



21.02.24

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, 29 February 2024 at 7.30 pm. The meeting will be held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Pritchard', written over a dotted grid background.

Andrew Pritchard
Chief Executive
01932 425500
Email: andrew.pritchard@runnymede.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

2. **Minutes**

6 - 12

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the following meetings:

- Council held on 8 February 2024 (attached)
- Standing Council Tax Setting Committee on 22 February 2024 (to follow)

3. **Apologies for Absence**

4. **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.

5. **Speaking or Questions from Members of the Public under Standing Order 12**

At the time of publication, one question had been received. Any additional

questions received before 12 noon on Thursday 22 February 2024 will be published as part of a supplementary summons.

a) Question from Aileen Owen Davies to the Leader of the Council

“The whole landscape of Runnymede is considerably less “green” than it was a few years ago. In my part of Runnymede very few trees seem to have been planted. There are so many spaces which could become little mini forests such as suggested by the RHS, I have seen no evidence of this. There are many other places where trees would enhance the look, air and carbon absorption of the area.

Increasing green cover will be a benefit to the beauty of the area and with the looming Climate Catastrophe, it is hugely important. They offer shade, habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife, as well as benefiting the quality of the air.

Trees in Conservation Area gardens cannot be either pruned or felled without council permission. Trees in other gardens can be felled whenever the owners wish. There should be similar controls for all properties. Presumably those on public ground do have to have council permission.

So I ask now, how many trees have been felled in Runnymede and how many have been planted during the past year and what is your “greening” plan for the future?”

6. **Petitions**

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

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

a) From Councillor Robert King to the Leader of the Council

“Can the Leader confirm the total and Individual departmental costs from the use of agency staff for this financial year so far and for the previous 22/23?”

b) From Councillor Abby King to the Leader of the Council

“With the UK now in a recession, the ongoing migration to Universal Credit and the end of Household Support Fund funding from April, what is his administration’s plan for helping residents from April who face real financial hardship?”

c) From Councillor Rhys Davies to the Leader of the Council

“Network Rail’s funding settlement for 2024-2029, was recently approved by the Leader’s own Conservative government, and within that settlement £1.2 billion was slashed from its budget, which is 6% of its total. With the corresponding Office for Rail Regulations report and vocal warnings from engineers and track side safety teams, sounding alarm bells that this will increase safety risks, reduce reliability on the network and almost totally remove community match funding for projects like level crossing replacements, is he as disappointed and angry as me that Runnymede residents are now doomed to face more delays, a less reliable service and more potential barrier down time at crossings because of cuts made by his own government and MPs?”

d) From Councillor Eliza Kettle to the Leader of the Council

“Will the leader join me in thanking officers for their proactive support and efforts to listen to local residents, and mitigate the disruption caused in Englefield Green

by large scale funerals, whilst ensuring that loved ones are treated with dignity and respect at the most difficult of times?”

8. Recommendations from Committees

a) Climate Change Action Plan - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 22 February 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee's recommendation will follow after it has met.

b) Pay Policy Statement - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 22 February 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee's recommendation will follow after it has met.

c) Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 22 February 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee's recommendation will follow after it has met.

d) Preliminary consideration of mayoral selection - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

The report associated with this item was circulated to all members with the [agenda for the 22 February 2024 Corporate Management Committee](#). The Committee's recommendation will follow after it has met.

9. Preliminary consideration of deputy mayoral selection

In accordance with Standing Order 7, the Council is asked to consider candidates for the office of Deputy Mayor for the 2024/25 municipal year.

If there is more than one nomination, the selection of Deputy Mayor will be conducted by secret ballot. In the event of an equality of votes on the nomination, the Mayor will exercise a casting or second vote.

The nominee will be put forward as a candidate for the office of Deputy Mayor at the Annual Council meeting on 15 May 2024 providing that they are still a member of the Council.

10. Review of allocation of seats to political groups

13

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 in 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 groups' calculated entitlement to seats on committees is attached.

Proposals regarding the allocation of seats will be circulated at the conclusion of discussions between group leaders.

Recommendations:

- 1. That the allocation of seats to political groups be agreed.**
- 2. That the Council note group leaders are able to 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 Don Whyte

To seek to abolish the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner and redirect the resources to frontline policing.

Motivation:

This motion is being brought forward by the Runnymede Liberal Democrat Group to seek the better use of council tax receipts and to deliver more effective services for residents by abolishing the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Council:

1. Recognises the bravery and hard work of Surrey's police officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), and staff in trying to keep our local communities safe.

