

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held as a Remote - Virtual Meeting on 11 February 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors R. Absalom (Mayor), M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), G. Adamson, T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, M. S. Blacker, N. J. Bramhall, J. S. Bray, G. Buttironi, J. C. S. Essex, K. Foreman, P. Harp, R. Harper, N. D. Harrison, A. C. J. Horwood, J. Hudson, E. Humphreys, G. J. Knight, J. P. King, V. H. Lewanski, A. M. Lynch, S. McKenna, R. Michalowski, N. C. Moses, C. M. Neame, S. Parnall, J. Paul, J. E. Philpott, S. J. G. Rickman, R. Ritter, D. A. Ross, K. Sachdeva, S. Sinden, C. Stevens, R. S. Turner, S. T. Walsh and C. T. H. Whinney.

57. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held 10 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Feeney, Kelly and Kulka.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

60. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

61. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Jonathan White asked a question about Firework noise, and a response was given by the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.14.

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=13260>

62. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Four questions on notice were asked, and responses given, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.15.

Question by	Response by	Subject
Cllr Essex	Executive Member for Investments and Companies, Cllr Archer	Horley Business Park
Cllr Ritter	Executive Member for Investments and Companies, Cllr Archer	Proposed Crematorium
Cllr McKenna	Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Cllr Lewanski	Energy Costs
Cllr Whinney	Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Cllr Biggs	Cladding on Buildings

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>

63. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council received six recommendations arising from the Executive meeting on 28 January 2021, relating to the Budget and Capital Programme 2021/22 (Minute ref. 65). A Notice of Amendment to recommendation 2, 4 and 5 had been received, and notification provided to all Members, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.13.4 (ii). The Mayor advised that debate would be guided by the procedure note circulated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.8.4.

Minute 65, Budget and Capital Programme 2021/22

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt moved the original recommendations and in so doing, commended Officers who had provided a year-on-year improvement in the clarity and detail of the information for Members to consider. The Budget had been prepared in acknowledgement of the ongoing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, and had benefitted from the contributions of the Budget Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, seconded the original recommendations, and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Essex proposed, and Councillor Ritter seconded, an amendment to recommendations 2, 4 and 5. The amendments sought to provide clarity that initiatives to deliver the Environmental Sustainability Strategy would be drawn from a permanent revenue budget, and growth for investment in capital assets, in recognition of the importance and urgency of climate change.

Members discussion of the amendment included the following considerations:

- The Council budgeted annually, and in so doing, did not need to bind itself, in the way the amendment proposed

- The delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy would be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which would provide greater transparency and assurance than the amendment proposed; and
- Members could be assured of the availability of the both the revenue and capital reserves when needed to be drawn upon for environmental initiatives, and that consequentially, the amendment was unnecessary.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, having reserved the right to speak as seconder of the original recommendations spoke on the amendment as follows:

- The Budget and Capital Programme had been prepared in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Budget Scrutiny Panel, as part of an annual process, the matters raised in the amendment could have been properly considered then, had they been proposed and supported
- The designated reserve had been recommended by the Council's Section 151 Officer as the most appropriate and flexible way to draw on funds when needed; and
- The delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy would draw on resources, skills and expertise from across the Council, not just one service area, and the amendment demonstrated a misunderstanding of the Budget setting process overall.

The Mayor called upon the Interim Head of Paid Service to conduct a recorded vote in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.21.3. On the **amendment** to the recommendations of Minute 65 (Budget and Capital Programme 2021/2022) voting was recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Essex, McKenna and Ritter. (3)

Against: Councillors Adamson, Archer, Ashford, Biggs, Blacker, Bramhall, Bray, Brunt, Buttironi, Foreman, Harp, Harper, Harrison, Horwood, Hudson, Humphreys, King, Knight, Lewanski, Lynch, Michalowski, Moses, Neame, Parnall, Paul, Philpott, Rickman, Ross, Sachdeva, Schofield, Stevens, Turner, Walsh and Whinney. (34)

Abstain: Councillors Absalom and Sinden. (2)

The Mayor declared the **amendment lost**. Accordingly, the **original recommendations**, as moved, were discussed, and remarks thereon included:

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had resolved that the budget growth proposals were realistic and based on reasonable assumptions
- An acknowledgement of the importance of the Council's Commercial Strategy in generating income in the future
- Clarification that resources, including the New Homes Bonus, would continue to be aligned to the priorities set out in the Housing Delivery Strategy 2020-2025
- Recycling initiatives would continue to be rolled-out; and
- The level of reserves remained healthy, but would be continually monitored, and that the Council was in a strong position to respond to challenges in the medium-term.

