

## **BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

### **COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on 2 December 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors J. S. Bray (Mayor), R. S. Turner (Deputy Mayor), M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), R. H. Ashford, J. Baker, R. Biggs, M. S. Blacker, G. Buttironi, P. Chandler, J. C. S. Essex, N. D. Harrison, J. Hudson, S. A. Kulka, J. P. King, V. H. Lewanski, S. Parnall, J. E. Philpott, R. Ritter, K. Sachdeva, S. Sinden, C. Stevens, M. Tary and R. Absalom.

Also present: Councillors G. Adamson, T. Archer, J. Booton, Z. Cooper, M. Elbourne, R. Harper, A. M. Lynch, R. Michalowski, C. M. Neame, D. Torra, S. T. Walsh and F. Kelly.

#### **41. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

#### **42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bramhall, Feeney, Harp, Horwood, Humphreys, A King, McKenna, Moses and Whinney.

#### **43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **44. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

#### **45. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

#### **46. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

Seven questions on notice were asked, and responses given, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.15 as follows:

<b>Question by</b>	<b>Answered by</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Cllr Sinden	Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Cllr Lewanski	Electric Car Charging Points
Cllr Essex	Executive Member for Housing and Support, Cllr Neame	Household Support Grant
Cllr Stevens	Executive Member for Leisure and Culture, Cllr Sachdeva	The Harlequin
Cllr Chandler	Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Cllr Bramhall	New Pond Farm
Cllr Chandler	Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Cllr Bramhall	Allotments at New Pond Farm <i>(to be answered in writing)</i>
Cllr McKenna	Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Cllr Biggs	Marketfield Way
Cllr Ritter	Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Cllr Biggs	Job Creation from New Developments

**Note:** For more information on responses to Council questions, please see this page on the Council's website: <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13264>.

#### 47. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of the Audit Committee, from its meeting on 25 November 2021 (Minute 28), be adopted.

#### 48. **STATEMENTS**

##### **Councillor Rosemary Absalom, Council Representative on Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Board**

Councillor Absalom explained that Natural England were reviewing the boundary of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Natural England were seeking views on the extension of the boundary until January 2022. Councillor Absalom encouraged members and residents to consider whether additional areas should be included in the boundary and submit their evidence to Natural England.

#### 49. **MOTION: ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, moved the motion which asked the Council to resolve to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

Councillor Kulka seconded the motion and expressed his belief that the Council should do whatever it could to stop irrational abuse.

Members highlighted the importance of:

- Ensuring the definition, once adopted, isn't misinterpreted or misused.
- Ensuring that the rights of one group don't preclude the rights of other groups.
- The Council's desire that there is no unlawful discrimination in our community.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism:

'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'

#### **50. MOTION: ALLOWANCE FOR MEMBERS TO VOTE ONLINE**

Councillor Essex, on behalf of Councillor McKenna, moved the motion which called for the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State to request that Councillors in England be able to meet and vote online. In moving the motion, Councillor Essex explained that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had learnt to work flexibly, with Members contributing remotely.

Councillor Chandler seconded the motion, and in doing so expressed the view that changes to the rules would enable people to stand for election where previously they were unable to.

Members made the following comments in support of the motion:

- That, whilst it was best that Members attended in person, Members should not be excluded from participating if they were unable to attend for any reason.
- That the motion was a result of learning from the Covid-19 pandemic, but would continue beyond the pandemic.
- That the change would allow the Council to be more modern, efficient, effective, pro-active and flexible.
- That it would give further opportunities to Councillors who are parents and carers to fully participate in Council business.
- That the pandemic demonstrated that remote meetings were just as effective as in person meetings.

In opposition to the motion, the following comment was made:

- That the Council should continue with in person meetings as there was value in casting a vote in person.

Upon a vote it was **RESOLVED** that the Council called for the Leader to write to the new Secretary of State, to call for parity across the UK and enable councillors in England, including in Reigate and Banstead, to meet and vote online as they see fit.

## 51. CONSTITUTION REVIEW

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. A review of the Constitution had been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer and relevant Officer and Member groups had been consulted. A number of changes were recommended which would provide certainty and clarity around decision making and governance, as well as the introduction of a new format in line with corporate standards and accessibility.

