

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

18 October 2018 at 7.30pm

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Mrs D V Clarke) in the chair.

Members of the Council present

Councillors A Alderson, D E Anderson-Bassey, J Broadhead, I A Chaudhri, Mrs D V Clarke, D A Cotty, M D Cressey, S Dennett, Ms F Dent, R J Edis, J R Furey, Mrs L M Gillham, Mrs E Gill, Mrs J Gracey, T Gracey, Mrs M T Harnden, N M King, D J Knight, M T Kusneraitis, Mrs Y P Lay, S Lewis, S Mackay, M J Maddox, M Nuti, D Parr, N Prescott, N Rubidge, Ms A Shepperdson, P Snow, Ms C Simmons, Miss J Sohi, P S Sohi, P J Taylor, A Tollett, P J Waddell, Mrs G Warner, N Wase-Rogers and M L Willingale

Members of the Council absent:

Councillors J R Ashmore, Miss M N Heath, Mrs G Kingerley and Mrs C S S Manduca

297 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Mayor read out the Fire Precautions.

298 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 19 and 30 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

299 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Council of her recent engagements and support for 'Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)'.

300 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Ashmore, Miss Heath, Mrs Kingerley and Mrs Manduca.

301 QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 12

Mr Nichol asked the following question:

*'Since this Council has been led by a person who has now confessed to lack integrity how can we have confidence in ANY decisions taken by this Full Council since he was leading and guiding the dominant party?'*

In asking his question, Mr Nichol referred to a letter sent by the Leader of the Council to Councillor Mrs Manduca which had been posted on social media .The letter related to the previous actions of the Leader in the temporary removal of Councillor Mrs Manduca from the Council's Planning Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee and contained his apology for his actions. Mr Nichol felt the Leader's removal of Councillor Manduca from these Committees deprived residents of full representation at the time when the Local Plan was proceeding through its Committee processes.

Mr Nichol felt that the Leader's actions were not in accordance with the standards of public office expected of an elected Councillor and the seven Nolan principles of public life as set

out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. In conclusion, Mr Nichol questioned Councillor Prescott's position as Leader of the Council and as a Councillor, and considered he should resign.

In response, the Leader of the Council made the following statement which would be supplied in writing to Mr Nichol:

'Thank you for your question this evening. Just to be clear this person you refer to in your question is me and I am *still* the leader of the Conservative Group at Runnymede Borough Council. Your question has two parts to it really so I will endeavour to give you a full answer. The first element concerns my leadership of Runnymede Borough Council, on a general level; the second the manner in which I have dealt with party disciplinary matters.

Firstly, let's talk about the recent achievements of Runnymede Borough Council. I cannot and will not claim all of the credit for RBC's successes, that's my first stance of integrity; I have continued in the footsteps of my predecessors to progress this Council in continuing to be an efficient and effective local government organisation, a council where we have not made any cuts to services, depleted our reserves and remained in surplus.

This is despite the difficult, some would argue nigh impossible position local authorities have found themselves in the last decade. This Council has lost all of its Revenue Support Grant in the last 8 years, amounting to £5.6m; that is the equivalent of over £7m in spending power in today's terms. Despite some tough economic times, we Members continue to deliver a full set of services to the residents of the Borough. We have done this through savings, or expanding income generating services and through our property investment strategy. So let's just explore what that has brought about to our residents: -

1. Runnymede still has one of the lowest Council Tax levels in the country (£159 at band D or £3.07p per week).
2. Look around you at a £70m regeneration of Addlestone. It brings much needed facilities to the town, a cinema, 300 new jobs, housing opportunities and improved shopping. Proposals are well in hand for Egham Town Centre Regeneration.
3. A new near £20m leisure centre will open early next year (the build programme is on time) bringing swimming facilities for our residents for the first time. On time and in budget.
4. A wide range of community services are being improved or developed such as community transport, Careline for the elderly, CCTV to keep our residents safe.
5. Our innovative Housing department is delivering more affordable housing opportunities, re-shaping and modernising our estates and working productively with the private sector and housing associations to create more housing opportunities throughout the Borough.
6. The Borough has produced a Local Plan. I appreciate you may not like some of its content Mr. Nichol. However, in my view it is a comprehensive, detailed and balanced Local Plan for continuing the economic prosperity of the Borough, meeting housing needs and giving this Council, the opportunity to bid for infrastructure in an ever increasingly competitive world for public sector funding.