The Mayor called upon the Interim Head of Paid Service to conduct a recorded vote in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.21.3. For the **original recommendations** set out at Minute 65 (Budget and Capital Programme 2021/2022) voting was recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Adamson, Archer, Ashford, Biggs, Blacker, Bramhall, Bray, Brunt, Buttironi, Foreman, Harp, Harper, Harrison, Horwood, Hudson, Humphreys, King, Knight, Lewanski, Lynch, Michalowski, Moses, Neame, Parnall, Paul, Philpott, Rickman, Ross, Sachdeva, Schofield, Stevens, Turner, Walsh and Whinney. (34)

Against: Councillors Essex, McKenna and Ritter. (3)

Abstain: Councillors Absalom and Sinden. (2)

The Mayor declared the **original recommendations carried**.

Minute 66 (Council Tax Setting 2021/22)

Voting was recorded in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.21.3 as follows:

For: Councillors Adamson, Archer, Ashford, Biggs, Blacker, Bramhall, Bray, Brunt, Buttironi, Essex, Foreman, Harp, Harper, Harrison, Horwood, Hudson, Humphreys, King, Knight, Lewanski, Lynch, McKenna, Michalowski, Moses, Neame, Parnall, Paul, Philpott, Rickman, Ross, Sachdeva, Schofield, Sinden, Stevens, Turner, Walsh and Whinney. (38)

Abstain: Councillor Absalom (1)

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Executive, from its meetings on 17 December 2020, and 28 January 2021, be adopted as follows:

1. Minute 57 (Horley Pay-on-Exit Parking)
2. Minute 65 (Budget and Capital Programme 2021/2022);
3. Minute 66 (Council Tax Setting 2021/22); and
4. Minute 68 (Calendar of Meetings 2021/2022).

64. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Interim Head of Paid Service presented the report on the adoption of the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The report set out the relevant statutory powers, the issues for the Council to consider, and the associated legal and financial implications. The format and content of the statement was in line with the statement approved in previous years.

The recommendation set out in the report was moved by Councillor Brunt, who emphasised the Council's ongoing commitment as a real Living Wage employer, and seconded by Councillor Schofield, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED: that the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 be approved.

65. STATEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, stated that the report on Local Government Reorganisation that had been commissioned by Surrey District and Borough Councils was now available to Members. An all-Member seminar would be organised in the coming weeks to discuss the report.

Councillor Harrison, as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, stated that there would be a seminar on Overview and Scrutiny facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, scheduled for 24 February 2021, and that all Members were invited to attend.

66. MOTION: CLADDING ON BUILDINGS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.17.3, Members had been notified that that the Mayor was of the opinion that it would be convenient and conducive to the conduct of business to allow the Motion set out at item 10 on the agenda, to be dealt with at the meeting.

Councillor Sinden proposed the Motion and in so doing emphasised the emotional and financial impact on residents whose homes were affected and urged the Council to support the national campaign as set out in the Motion. Councillor Essex seconded the motion, and reserved the right to speak.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.19, Councillor Biggs moved an amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Walsh. The amendment, circulated to all Members before the meeting, with additional words in **bold underlined** text, and deletions struck through, was as follows:

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council **having regard to the** ~~to sign up to the 'End our Cladding Scandal Campaign', which makes the following 10 demands~~ **and the associated pledges will**

- ~~1. The Government must lead an urgent national effort to remove all dangerous cladding from buildings by June 2022.~~
- ~~2. The Building Safety Fund must cover all buildings, regardless of height, and a range of internal and external fire safety defects, not just cladding.~~
- ~~3. The Government should provide the money up front and then seek to recover it from any responsible parties or via a temporary levy on development.~~
- ~~4. Social housing providers must have full and equal access to the fund.~~
- ~~5. The Government must compel building owners or managers to be honest with residents about fire safety defects.~~
- ~~6. The Government should cover the cost of interim safety measures.~~
- ~~7. The Government should act as an insurer of last resort and underwrite insurance where premiums have soared.~~
- ~~8. A fairer, faster process is needed to replace the EWS form and funding is necessary to ensure all buildings requiring a form are surveyed within 12 months.~~