Councillor Schofield moved the recommendation, and in doing so explained that the changes would bring the Constitution up to date with best practice.

Councillor Biggs seconded.

During the discussion it was requested that paragraph 6.9 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation be amended to include consultation with the Head of Service with responsibility for Human Resources.

**RESOLVED** that the changes to the Constitution set out in Annex 1, the addendum and the inclusion of consultation with the Head of Service with responsibility for Human Resources at paragraph 6.9 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation, be approved.

## 52. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Interim Head of Paid Service introduced the report, which was the annual technical report to confirm the Tax Base that would be used for setting council tax for 2022/23. It also included the tax bases for Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council and Horley Town Council in order that they may prepare their budgets and precepts. The tax base was also used by the County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner to set their council tax.

The recommendations included provision for the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Finance & Governance, to make any final changes to the numbers ready for the final budget report to Council in February.

Councillor Schofield moved the recommendation, explaining that it was a key piece of information for the budget setting process.

Councillor Biggs seconded.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That Council approve a Council Tax Base for 2022/23 for the purpose of setting the Collection Fund budget of 62,274.70 Band D equivalents, this being a net increase in the Tax Base on 2021/22 of 1.50%
- ii) That Council delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Finance to make further adjustments to the final tax base where necessary to reflect any changes in the underlying assumptions and report the outcome to Executive in January.

***Clerk's note:** The Interim Head of Paid Service, Mari Roberts-Wood, left the meeting upon conclusion of this item, and did not return.*

### **53. DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Director of Place introduced the recommendation to designate Mari Roberts-Wood (Interim Head of Paid Service and Director of People Services) as Head of Paid Service.

Councillor Lewanski moved the recommendation and Councillor Brunt seconded.

Members expressed support for the recommendation as the right decision for the Council and residents.

**RESOLVED** that Mari-Roberts-Wood (Interim Head of Paid Service and Director of People Services) be designated as Head of Paid Service.

### **54. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, announced that, following the nomination process, the Mayor-elect for 2022/23 would be Councillor Frank Kelly, in recognition of his two previous terms as Deputy Mayor.

### **55. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Remembrance Services**

The Mayor thanked the uniformed groups for their hard work in making the services of Remembrance special occasions, and the Harlequin technical team for lighting up the Town Hall.

#### **High Sheriff Visit**

The Mayor had welcomed the High Sheriff of Surrey, Dr Julie Llewlyn, on a tour of the borough. This included visits to YMCA East Surrey and the Earlswood Depot where the High Sheriff awarded certificates to the Council's Green Spaces, Refuse and Recycling, Parking, Joint Enforcement Team and Street Cleansing teams.

The High Sheriff had been impressed with the work carried out in the borough and a follow up visit would be arranged to include a visit to the Beacon School and a tour of YMCA activities in Merstham.

#### **Michael Wilson CBE**

The Mayor paid tribute to the work of Michael Wilson CBE who had retired from his post as Chief Executive Officer of East Surrey Hospital.

#### **Charity Events**

The Mayor announced that over £3,600 had been raised at a Quiz Night fundraiser for YMCA East Surrey, with all proceeds going to the Life Change Fund.

The YMCA East Surrey Santa Run was to take place on Sunday 5 December.

A screening of the Nutcracker Live would take place at the Harlequin on Thursday 9 December. All proceeds would go to Age Concern Banstead and YMCA East Surrey.

**Civic Carole Service**

The Mayor announced that the Civic Carol Service would take place on Sunday 12 December at the United Church of St Mark's, Tattenham Corner.

**Awarding of Part Mayor's Badges**

The Mayor awarded Councillor Rosemary Absalom with a Past Mayor's Medallion. The Mayor thanked Councillor Absalom for the hard work she undertook as Mayor. This included many virtual engagements during the pandemic as well as Covid-19 safe fundraisers such as an online raffle, art competition and a sponsored walk undertaken by the Mayor's Consort.

The Mayor also thanked Councillor Kelly, the past Deputy Mayor, and the past-Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Kelly, for their support to Councillor Absalom.

The Meeting closed at 8.53 pm