2. Notes that despite their efforts, and Surrey residents paying the highest council tax in England for their police force, just 150 out of over 2,700 residential burglaries were solved in the year to August 2023, and there were over 6,500 vehicle crimes, representing an annual increase of over 14%.
3. Believes that many more crimes could be prevented in Runnymede with an increased community policing presence and that many of our communities have seen a drop in police visibility and presence over recent years.
4. Notes that the operating budget for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, including staff and running costs, is £1,667,000, representing an increase of nearly 70% since March 2021.
5. Further notes that, according to Home Office statistics, the number of PCSOs on Surrey's streets reduced by nearly 50% from 140 to just 71 in the two years since March 2021.
6. Believes that the costs of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner should be spent on providing frontline police services, funding the equivalent of around 70 new PCSOs.
7. Further believes that, regardless of the incumbent's political allegiances, it is clear that the role of Police and Crime Commissioner is not necessary and should be abolished, with its functions transferring to Police Boards, made up of local councillors and representatives from relevant local groups.

The Council resolves to:

Call on the Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary expressing this Council's view that this needlessly political role should be abolished, with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing that would benefit Runnymede and all of Surrey.

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.

Runnymede Borough CouncilFull CouncilThursday, 8 February 2024 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Council present: Councillors S Saise-Marshall (Mayor), R Bromley (Deputy Mayor), A Balkan, A Berardi, T Burton, D Clarke, D Coen, MD Cressey, MK Cressey, V Cunningham, M Darby, S Dennett, J Furey, T Gates, L Gillham, T Gracey, M Harnden, C Howorth, J Hulley, S Jenkins, E Kettle, A King, R King, S Lewis, C Mann, J Mavi, I Mullens, M Nuti, N Prescott, S Ringham, M Smith, P Snow, S Walsh, D Whyte, S Whyte, S Williams, M Willingale and J Wilson.

72 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor provided an update on the events and engagements that she had attended since the last Council.

73 Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings of the Council were confirmed and signed as a correct record:

- 7 December 2023 (special meeting)
- 7 December 2023 (ordinary meeting)

74 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davies, Gill and Singh.

75 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

76 Speaking or Questions from Members of the Public under Standing Order 12

There were no public questions.

77 Petitions

There were no petitions.

78 Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 13

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

"My question is with regard to the bad press we recently received from the Surrey Advertiser on the 5 January. The article related to a warning by Suzanne Clarke from the DLUHC which referred to a "Best Value Notice". Can the Leader please confirm whether the article was factual or not and how we have addressed the concerns that are now being raised by all Runnymede residents since the article was published. Specially can the Leader clarify whether the less than ONE percentage is correct or the figure of 4.1 % is the actual figure as recorded?"

The Leader replied in the following terms:

"I can confirm that the article was not factual in respect of reporting a less than one percent return. I would like to take this opportunity to ensure there is an unambiguous understanding of our finances.

Reconciliation to Figures in the 24/25 Budget Report (as at 31 March 2023)							
	Total Value of Investment Properties (From 22/23 Statement of Accounts)		Investment Property Net income (From 22/23 Statement of Accounts)			Investment Property Income Net of borrowing costs	
	£		£			£	
Investment Property	539,580,800		26,208,000	4.9%		11,182,293	2.1%

Within the line "investment property" we include all those assets in which we primarily sought a return to provide the borough with stable cash flows during the period when a number of our established town centre assets were regenerated, as well as the assets that have been delivered through that regeneration, namely Addlestone One, Magna Square and the Egham Orbit.

Factoring in all costs other than interest and Minimum Revenue Provision and excluding revenue derived from residential units, we receive an income of just over £26mn against assets valued at just under £540mn, for a return of 4.9%. When we factor in borrowing costs our total net revenue from our investment property comes to £11.2mn, for a net return of 2.1%.

Without wanting to pre-empt the budget items coming forward shortly, I would point out that this compares to our core spending power of £10.4mn and provides this Council with the financial stability and capability to maintain its broad range of discretionary services and support to its residents.

In terms of the steps that were taken following the publication of the story, a correct presentation of our returns was immediately made available to the two media outlets that ran the story online. One corrected their record immediately, the latter however took several days in which time an additional version of the story was published in the 12 January 2024 edition of the Surrey Advertiser.

Following further discussion with the newspaper's editor, the 19th January edition contained the corrected record in the form of a letter from me. I would note that when the article was being prepared by the journalist, the Council was not contacted to present its view up front or offered the right of reply to the quotes made in the article.

To describe the return as less than one percent is wholly inaccurate. Some have suggested these figures were shared with the media despite knowing they were inaccurate purely for political ends and to bring this Council into disrepute. I, as Leader of this Council, would like to think that no member of this Council would ever do such a thing and I would welcome the relevant councillor to correct the record in print.

