

16.10.24

Dear Councillor

SUMMONS TO A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Full Council to be held on **Thursday, 24 October 2024 at 7.30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Centre.**



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A G E N D A

1. **Councillors Jonathan Wilson and Malcolm Cressey**
2. **Mayor's Announcements**
3. **Minutes** 7 - 15

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 July 2024.
4. **Apologies for Absence**
5. **Declarations of Interest**

If Members have an interest in an item, please complete a member interest form and email it to Democratic.Services@runnymede.gov.uk by 5pm on the day of the meeting. Members are advised to contact the Corporate Head of Law and Governance prior to the meeting if they wish to seek advice on a potential interest.
6. **Speaking or Questions from Members of the Public under Standing Order 12**
 - a) Question from Adam Bryant to the Co-Leaders of the Council

“Addlestone One apartments were built 7 years ago and my question is why is the WiFi in the building not fit for purpose and what is being done to improve the service?”

7. **Petitions**

To receive any petitions from members of the Council under Standing Order 19.

8. **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 13**

a) From Councillor Pippa Tucker-Brown to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Living Well Week has been a celebration of social prescribing through being active and creative, making friendships and combatting loneliness. I’d like to ask the Co-Leaders if they agree that this week is essential to the overall wellbeing of the community; how they supported it and how they highlighted the work of the people – a large number of whom are volunteers - that are behind all the activities that give shape and meaning to the lives of many?”

b) From Councillor Jonathan Hulley to Councillor Robert King (as chair of the Corporate Management Committee):

"How much this Council has received from the Household Support Fund since 2021/22 and the breakdown of Household Support Fund spend from 2021 to end September 2024?"

c) From Councillor Sam Jenkins to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Under the Equality Act, people with disabilities who are accompanied by their working assistance dogs, including guide dogs, have the right to access taxis, shops, restaurants, and other places open to the public. It is also unlawful to provide an inferior level of service because of a guide dog, for example, excluding guide dog owners from parts of a restaurant, café or bar, or restricting them to an area where pet dogs may ordinarily be allowed. Access refusals can be an upsetting and humiliating experience for people, which can have a significant impact on guide dog owners’ confidence and independence. Can the Co-Leaders please confirm if businesses operating from RBC-owned units can face enforcement action under the terms of their leases if they fail to comply with Equalities legislation?”

d) From Councillor Peter Snow to Councillor Robert King (as chair of the Corporate Management Committee):

“Our role as Councillors is to request information from the paid officers via the CEO.

Could you tell us why it is then necessary for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Management Committee to re-examine the financial statements of the Local Authority when that role is carried out by the financially qualified staff in the Section 151 Office?”

e) From Councillor Shannon Saise-Marshall to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Can the Co-Leaders confirm that RBC has no plans to close Chertsey Museum and that no such idea has or will be discussed.”

f) From Councillor Cai Parry to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Would the Co-Leaders of the council confirm that the council will always act to prosecute those involved in criminal acts which result in a cost to the council and its residents when clear evidence exists to support this?”

g) From Councillor Rhys Davies to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Can the Co-Leaders confirm if they have received confirmation that Surrey County Council has decided to remove ITS funding from the proposed Toucan Crossing point at Thorpe Lea Road and Pooley Green roundabout which myself and other ward councillors have been campaigning for?”

h) From Councillor Chris Howorth to the Co-Leaders of the Council:

“Can the co-leaders please provide an update on progress regarding the proposed sale of Barbara Clark House?”

9. **Recommendations from Committees**

a) **Medium Term Financial Strategy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 17 October 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee’s recommendations will follow after it has met.

b) **Calendar of meetings - 2025/26 municipal year - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 17 October 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee’s recommendations will follow after it has met.

c) **Update on recruitment for an Independent Remuneration Panel and Members' Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 17 October 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee’s recommendations will follow after it has met.

d) **Member Working Parties - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 17 October 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee’s recommendations will follow after it has met.

10. **Updates to Committees**

a) **Allocation of seats to political groups**

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Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out how ordinary Committees must be constituted when the authority is divided into one or more political groups. The authority is to give effect, as far as reasonably practicable, to the following four principles when constituting its committees or sub-committees:

- a) that not all the seats on the committee or sub-committee are allocated to the same political group;
- b) that the majority of the seats on the committee or sub-committee are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
- c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that Authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority; and
- d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the committee or sub-committee which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority.

It is important to note that the commonly accepted definition of a “political group” is a grouping of two or more members. Independent councillors therefore do not have an entitlement to a seat on a committee, although the Council is at liberty to allocate seats to independent councillors, should it so wish.

The Licensing Committee is separately constituted under the Licensing Act 2003. There is no statutory requirement for political balance but it has been the practice of the authority to ensure that this committee is constituted with consideration for proportionality arrangements. The Licensing Committee is therefore included in the wider calculations.

The calculated entitlement to seats is attached.

Recommendations on the proposed allocation of seats to political groups are to follow after discussions between group leaders.

b) Appointment of members to committees and sub-committees

Recommendation:

That the Council note that group leaders can make appointments to committees in accordance with Standing Order 22.8.

11. Notices of Motion from Members of the Council under Standing Order 15

To receive and consider any notices of motion from members of the Council under Standing Order 15.

a) From Councillor Tom Gracey

This Council notes:

- The Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million

pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.

- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Runnymede Borough Council and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The fact that no national impact assessment appears to have been carried out regarding the detriment this Policy will cause.
- That the low threshold and the short notice of the implementation of this Policy are likely to increase the risk to vulnerable residents this winter.
- Ofgem's energy price cap has recently risen by £149, placing greater financial pressure on low income households this winter.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has provided essential support for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many low income pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, hundreds of pensioners across Runnymede Borough Council sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to implement such a severe means-test to Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of many of our older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.
- The lack of an impact assessment means that the financial impact of this Policy is unknown given the likely increased costs to the NHS.

This Council resolves to:

- Express its opposition to this Policy and the impact it will have on vulnerable pensioners in Runnymede.
- Prepare an analysis of how many of the circa 14,000 pensioners in Runnymede are expected to experience financial hardship as a result of the removal of the Winter Fuel allowance, coupled with the increase in the energy price cap announced in August and report on this through Corporate Management Committee.
- Request that the Council Co-Leaders write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to:

- (i) ensure that vulnerable pensioners are protected from fuel poverty,
- (ii) maintain the Pension triple lock, and,
- (iii) bring in changes to the tax code through the budget to ensure that the state pension, where a sole income, will never be subject to income tax.

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need, partnering with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Runnymede Borough Council are supported in claiming their entitlement.
- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Assess what support this Council could provide through the Household Support Fund or other funding available to support vulnerable residents this winter.

12. **Minority Group Priority Business**

No minority group priority business has been registered under Standing Order 23.

13. **Press and Public to be Excluded by Resolution**

To consider any items so resolved at the meeting.

14. **Recommendations from Committees**

a) **Addlestone One Update - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members as part of an exempt document pack for the 17 October 2024 Corporate Management Committee. The Committee's recommendations will follow after it has met.