

## MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

5 March 2020 at 7.30 pm

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor P Sohi) in the chair.

Members of the Council present      Councillors M Adams, A Alderson, D Anderson-Bassey, M Brierley, J Broadhead, T Burton, I Chaudhri, B Clarke, D Clarke, D Cotty, M Cressey, R Edis, J Furey, E Gill, L Gillham, J Gracey, T Gracey, M Harnden, M Heath, C Howorth, J Hulley, N King, R King, M Kusneraitis, S Lewis, M Maddox, I Mullens, A Neathey, M Nuti, J Olorenshaw, N Prescott, P Snow, P Sohi, S Walsh, D Whyte, S Whyte and M Willingale

Members of the Council absent:      Councillors S Dennett, S Mackay, J Sohi and J Wilson

### 532    **FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

The Mayor read out the Fire Precautions.

### 533    **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council noted the Mayoral announcements.

The Mayor announced that Cllr Gillham was stepping down as Chairman of the Runnymede Health and Wellbeing Task Group after 5 years in the role. The Mayor outlined some of her achievements during her tenure as Chairman, for which Members expressed their appreciation.

### 534    **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 February 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 535    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors S Dennett, S Mackay, J Sohi and J Wilson

### 536    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors J Gracey, T Gracey and C Howorth declared a non pecuniary interest in the item on Addlestone Canoe Club as their family had used the Club. The Councillors remained in the room and voted thereon.

### 537    **PETITIONS**

No petitions were submitted by Members of the Council under Standing Order No 19

### 538    **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13**

Council agreed to alter the order of business so that the Questions (b) and (c) from Members were dealt with prior to the exclusion of press and public and question (a) was

dealt with after exclusion of press and public to allow commercially sensitive information to be provided as part of the answer to that question.

539 **PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF MAYORAL SELECTION**

In accordance with Standing Order 7, Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee regarding a nomination for the office of Mayor for 2020/21.

**RESOLVED that –**

**Councillor Mrs E Gill be nominated for the office of Mayor for 2020/21.**

540 **PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF DEPUTY MAYORAL SELECTION**

In accordance with Standing Order 7, Council considered candidates for the office of Deputy Mayor for 2020/21.

Councillors Chaudhri and Harnden had been nominated. As there were two nominations, the selection of Deputy Mayor was conducted by secret ballot. Councillor Chaudhri polled 11 votes, Mrs Harnden 25 votes and there was one abstention. Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED that**

**Cllr Harnden be nominated for the office of Deputy Mayor at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2020.**

541 **ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21**

Council considered a recommendation from Corporate Management Committee which had met on 27 February 2020 regarding the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2020/21. Council agreed the Statement, subject to deletion of the word 'package' from para 4.7.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Annual Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved, subject to deletion of the word 'package' from para 4.7.**

542 **NOTICE OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER**

***Liberal Democrat Motion: For the purpose of increasing recycling in Runnymede, publicise the end destination of kerbside recycling and identify what the materials are recycled into.***

*This Council notes that:*

1. *Runnymede borough has a kerbside recycling rate of 44.5% (2018/2019) against a target of 47%*
2. *Surrey Heath, a neighbouring borough, report 66.9% for the same period (2018/2019)<sup>1</sup>*
3. *Surrey County Council publicises at the end of each year the end destinations for recycling, albeit there has not been a report published since November 2018 for the year 2017/2018<sup>2</sup>*
4. *The government has introduced a climate strategy aimed at reaching net zero emissions by 2050<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2018-19-overall-performance/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.surreyep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SWP-end-destinations-report-2017\\_18-1.pdf](https://www.surreyep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SWP-end-destinations-report-2017_18-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-go-further-and-faster-to-tackle-climate-change>

5. *There is a growing perception that recyclable materials are not recycled but are sent to landfill or similar*

*This Council believes that:*

1. *Runnymede should be a leader in halting the effects of climate change*
2. *Achieving a zero-waste economy is crucial to transitioning to net-zero carbon emissions*
3. *Runnymede Borough Council should do all within its power to improve recycling rates*
4. *There is empirical evidence that education is fundamental to improving behaviours*
5. *Greater transparency about where our recycling goes and what happens to it will provide people with more incentives to take responsibility for their waste and lead to improved recycling rates*
6. *Publicising where recycling goes should not add additional costs to the borough through the use of already available publications such as the Runnymede Talks magazine, the Runnymede Borough Website and existing social media accounts*

*This Council resolves to:*

1. *Publicise through existing communication channels the destinations of kerbside recycling in the borough of Runnymede*
2. *Publicise what happens to kerbside recycled material at the end destination i.e. what do the materials get recycled into?*

Councillor Whyte asked for the Motion to be referred to Environment and Sustainability Committee.

The Chairman of Environment and Sustainability Committee was supportive of increased transparency in relation to recycling and there were no issues with making this information, as far as could be obtained, available through normal RBC channels.