- ~~9. Mental health support must be offered to affected residents.~~
- ~~10. Protecting residents from historic and future costs must be a key commitment of new building safety legislation.~~
- **Press the government to ensure the buildings with the greatest safety concerns within the Borough are prioritised**
 - **Continue lobbying the Government on behalf of our residents to allocate additional funding, particularly those in properties below 18m in height**
 - **Support a Borough wide effort to ensure that developers remove all dangerous cladding from the buildings affected as a matter of urgency;**
 - **Enable and encourage our affected residents to contact our officers and members to escalate their issues to the necessary parties and agencies to ensure that all necessary safety works are carried out in the shortest possible time.**

Members discussion on the amendment included the following comments:

- That the announcement by the Housing Secretary of £3.5 billion of government funding to replace unsafe cladding on residential buildings of 18 metres or over, was welcome
- It was desirable that every resident that was affected should have their property prioritised, remedied by the developers and contractors responsible, and not suffer a financial loss
- One Ward councillor was already engaging with affected residents, and the amendment encouraged the continuance of engagement between affected residents, Members, and Officers; and
- The amendment was realistic and specific to the Borough.

Councillor Essex, having reserved the right to speak as seconder of the original motion, felt that the amendment was not as strong as the original motion, and in acknowledging the spirit of the amendment, urged that the local Member of Parliament should offer support in forthcoming parliamentary debates. Councillor Sinden, as mover of the original motion, emphasised the mental health and wellbeing impact on residents affected, and urged that remedial actions be taken promptly.

The Mayor called upon the Interim Head of Paid service to conduct a roll-call vote on the **amendment**, which was **carried** with 34 votes for, 3 against and 2 abstentions, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED that

1. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council having regard to the 'End our Cladding Scandal Campaign' and the associated pledges will:
 - Press the government to ensure the buildings with the greatest safety concerns within the Borough are prioritised
 - Continue lobbying the Government on behalf of our residents to allocate additional funding, particularly those in properties below 18m in height

- Support a Borough wide effort to ensure that developers remove all dangerous cladding from the buildings affected as a matter of urgency;
- Enable and encourage our affected residents to contact our Officers and Members to escalate their issues to the necessary parties and agencies to ensure that all necessary safety works are carried out in the shortest possible time.

67. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt announced that:

- Councillor Michalowski would be joining the Executive as the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, replacing Councillor Horwood who had stepped down. The Leader thanked Councillor Horwood for his support and long-service to the Executive, and the Council.
- Councillor Rachel Turner would be Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2021/22; and
- That the best wishes of the Council be conveyed to Alderman Selby, who was recovering from ill health.

68. APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to report and make recommendations on Members Allowances. A recruitment process was undertaken in November and December 2020.

RESOLVED

1. That Robert Coyle and John Thompson MBE be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the period until February 2024 and receive a payment of £573.34 per annum.
2. That the appointment of Farah Stehrenberger be extended for the period until February 2024 and receive a payment of £573.34 per annum.

69. REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL AND THE ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

RESOLVED that the review of political proportionality, the allocation of committee seats to political groups, and the appointment of members to committee seats, in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, be agreed.

70. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor summarised the Mayoral engagements since the last meeting of Council, which included (in accordance with guidance at the time):

- Participation in a wreath-making workshop at the Harlequin Theatre, in aid of the Women's Refuge

- Festive events, including presenting the *Best Dressed Festive Shop Window* prize to Willows on West Street
- Presenting certificates of appreciation to Mr Andy Nash, the Manager of the Belfrey Shopping Centre; and to Able Cadet Amy Lewis, in recognition of her year as the Mayoral Cadet for the immediate past Mayor; and
- Presenting the Burgee for High Overall Standards to the Reigate Unit of the Sea Cadets.

In the coming weeks, the Mayor's Office would be organising an art competition for young people aged 5 to 18, to reflect on and illustrate their experiences of the past year.

Thirteen charities and organisations had benefitted from the Mayor's chosen charity, the Community Fund for Reigate and Banstead, details of which would be included on the Mayor's social media pages.

The Meeting closed at 9.47 pm