Our finance team are consummate professionals who work tirelessly on behalf of this Council and the residents we serve and I have full confidence in their and this Council's ability to deliver for residents."

Councillor Lewis asked which member had provided the original information to the local press? Councillor Gracey stated that the quote reported in the local press was attributed to Councillor R King.

Councillor R King asked whether the Leader understood the level of risk involved in purchasing assets between 2014 and 2019, in light of the non-statutory Best Value Notice's (NSBVN) reported nominal return of 1.4%? Councillor Gracey stated that he was confident all members had an understanding of the risks and that the committee-based system of governance offered recurring and regular scrutiny through papers such as treasury management reports. He added that when appreciation on the Council's assets was factored in, the figures were considerably higher than those quoted in the NSBVN.

79 **Notification of receipt of non-statutory Best Value Notice**

The receipt of the non-statutory Best Value Notice was noted.

80 **Recommendations from Committees**

80a **Chertsey Town Centre Street Licensing - recommendation from the Environment and Sustainability Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Coen), seconded (by Councillor Cunningham) and **resolved** that:

1. All previous resolutions of the Council, made pursuant to paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 (the Act), be rescinded.
2. Pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Act, that as from the date on which this resolution takes effect, all areas of land within the Borough of Runnymede which were "streets" within the definition of that term contained in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 to the Act, be designated as prohibited streets with the exception of any streets referred to in resolution 3 below.
3. The streets and parts of streets set out below be designated as Consent Streets and Licence Streets, as defined in Schedule 4 to the Act:

Consent Streets – Broadway, New Haw - at the eastern service road adjacent to the street from the northern boundary of the Black Prince Public House for a distance of fifteen (15) metres in a northerly direction

Licence Streets – High Street, Egham; Station Road North, Egham; Guildford Street, at the junction of Riversdell Close and Heriot Road, and the junction that meets Windsor Street and London Road.

4. The designation come into effect on 30 March 2024.

80b **RIPA Policy Annual Review - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Willingale) and **resolved** that:

1. The Council note it had not used its RIPA powers during the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 and that the Council further note such powers had not been used since 2011.
2. The revised policy, to govern the use of the Council's RIPA powers for the period 9 February 2024 to 7 February 2025, be adopted.

80c **Housing Revenue Account Estimates - recommendation from the Housing Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Nuti), seconded (by Councillor Hulley) and **resolved** that the revenue estimates for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix A of the officer's report, be approved, and that provisions be made accordingly.

80d **Review of Local Council Tax Discounts - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Willingale) and **resolved** that:

1. With effect from 1 April 2024, the following discounts council tax continue:
 - Care leavers
 - Ukrainian refugees
 - Properties affected by flooding
2. The council tax discount for unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings be reduced from 100% for up to 3 months to 100% for up to 28 days (Class C of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012).
3. With effect from 1 April 2025:
 - a) In accordance with Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, the additional amount payable for council tax be increased from 50% to 100% for dwellings that were unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year.
 - b) The additional amount of council tax be increased from 50% to 200% for properties that were unoccupied and unfurnished for more than five years.
 - c) The additional amount of council tax be increased from 50% to 300% for properties that were unoccupied and unfurnished for more than ten years.

80e **Medium Term Financial Strategy - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Willingale) and **resolved** that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy be approved.

A named vote was requested on this resolution, with the voting recorded as follows:

In favour of the resolution (23)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MD Cressey, MK Cressey, Cunningham, Darby, Dennett, Furey, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mann, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Snow, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson.

Against the resolution (15)

Councillors Berardi, Burton, Gates, Gillham, Harnden, Jenkins, Kettle, A King, R King, Mullens, Ringham, Smith, D Whyte, S Whyte and Williams.

Abstentions (0)80f **24/25 Budget - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee**

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey) and seconded (by Councillor Willingale) that the recommendations, as put forward by the Corporate Management Committee be agreed.

It was proposed (by Councillor R King) and seconded (by Councillor D Whyte) that the amendments to the budget from the Labour, Co-operative and Green Group, the Liberal Democrat Group, and Runnymede Independent Residents and Englefield Green Independent Group be agreed.

[Councillor A King left the meeting at this point due to ill health.]

[The meeting adjourned between 8.50pm and 8.57pm.]

The proposed amendments to the budget were put to the vote and **FELL**.

A named vote was requested on this resolution, with the voting recorded as follows:

In favour of the amendments to the budget (15)

Councillors Berardi, Burton, Gates, Gillham, Harnden, Jenkins, Kettle, R King, Mullens, Ringham, Smith, Snow, D Whyte, S Whyte and Williams.

