

MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL

2 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor W H Lewis), Councillors Mrs Allanach, Mrs A'Barrow, Bearne, Brader, Mrs Bragg, Mrs Brown, Brown, Butlin, Cade, Mrs Crane, Cranham, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Eccleson, Ellis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Keeling, Miss Lawrence, Lowe, McQueen, Mahoney, 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 and Mrs Timms.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Leigh Hunt and Stokes.

70. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020 were approved.

71. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) Members had been notified that a former Councillor, Maggie Robinson, had passed away recently. Maggie was active in local politics in the 1980s and was a Borough Councillor for Admirals Ward from 1984 to 1988. Maggie was also a well-respected teacher at Dunsmore School for Girls and Ashlawn School. Councillors Mrs Brown, Mrs O'Rourke and Roodhouse also paid tribute to Maggie.
- (ii) The Mayor announced that Julie Booker, former manager and duty manager at the Benn Hall for a number of years, had sadly passed away at the weekend. She had remained a valued member of bar staff after retiring to look after her grandchildren.
- (iii) It had been announced prior to this meeting that Captain Sir Tom Moore had died while in hospital suffering from coronavirus. Captain Sir Tom raised almost £33m for NHS charities by being sponsored while walking 100 laps of his garden just before his 100th birthday last year. He was knighted by the Queen in July.
- (iv) Members had also been made aware that Keith Appleton, a long-serving employee within the council's Revenues team, had been missing for more than two weeks. The Council remained very concerned for his welfare and was grateful for the work of the police and other agencies who were continuing to look for him.

All Members and officers present at the meeting joined the Mayor in a moment's silence in memory of Maggie, Julie and Captain Sir Tom and in support of Keith's friends and family.

- (v) The Mayor informed the meeting that it had been his privilege as a resident in one of the priority groups to receive the first of his vaccine injections recently. He had been very impressed with the way that Rugby's vaccination centre was being run. There were now more than 100 volunteers supporting this effort and the Mayor conveyed his thanks on behalf of the borough for everything that they were doing. The Mayor encouraged all residents to take up the vaccine when they were offered it. Taking the vaccine would mean that we are less likely to become seriously ill, less likely to pass on the virus and more likely to survive. The Mayor was pleased to be able to do his civic duty. He would also continue to follow the national guidance by staying home, washing hands frequently, wearing a face covering and keeping a safe distance from others.
- (vi) The Mayor and all Members acknowledged the efforts of all council officers under continuing difficult conditions. Many officers were continuing to support residents from their home offices, whilst dealing with the challenges that that brings. Last week's severe weather brought to mind the conditions that the council's waste collection and street cleaning crews, gardeners, and property maintenance teams continued to operate in. The Rainsbrook crematorium staff also continued to work with sensitivity under challenging conditions. All Members joined the Mayor in acknowledging the outstanding contribution all council staff continued to make. He wished to convey his thanks to each and every employee.

72. QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

Councillor Mrs Allanach asked the following question of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:

"This Council receives national Covid data which includes numbers of people infected, number of cases in hospital, the number of deaths and the numbers of people vaccinated in this country overall, all depressing news. The only data shared by this government about the number of vaccinations which given are the overall figures, not local figures. What can this council do to find out the vaccination figures for Rugby?"

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council replied as follows:

"This Council has supported the rollout out of the critical vaccination programme that will in time lead us out of the pandemic.

We have been liaising with Clinical Commission Group colleagues regarding the granularity of the vaccination data so that we can assist with targeted communications and reach out to our communities to support the uptake of the vaccine. The latest data shows that 84.8% of residents aged 80+ have received their first dose of vaccine in Coventry and Warwickshire. This is a tremendous achievement and we congratulate all of our colleagues and volunteers who are working on this programme.

The vaccination data is published on the NHS website and we publish it to our residents using our social media channels. All members are encouraged to follow the council's corporate social media accounts and share posts on their own profiles, and I thank members who already engage in this way.

Currently the data available does not provide the local level of visibility that we or our NHS colleagues need. It is our understanding that Directors of Public

Health will soon receive more detailed data which will be shared with us and provide us with the detail we all wish to see.

It should be noted however that, while clearly good news, the roll out of the vaccines will not immediately lead to any lifting of restrictions. It is vital that we all continue to do everything we can to reduce the transmission of the virus. The vaccine is one tool to do this, but for now staying at home, washing our hands, keeping our distance and wearing face coverings remain the best ways to stop the spread of the virus.”

73. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

(a) Draft Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-25

Council considered the report of the Head of Communities and Homes and Chief Financial Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 5(a)) concerning the draft Housing Revenue Account capital and revenue budgets for 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021-25.

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

(1) The draft revenue and capital budgets at Appendices A and B for 2021/22 be approved inclusive of a 1.5% increase in rent and service charges as per section 6 of this report;

(2) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Executive Director, delegated authority be given to the Head of Communities and Homes and the Chief Finance Officer to approve any short term additional Property Repairs Service resourcing to deal with current capacity issues;

(3) the capital programme be reviewed by a cross party group as a matter of urgency with special regard to what actions can be taken regarding the Climate Emergency motion that this council adopted, for example, gas boiler replacement programme; and

(4) a tree planting programme along with increased planting for biodiversity that maximises the use of all the land under housing control be implemented, ensuring that where possible existing trees are fully protected.

Following debate, Councillor Picker moved and Councillor Miss Lawrence moved a friendly amendment as detailed below (highlighted in bold below):

*(1) **The draft revenue and capital budgets at Appendices A and B for 2021/22 be approved inclusive of a 1.5% increase in rent and service charges as per section 6 of this report;***

*(2) **in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Executive Director, delegated authority be given to the Head of Communities and Homes and the Chief Finance Officer to approve any short term additional Property Repairs Service resourcing to deal with current capacity issues;***

*(3) the capital programme be reviewed by **the Climate Emergency Working Group** as a matter of urgency with special regard to what actions can be taken regarding the Climate Emergency motion that this council adopted, for example, gas boiler replacement programme; and*

(4) a tree planting programme along with increased planting for biodiversity that maximises the use of all the land under housing control be implemented, ensuring that where possible existing trees are fully protected.

Councillors Roodhouse and Mrs New accepted the friendly amendment.

Further to discussion, the friendly amendment was put to the vote and the Mayor declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the draft revenue and capital budgets at Appendices A and B for 2021/22 be approved inclusive of a 1.5% increase in rent and service charges as per section 6 of this report;
- (2) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Executive Director, delegated authority be given to the Head of Communities and Homes and the Chief Finance Officer to approve any short term additional Property Repairs Service resourcing to deal with current capacity issues;
- (3) the capital programme be reviewed by the Climate Emergency Working Group as a matter of urgency with special regard to what actions can be taken regarding the Climate Emergency motion that this council adopted, for example, gas boiler replacement programme; and
- (4) a tree planting programme along with increased planting for biodiversity that maximises the use of all the land under housing control be implemented, ensuring that where possible existing trees are fully protected.

74. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

75. 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 report adopted at this meeting.

MAYOR