Now let me turn to the issue of personal integrity; which is defined as *'the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.'* Leaders will make many vital and successful decisions, equally, and occasionally mistakes will be made. I cannot help but think that your comments are largely to do with a letter of apology, to Cllr Manduca from me sent initially in June of this year; it seems that the 'leaker' doesn't quite get the auto/date time function on

MS Word. This is of course, wholly an internal matter for the Conservative Group, but this matter has come arisen into the public domain, so I will give you a clear and unequivocal answer. There was a mis-interpretation on my part about the Conservative Party rules, which at the time I believed my course of action was correct and I conferred with Conservative Party members as to my intended actions.

*Upon investigation, it was found by the Surrey Area Committee that: The Runnymede Conservative Group rules 5.1 and 5.2 respectively say "Service Committee Chairmen and /or Group Spokesmen if so appointed shall be appointed by the Group Leader." and "Group nominations for Council committees shall be decided by the Group Leader, reflecting, where possible, Members' preferences." However, as section 16 of the same rules sets out disciplinary procedures the Group must follow when disciplining members of the Group, the AME believe that it is not in the spirit or the letter of the Group Rules for 5.1 and 5.2 to be used as a disciplinary mechanism. From the documentation provided to the AME, including correspondence from the Group Leader, the AME noted that the removal of Cllr Manduca from membership of the committees was only ever intended to be a temporary measure (17th November 2017 to 1st January 2018). In the AME's view as a temporary measure, the suspension was intended as a disciplinary sanction and therefore section 16 of the group rules should have been followed before any action was taken against Cllr Manduca.*

I had the humility and integrity to audit that and provide Cllr Manduca with a clear apology. I would add that recognising the undoubted talents of this Councillor and in a spirit of reconciliation, Cllr Manduca serves on three of the most important committees of the Council, Corporate Management Committee, Planning and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

I hope you will agree therefore, that as a public servant should, I have shown both humility and good grace. When I discharge my duties, I act for all the residents of Runnymede, and not within the confines of the ward nor on a narrow interest. And to add to a final point, the second definition of integrity is, 'the state of being whole and undivided.' The other night, the Conservative Group placed a strong motion of support in my leadership to continue the excellent work of the Council. This is amplified by the move this week of Cllr. Shepperdson joining the Conservative Group from the Residents' Association of Runnymede. Whilst I enjoy very strong support from the group, a council leader cannot ask for more support when there is an additional member to the group, joining a group where all of the Conservative Councillors wish to continue devoting our main effort and focus in continuing to deliver for the residents.

I remain committed to the democratic processes which ensures the Council is run in a transparent manner and you or any other resident is always welcome to approach me with questions or concerns'.

### 302 PETITION – LLOYDS BANK CLOSURE

Councillor Lewis submitted a petition to the Mayor which had been organised by Mr Adrian Waite on behalf of local residents objecting to the imminent closure of Lloyds Bank in Addlestone.

Owing to the timescale for closure of the Bank there was insufficient time to refer the petition to the appropriate Committee for consideration and therefore the Mayor agreed for the petition to be considered as part of the Notice of Motion from Councillor Furey which was the next item of business.

### 303 NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 15 FROM COUNCILLOR J R FUREY- LLOYDS BANK CLOSURE

Further to SO 15.6 (ii), the following Motion was moved by Councillor Furey, seconded by Councillor Waddell : -

**“This Council expresses its disapproval of the decision of Lloyds Bank to close its Addlestone branch, which is due to be implemented within the next few weeks.**

**Despite public statements by Lloyds Bank that it had consulted with elected Members, local residents and local business; no such consultation took place which is deeply regrettable.**

**The Council wishes to express its support for local residents and businesses, who wish to access their banking services at a local branch rather than remotely.**

**The Council invites the Leader of the Council to contact the board of Lloyds Bank to invite them to agree to delay the proposed closure of its Addlestone Branch so that it may enter into an immediate and meaningful consultation with elected Members and our local residents and businesses.”**

Under Standing Order 15.6 (b) (ii), Councillor Furey had asked for this Motion to be determined at this meeting as the matter was exceptionally urgent. The Mayor had so agreed.