Against the amendments to the budget (22)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MD Cressey, MK Cressey, Cunningham, Darby, Dennett, Furey, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mann, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson.

Abstentions (0)

The substantive proposed motion was put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The Revised Budget for 2023/24, and Budget Estimates for 2024/25, as set out in the officer's report and at Appendix D of said report be agreed.
2. An increase to the Band D Council Tax level of 2.99% (£5.53) from £184.92 to £190.45 be agreed.
3. The maintenance of the minimum threshold for the General Fund Working Balance at £5m be agreed.
4. The transfers to and from reserves, as set out in the officer's report, be agreed.

A named vote was required on the resolution, with the voting recorded as follows:

In favour of the resolution (22)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MD Cressey, MK Cressey, Cunningham, Darby, Dennett, Furey, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Snow, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson.

Against the resolution (14)

Councillors Berardi, Burton, Gates, Gillham, Harnden, Jenkins, Kettle, R King, Mullens, Ringham, Smith, D Whyte, S Whyte and Williams.

Abstentions (1)

Councillor Mann.

80g Council Tax Resolution

[This item was considered after agenda item 9i - Capital and Investment Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee.]

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Willingale) and **resolved** that formal approval of the Council Tax Resolution be deferred to a meeting of the Standing Council Tax Setting Committee, in accordance with its existing delegation, to be held once all precept notifications had been received.

80h Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Lewis) and **resolved** that:

1. The proposed 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy, which also encompassed the Annual Investment Strategy, be agreed.
2. The Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for 2024/25 be agreed.
3. The Authorised Limit for external borrowing by the Council in 2024/25 be set at £723,443,000 (this being the statutory limit determined under Section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003).
4. The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2024/25, as set out in paragraph 7.15 of the officer's report, be agreed.

80i Capital and Investment Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee

[The proposed amendment to the capital programme was determined as part of the agenda item relating to the 24/25 Budget - recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee.]

It was proposed (by Councillor Gracey), seconded (by Councillor Walsh) and **resolved** that:

1. The Capital and Investment Strategy at Appendix 'A' and the Capital Programme at Exempt Appendix 'B' be agreed.
2. A moratorium on any new debt-funded asset investment, in light of the requirements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, be agreed.

3. The “low value” limit for IFRS16 reporting purposes be set at £10,000, subject to the agreement of the external auditor.

A named vote was required on the resolution, with the voting recorded as follows:

In favour of the resolution (22)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MD Cressey, MK Cressey, Cunningham, Darby, Dennett, Furey, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Snow, Walsh, Willingale and Wilson.

Against the resolution (9)

Councillors Berardi, Burton, Kettle, R King, Ringham, Smith, D Whyte, S Whyte and Williams.

Abstentions (6)

Councillor Gates, Gillham, Harnden, Jenkins, Mann and Mullens.

[Councillor A King rejoined the meeting.]

81 Notices of Motion from Members of the Council under Standing Order 15

There were no notices of motion.

82 Minority Group Priority Business

There was no minority group priority business.

83 Press and Public to be Excluded by Resolution

There was no exempt business.

(The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.)

Chair

	Councillors in groups	%	Corporate Management	Environment and Sustainability	Housing	Community Services	Planning	Licensing	Regulatory [^]	Overview and Scrutiny Select	Crime and disorder [*]	Standards and Audit	Standing Appointments Sub	Standing Council Tax Setting &		Total seat entitlement	Total seat entitlement rounded
No of seats			12	10	10	10	15	11	5	9	9	10	5	12	0	118	
Conservative	19	47.500	5.700	4.750	4.750	4.750	7.125	5.225	2.375	4.275	4.275	4.750	2.375	5.700	0.000	56.050	56
RIRG and EGI	8	20.000	2.400	2.000	2.000	2.000	3.000	2.200	1.000	1.800	1.800	2.000	1.000	2.400	0.000	23.600	24
Labour and Co-Op, and Green	6	15.000	1.800	1.500	1.500	1.500	2.250	1.650	0.750	1.350	1.350	1.500	0.750	1.800	0.000	17.700	18
Liberal Democrat	4	10.000	1.200	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.500	1.100	0.500	0.900	0.900	1.000	0.500	1.200	0.000	11.800	12
Independent Group	3	7.500	0.900	0.750	0.750	0.750	1.125	0.825	0.375	0.675	0.675	0.750	0.375	0.900	0.000	8.850	9
Group 6		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0
Group 7		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0
Totals	40	100.00	12.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	15.00	11.00	5.00	9.00	9.00	10.00	5.00	12.00	0.00	118.00	119.00
* Same membership as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee																	
[^] Also members of the Licensing Committee																	
& Same membership as the Corporate Management Committee																	