Council was further informed that the Council's Corporate Head of Environmental Services would request an update of the end destination sites for Runnymede from the Depot or via the SEP and would as far as possible endeavour to find out what use the recycled material was put to, although this was not always easy to establish. The SEP was undertaking work to collate end destination data, and this would be published when finalised. SEP were still collating the information.

A new comprehensive 2020 Household kerbside waste and recycling policy would be reported to Environment & Sustainability Committee on 19 March for approval including, measures to improve RBC recycling rates and reduce waste disposal overall. The Chairman stated that this would provide an opportunity for further discussion on this matter.'

A Member stated that work was currently being done by SCC to bring consistency to recycling across the County and to improve recycling rates.

To reflect the role of SCC in the recycling process, an amendment to the Motion was passed and it was \_

**RESOLVED that-**

**The following Motion be remitted to Environment and Sustainability Committee with an expression of support:**

- i) **Ask SCC to publicise the end destination of kerbside recycling; and**
- ii) **SCC and RBC to publicise through existing communication channels the destinations of kerbside recycling in the borough of Runnymede.**

In accordance with Standing Order 25.2, a named vote was taken on the above Motion, and the voting was as follows:

For (37): Councillors Adams, Alderson, Anderson-Bassey, Brierley, Broadhead, Burton, Chaudhri, B Clarke, D Clarke, Cotty, Cressey, Edis, Furey, Gillham, Gill, J Gracey, T Gracey, Harnden Heath, Howorth, Hulley, N King, R King, Kusneraitis, Lewis, Maddox, Mullens, Neathey, Nuti, Olorenshaw, Prescott, Snow, P Sohi, Walsh, D Whyte, S Whyte and Willingale.

Against (0).

Abstention (0)

543 **MINORITY GROUP PRIORITY BUSINESS**

No items of Minority Group Priority business had been registered under Standing Order 23.

544 **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME – ADOPTION**

The Council considered the revocation of the existing Members' Allowances scheme and adoption of the amended scheme of Members' Allowances to be effective from 1 April 2020 in accordance with the decision of Council in March 2019. The Allowances would be increased by RPI.

Some Members enquired about linking annual uplifts in the Allowances to pay awards for staff rather than RPI. The linkage of uplifts to RPI could be addressed by the Independent Remuneration Panel at the next triennial review.

The Leader of the Council moved that the new scheme be adopted with an addition that the Special Responsibility Allowances for Chairman and Vice Chairman of Standards and Audit Committee and Deputy leader of the Council be reviewed to reflect their increased duties and responsibilities, and that the Special Responsibility Allowances for Opposition Group leaders be reviewed to reflect their size of the respective Groups. Council agreed the addition which would involve the reconvening of the Independent Remuneration Panel to review these elements of the scheme in advance of the next Triennial review.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) **The existing Scheme be revoked as from 31 March 2020 and the Members' Allowances Scheme as reported be adopted for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021; and**
- ii) **The Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to review and report back to Council on:**
  - **the level of Special Responsibility Allowance for Chairman and Vice Chairman of Standards and Audit Committee;**
  - **the level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council;**
  - **the level of Special Responsibility Allowance for Group Leaders, other than Leader of Council, to reflect size of their respective Groups**

545 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13**

No Questions were submitted by Members of the Council under Standing Order No 13.

## 546 ADDLESTONE CANOE CLUB – LOAN GUARANTEE

Council approval was sought to offer a loan guarantee to the Addlestone Canoe Club, (a Community Club), to replace a dilapidated building with a new, fit for purpose building.

The Club had been a water-based activity club since the nineteenth century, offering water-based activities with canoeing starting in the 1950's.

The club house needed to be re-built and in order to access various forms of funding the Club was seeking the Council to provide a loan guarantee.

The project would replace the current dilapidated structure which was beyond repair with a fit for purpose building to include

- Disabled access
- Changing rooms
- Gym facilities
- Boat store
- Multiuse space for courses, meetings etc.
- Kitchen area
- Landscaping

The Club had obtained planning permission in August 2019 and the preliminary works were complete. The Club had applied for Community Sports Club status which would give them VAT exempt status. As the club house would be new build it would be exempt from VAT. The Club had three competitive quotes and the total cost of the project was £466,560 ex VAT.

Over the last three years the Club had spent £23,000 on the project and had a further £90,000 to start the build plus some contingency funds.

The club were in the final stages of finalising a grant from the London Marathon Trust of £150,000 plus other grants were in the pipeline.

If the Council granted the Club a loan guarantee of up to £150,000 this would help in securing other sources of funding. The Club were reasonably confident they would not need to use the loan guarantee, but should it be needed it could be repaid over 15 years at £10k per annum. However, the Club were willing for the Council to put a legal charge on the property. In the event that the Addlestone Canoe Club secure funding from other bodies then the loan guarantee agreement with the Council would be cancelled and any charge would be removed.

