

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

13 DECEMBER 2018

At a Meeting of the Rugby Borough Council held on 13 December 2018.

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor T Mahoney), Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Mrs Avis, Bearne, Brader, Mrs Bragg, Brown, Butlin, Cade, Mrs Crane, Cranham, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Ms Edwards, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Keeling, Leigh Hunt, Miss Lawrence, Lewis, Lowe, McQueen, Mistry, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Pacey-Day, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Ms Robbins, Roberts, Mrs Roberts, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Shera, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Srivastava, Stokes, Mrs Timms and Ms Watson-Merret.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Mrs Nash.

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2018 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

43. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members had been notified that Past Mayor and former Councillor Bill Shields had passed away on 11 December 2018. Bill was Mayor of the Borough for the 2002/03 municipal year and a Councillor for Dunchurch and Knightlow Ward from 1990 to 2008.

Members and officers present at the meeting stood in silence in memory of Bill.

The Mayor announced that a new path for horse riders at Rugby's Diamond Wood had secured the Council the British Horse Society Access Award for excellence in delivering enhanced equestrian access.

The Council had created the route for riders with the support of a £1,000 grant from the British Horse Society's Paths for Communities Fund. The path, which gives equestrians safe, easy access to off-road riding, was officially opened in May. The Mayor congratulated all involved in achieving the prestigious award.

44. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

(a) Councillor Douglas asked the following question of the Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mrs Parker:

The Cabinet report on 25 June 2018 said that the Council "will seek to identify all HMOs within the Borough and endeavour to work with those in control of the HMOs to ensure no occupants of these properties are put at unacceptable risks.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm firstly, that all HMOs in the Borough have been identified? And secondly, through working with those in control of HMOs whether any improvement notices have been issued or enforcement has taken place?

Councillor Mrs Parker, Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder replied as follows:

Officers have searched all known records available to the council to identify HMOs that now require licensing and have written to them. The majority have now applied for licences. Officers will continue to identify them as new information becomes available, e.g. complaints, and they will be dealt with as unlicensed HMOs with the legal consequences of that.

This Council takes the matter of HMO licensing very seriously and Cabinet has approved the recruitment of a new officer specifically to manage HMO licensing. I can confirm that officer is now in place and has started his inspections and licensing of HMOs. He joins and supports a small team of officers responsible for private rented sector housing regulation and enforcement.

Officers have identified around 20 properties which they suspect are HMOs and have not applied for a licence, and one has already been subject to an inspection under warrant. This work will continue.

Councillor Douglas then asked if the Portfolio Holder could outline how many properties would need to be inspected. Councillor Mrs Parker stated that, since the introduction of the new licensing regulations relating to HMOs, the number of properties requiring inspection had increased from 50 to approximately 350, although this figure could increase.

(b) Councillor Douglas asked the following question of the Communities and Homes Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mrs Crane:

At Full Council on 19 July 2018, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homes said the likely date for the completion of a Private Renters Charter for Rugby would be August 2018.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain firstly, why the Charter isn't complete? And secondly, when will landlords get the support and tenants the help they need?

Councillor Mrs Crane, Communities and Homes Portfolio Holder, replied as follows:

Officers had previously advised that the Charter would be available in August 2018. At this point, it had been anticipated to be a relatively simple document and a Charter was drafted.

Discussion between officers and consultation with councillors from all political groups has meant we have made a significant number of alterations to the initial draft. As a result, the current draft is more detailed and comprises of a single page Charter with a supporting guidance manual for landlords and tenants, detailing rights and responsibilities.

A finalised version is anticipated to be considered by Cabinet in January 2019.

With regard to landlords and tenants, they are already getting the support they need. We have a small team of officers who have been established for many years, now supported by a HMO licensing officer, who give advice and take enforcement action when it is necessary to protect tenants or landlords and who are already working in accordance with the draft Charter and supporting documents.

The Charter supports the good landlords, and Cabinet actively supports helping responsible businesses, but the Charter is reinforcement of the action already being taken by officers, and only one of many tools.

Councillor Douglas then asked the Portfolio Holder how many landlords had been consulted on the draft Charter. Councillor Mrs Crane confirmed that officers had consulted landlords on the proposal.

(c) Councillor Roodhouse asked the following question of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stokes:

Would the Leader agree that one of the measures for a well run local authority is a well managed performance management system that is visible to its elected members?

Councillor Stokes, Leader of the Council, replied as follows:

A performance management system plays an important part when used as part of a range of tools. In Rugby we use RPMS which is available to elected members.

Councillor Roodhouse then asked if the Leader of the Council could provide a date when all Members would have visibility to all performance indicators on the Council's performance management system. Councillor Stokes stated that the Executive Director and Heads of Service were aware of the importance of the system and were working to ensure it was up to date as soon as possible.

(d) Councillor Roodhouse asked the following question of the Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mrs Parker:

The Corporate Strategy (2017-2020), says "it will work in partnership and help residents to feel safe. Could the portfolio holder with responsibility for community safety confirm if Rugby Borough Council is providing any extra support to the Police following the breakdown of the strategic alliance between the West Mercia and Warwickshire Police forces?"

Councillor Mrs Parker, Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder, replied as follows:

Rugby Borough Council has a firm commitment to working in partnership with Warwickshire Police to promote Community Safety - both on and agency to agency basis and through the Rugby Community Safety Partnership.

The detail and implications of West Mercia Police's intention to withdraw from the Strategic Alliance in October 2019 are yet to be fully understood and discussed. As such, no additional support has been requested by Warwickshire Police to date.

Councillor Roodhouse then asked if the Portfolio Holder would be willing to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to this Council for scrutiny. Councillor Mrs Parker confirmed that a representative of the PCC attended meetings with the Council but she was willing to extend a further invitation.

45. REPORT OF CABINET – 3 DECEMBER 2018

RESOLVED THAT – the report be confirmed and adopted.

46. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

47. 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 committee reports adopted at this meeting.

48. 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 defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

49. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 3 DECEMBER 2018

RESOLVED THAT – the private report be confirmed and adopted.

MAYOR