PRIVATE REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

##### **(a) Organisational Transformation**

Council considered the private report of the Executive Director (Part 2 – agenda item 1(a)) concerning proposals for organisational transformation.

Councillor Lowe moved and Councillor Poole seconded the recommendation as printed in the report.

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

**For the motion:** Councillors Mrs A' Barrow, Bearne, Mrs Bragg, Cade, Mrs Crane, Cranham, Eccleson, Gillias, Keeling, Miss Lawrence, Lowe, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Ms Robbins, Mrs Roberts, Roberts, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Mrs Timms – **19 votes**

**Against the motion:** Councillors Brader, Mrs Brown, Ellis, Leigh Hunt, Mahoney, Mistry, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Sandison, Shera, Srivastava and Stokes – **12 votes**

**Abstentions from the motion:** Councillors Mrs Allanach, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Lewis, McQueen, Roodhouse and Mrs Roodhouse – **7 votes**

***Note:** Councillors Brown and Mrs Garcia were not in attendance at the meeting for this item due to IT technical issues and did not, therefore, vote on the motion.*

#### **RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the proposed restructure of the senior management team, as per Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director to take any step that is necessary to implement the approved restructure; and
- (3) a further report be brought back to Council in the event the recruitment (as detailed within this report) to all the new roles is unsuccessful; and
- (4) all officers of the Council be thanked for their hard work and efforts, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic.

**MAYOR**