Council was supportive of the proposed loan guarantee subject to the terms of the loan, if required, being agreed by Corporate Management Committee.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the Addlestone Canoe Club be offered a loan guarantee of £150,000 which will be secured on the Clubs' assets, and in the event of a loan being extended the terms of the loan be agreed by Corporate Management Committee.**

## 547 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

### ***Question from Cllr Mullens***

Councillor Mullens asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

*“Last April Runnymede Borough Council made substantial changes to its Council Tax Support scheme, a scheme which helps people on low income to pay their Council Tax.*

*One outcome of these changes is that the number of Working Age Employed residents claiming Council Tax Support has fallen by more than 50% compared to the previous year. In the region of 180 of our residents, who are in work but on low pay, have had their support from the Council withdrawn, making them vulnerable to debt and homelessness.*

*The Council’s constitution puts Council Tax Support in the terms of reference of the Housing Committee. However, prior to the new scheme being ratified by the Full Council in early 2019, it had not been seen by the Housing Committee, being considered only by the Corporate Management Committee.*

*Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that when the current Council Tax Support scheme is reviewed in the coming year, any scheme that is proposed should be considered by the Housing Committee in the first instance, and that this would lead to more robust scrutiny by Members?”*

The Leader of the Council responded that in 2019 the Council consulted very widely, and with some expense, across a wide range of interest groups, CAB, tenants’ groups, residents’ associations and invited individual responses from our website etc. The overwhelming response was in favour of the scheme that was introduced. The recent Council decision on the CTS scheme increased the sums payable to qualifying households.

When it comes to policy decisions the Housing Committee will not be making any further policy decisions on Housing benefit anyway as the Government have firmly taken these to themselves as HB is a national scheme, not a Runnymede Scheme.

For CTS this is not funded by Government, it is funded by the Council from its council tax income. Some claimants are in the HRA, many in private tenancies or are owner occupiers. The cost of CTS is reflected in the General Fund, not the HRA, so it is right and proper those policy decisions are made by the Corporate Management Committee’.

The Leader would also supply the answer with any supporting explanation after the meeting.

In response, Cllr Mullens disagreed that there had been overwhelming support in 2019 and that consultation was wide. Cllr Mullens asked the Leader if he realised the impact the decision of Corporate Management Committee and Full Council would have on 187 residents in work in borough.

The Leader responded that he was not wholly aware of the impact and would ask for a review to be done and that he would hold discussions with Cllr Mullens to discuss the impact. The matter would be included in the work programme for Corporate Management Committee.

**c) Question from Cllr D Whyte**

Councillor D Whyte asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

*“Following the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 there is likely to be some uncertainty in the upcoming local elections in May as to whether non-British residents are able to vote.*

*Would it be appropriate for the Council to conduct a communication exercise to clarify for all residents who is entitled to vote in the elections on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020?”*

The Leader of the Council responded that if a person holds British, Irish or qualifying commonwealth citizenship, they could vote in all elections that take place in May 2020.

EU citizens living in the UK could vote in the May 2020 Local Elections in England and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.

The Council's Runnymede Talks publication would have information on the May elections and would include information about eligibility to vote. The elections page of the website would also include a paragraph informing electors who could vote. The right to vote was more generous than our European counterparts

548 **QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13**

By resolution of the Council, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

**Question from Cllr Snow**

a) Councillor Snow asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

*"Can we have an updated report on the vacant retail units within Addlestone One.*

*We have continually heard since the completion of Addlestone One some two years ago many reports on retailers that were seriously thinking of coming to our town. Most has fallen by the wayside and each time we ask there is another great retailer on the horizon, yet as before they disappear as fast as their rumour arrived.*

*I would like to know whether we will have a different strategy once our new Head of Assets and Regeneration starts or is Addlestone One going to continue to become the White Elephant as many now call it.*

*Many are aware that the few retailers we do have in Addlestone One consider RBC to have failed to achieve their promises and some are looking elsewhere. It is time to be proactive not reactive and ensure things happen for the good of the town, the retailers that have put their faith in us and most of all the Addlestone residents."*

*The Leader of the Council gave a confidential response on progress on Addlestone One and overall commercial performance to date this year.*

*In response Cllr Snow asked if planning permission might be required for two of the proposed occupiers. The Leader confirmed that this might be the case..*

549 **BACK OFFICE CORE SYSTEMS PROCUREMENT**

By resolution of the Council, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

Council considered a recommendation from Corporate Management Committee which had met on 27 February 2020 regarding proposals for procurement following a market testing exercise of back office core systems for Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) and Planning.

Council were supportive of the recommendation and thanked Cllr Lewis and Officers for their work thereon.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the Council enters into a 5 year contract with the incumbent supplier for the continued provision of IT solutions for Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) and Planning to be supplemented by intrinsically-linked additional modules for those existing applications;**
- ii) a capital estimate in the sum of £511,000 be approved for the additional modules referred to at i) above to be taken from the provision for retendering of systems held in the Capital Programme; and**
- iii) the potential annual revenue savings as set out above in the preamble to these recommendations be noted.**

(The meeting ended at 9.00pm)

Mayor