

# MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL

6 FEBRUARY 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, J Keeling, Lewis, Ms Livesey, Mrs Maoudis, Mrs McKenzie, Mistry, Moran, Mrs New, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Rabin, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Russell, Sandison, Mrs Sayani, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Slinger, Srivastava, Mrs Timms, Ward, Ms Watson-Merret and Willis.

## 72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Douglas and Lawrence.

## 73. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

## 74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a)(2) – Parks and Open Spaces Section 106 projects – Councillor J Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being an allotment holder and an executive member of the Community Allotments Association).

Item 6(b)(1) – Draft Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 - Councillor Picker (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being an employee of the local Member of Parliament).

## 75. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It had been a particularly sad time for the Council since its last meeting, with the passing of Brendan O'Rourke (the Mayor's husband and consort), Dr James Shera (Freeman of the Borough, Past Mayor and former Councillor) and Evelyn Dickinson (Past Mayor and former Councillor).

The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported and sent condolences to her and her family following the passing of her husband and Consort, Brendan O'Rourke. She also thanked those who attended Brendan's funeral and for the generous donations received in his memory.

All Group Leaders paid tribute to Brendan, James and Evelyn for their service to the Council. Councillor Ms Robbins also paid tribute to Evelyn.

Everyone present at the meeting then stood in a moment's silence in memory of Brendan, James and Evelyn.

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

There were no questions.

## **77. REPORT OF CABINET – 8 JANUARY 2024**

Council considered the report of Cabinet dated 8 January 2024 (Part 1 – agenda item 6(a)) together with the equality impact assessment to item 6(a)(2) which had been circulated to all Members and published on the Council's website prior to the meeting. Councillor Poole stated that the omission of the equality impact assessment did not affect the recommendation made by Cabinet.

With regard to item 6(a)(1) relating to the Corporate Peer Challenge, Councillor Poole moved and Councillor Picker seconded the report as well as agenda item 6(b)(2) concerning the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan.

With regard to item 6(a)(2) relating to parks and open spaces section 106 projects, Councillor Moran moved and Councillor Mistry seconded the following amendment (in italics):

- (1) A 2024/25 capital budget of £44,350 for green gym equipment replacement at Cawston NEAP to be fully funded through section 106 funding, be approved;
- (2) a capital budget of £80,200 for Brindley Road/Lennon Close Play Areas and Hillmorton Recreation Ground as per legal agreement, to be fully funded through Section.106 income for 2024/25 be approved;
- (3) a capital budget of £70,800 for the development of community allotments at Centenary Park, Newbold, to be fully funded through Section.106 income, be approved for 2024/25;
- (4) a capital budget of £93,000 for the required refurbishment and installation of the Betony Road Play Area following transfer from the developer as per the planning permission to be funded through section 106 income for 2024/25 be approved;

- (5) a capital budget request for play equipment refurbishment and youth provision of £50,000 from 2024/25 and onwards annually to be funded from section 106 income be approved;
- (6) a capital budget of £70,000 for accessibility improvements to footpaths as part of the Park Connector Scheme from 2024/25 to be funded from section 106 income be approved; and
- (7) *a sum of £42,735 to be allocated from Council reserves, equivalent to 10% of the proposed programme capital expenditure on the seven projects, to ensure efficient delivery of the projects and smooth out any minor over-spend or unforeseen issues as directed by the Senior Officer. Where any monies are unspent they are to be returned to reserves.*

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

A request was then made for a separate vote to be taken on items 6(a)(1) and 6(b)(2) – Corporate Peer Challenge. The Mayor put the motion to the vote and declared it carried.

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

## **78. REPORT OF CABINET – 5 FEBRUARY 2024**

Council considered the report of Cabinet dated 5 February 2024 (Part 1 – agenda item 6(b)).

Councillor Willis moved and Councillor Poole seconded the motion relating to item 6(b)(1) – Draft Housing Draft Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28.

Councillor Slinger moved and Councillor Harrington seconded the following amendment (in italics):

“IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

(1) the draft revenue budgets for 2024/25 and the updated medium term financial plan in Appendices A and C be approved inclusive of 7.7% increase in rent and service charges based on estimated costs and the pitch fees at Woodside Park;

(2) the approved capital budget in Appendix B be noted;

(3) the contribution to the Transformation reserve as set out in paragraph 9.4 be approved; and

*(4) the Council will investigate options to mitigate the damaging effect of the increase on the most vulnerable tenants through a hardship fund, particularly targeted at those people who are not in receipt of Universal Credit.”*

Councillor Willis then moved and Councillor Picker seconded the following friendly amendment which was accepted by Councillors Slinger and Harrington:

“IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

(1) the draft revenue budgets for 2024/25 and the updated medium term financial plan in Appendices A and C be approved inclusive of 7.7% increase in rent and service charges based on estimated costs and the pitch fees at Woodside Park;

(2) the approved capital budget in Appendix B be noted;

(3) the contribution to the Transformation reserve as set out in paragraph 9.4 be approved; and

*(4) the Council recognises the challenges faced by our tenants in light of this increase and will investigate options to build on the assistance provided by the Government’s Household Support Fund, the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme, our partnership work with other organisations and our existing use of Discretionary Housing Payments for our most vulnerable tenants. This work will be particularly targeted at those people who are not in receipt of Universal Credit.”*

The Mayor put the friendly amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

The Mayor then put the confirmation and adoption of the report, as amended, to the vote and declared it carried.

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report of Cabinet dated 5 February 2024, as amended, be confirmed and adopted.

## **79. REPORT OF OFFICERS**

### **(a) Urgent Decisions under Delegated Powers**

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of Council.

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be noted.

### **(b) Dunsmore Ward by-election – 14 December 2023**

Council considered the report of the Returning Officer (part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning the results of the Dunsmore ward by-election on 14 December 2023.

The Mayor extended a warm welcome to Councillors Bennett and Mrs Simpson-Vince and wished them well in their future service of the Council.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor placed on record its appreciation of the contribution which retiring Councillors Howard and Deepah Roberts made during their service as members of the Borough Council.

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be noted.

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

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, there were no motions on notice for consideration.

**81. 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 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**82. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 8 JANUARY 2024**

Cabinet considered the private report of Cabinet dated 8 January 2024 (Part 2 – agenda item 1(a)).

**RESOLVED THAT** - subject to the councillors concerned continuing to be Members of the Borough Council in that year,

(a) Councillor Ward be nominated for election as Mayor for 2024/25; and

(b) Councillor Mrs Brown be nominated for appointment as Deputy Mayor for 2024/25.

**83. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 5 FEBRUARY 2024**

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

**MAYOR**