In moving the Motion, Councillor Furey stated that the closure of Lloyds Bank was not justified and would have a detrimental effect on small businesses and residents of Addlestone at a time when the town was being regenerated and custom at the Bank was increasing.

Council fully supported the comments of Councillor Furey and the Motion as set out above was passed unanimously.

#### 304 COMMITTEE SEATS REVIEW

Council reviewed the allocation of seats on the Council’s Committees following the resignation of Councillor Cressey from the Residents’ Associations of Runnymede Group and his wish to be an Independent Councillor, and the resignation of Councillor Ms Shepperdson from the Residents’ Associations of Runnymede Group and her joining the Conservative Group.

No change would be made to the Committee memberships as agreed at Annual Council in May this year and Councillor Cressey would continue to sit on Community Services Committee and Standards and Audit Committee, now as an Independent Councillor, and Councillor Ms Shepperdson would continue to sit on Planning Committee and Regulatory Committee, now as a Conservative Councillor.

**RESOLVED that;**

**a) the allocation of seats on the Committees named be as set out below:**

	Political Groups					Total
	Con	RIRG	RAR	Lab	Ind	
Corporate Management Committee	10	2				12
Environment and Sustainability Committee	8	2				10
Housing Committee	7	1	1	1		10
Community Services Committee	7	1		1	1	10
Planning Committee	13	2				15

Regulatory Committee	4	1				5
Overview and Scrutiny Select & Crime and Disorder Committees	7	1	1			9
Standards and Audit Committee	8	1			1	10
Totals	64	11	2	2	2	81

- b) the allocation of Committee seats to Members of Political Groups as previously requested by those Groups in May 2018 be confirmed, subject to the change to reflect c) below; and
- c) Councillor Cressey be re-appointed to Community Services Committee and Standards and Audit Committee as an Independent Councillor, and Councillor Ms Shepperdson be re-appointed to Planning Committee and Regulatory Committee as a Conservative Councillor.

305 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/2020

Council considered a recommendation from Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 11 October 2018.

**RESOLVED that-**

**the Calendar of Meetings for May 2019 – May 2020, as reported, be approved.**

306 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Council considered a recommendation from Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 11 October 2018.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the following changes be approved:**

- i) **the Community Development Business Centre be split into two new Business Centres as reported**
- ii) **the Independent Retirement Living service be transferred into the Housing Business Centre;**
- iii) **the Handyperson, Housing Improvement Agency and Yellow Bus Administration be transferred into the new Community Services Business Centre;**
- iv) **the budget for the vacant full-time Care & Repair Case Officer post for the Home Improvement Agency service be transferred to create a new Senior Administrator post within the Community Services Business Centre at the earliest opportunity;**
- v) **all budgets associated with the services being transferred be transferred to the new business centre's relevant budget code, other than the maintenance budget associated with the Home Improvement Agency service as this would still be carried out by the Housing Business Centre; and**
- vi) **a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum reported for a part year in 2018/19 be approved to cover the difference between the current Community Services Manager post salary and the new Head of Community Services salary**

**at the grade reported, and in the sum reported for a full year from 2019/2020 onwards.**

307 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Council was asked to approve the appointment of the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel to undertake the triennial review of the current Members' Allowances Scheme.

The triennial review of the Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel would commence next month in order to have a new Members' Allowances scheme in place from 1 April 2019. This Panel would consist of five persons who represent residents' associations, business, voluntary sector, education and health. The Panel membership would be completely new as the previous panelists had served the maximum terms of office or no longer were able to serve.

In line with previous practice, interviews of the candidates had been undertaken by a Member Selection Panel on 21 August and 18 September.

The Selection Panel recommend that the following persons be appointed to the IRP;

Mark Adams ( Business sector)  
Rachel Bradley (Education sector)  
Lorna Jamison (Health sector)  
Bob Locker (Residents sector)  
Suzie Tobin (Voluntary sector)

Council supported the appointment of these persons and

**RESOLVED that-**

**the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in the preamble to this resolution be approved**

308 TWINNING VISIT TO HERNDON, USA

Councillor Chaudhri informed Council of his recent successful official visit to Herndon USA, one of the Council's twinning partners which had reinforced the links between the Council and Herndon .

(The meeting ended at 8.15pm)

Mayor