

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held as a Remote - Virtual Meeting on 30 July 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors R. Absalom (Mayor), M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), G. Adamson, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, M. S. Blacker, J. S. Bray, G. Buttironi, J. C. S. Essex, R. J. Feeney, K. Foreman, P. Harp, R. Harper, N. D. Harrison, A. C. J. Horwood, J. Hudson, E. Humphreys, G. J. Knight, S. A. Kulka, 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.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 28 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allcard, Archer, Brown and Kelly.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

19. URGENT BUSINESS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.11, the Mayor specified the circumstance by which the report had been allowed to be taken as urgent business. This was to ensure that Reigate & Banstead Borough Council would be able to contribute to the current debate about the future shape of local government in Surrey and to ensure that the interests of the borough and its residents would be represented in any proposals that were developed.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, introduced the report which proposed that the full range of options for the future of local government within Surrey should be properly investigated before any decision was made. It was considered premature to conclude that a single county wide unitary council was the most appropriate structure until that had been done. There may be other models that would be equally or more appropriate in balancing the wide range of considerations (for example, options that were more consistent with the government's guideline size criteria). The other Boroughs and Districts in Surrey had also expressed concerns about the principle of pursuing a single-unitary solution for Surrey when no business case had yet been presented and when other options had not been fully investigated.

At the invitation of the Mayor, Members spoke in endorsement of the recommendations, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED that the Council

1. Supports further investigation into the future structure of local government in Surrey and in so doing utilises the funding set out at paragraph 19 of the report
2. Agrees that the Leader, supported by officers, should work with other authorities across the County to develop a proposal which is place-based, close to local communities and continues to provide residents with the support and services they need; and
3. Agrees that the Leader establishes a cross party member working group to feed into the above work

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Jonathan White asked a question about the use of Helium Balloons on Council sites, and a response was given by the Leader of the Council 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>

21. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Notice of six questions had been received, two of which would receive a written answer. Four questions were asked at the meeting and responses given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.15. The details were as follows:

Question by	Answered by	Subject
Councillor Essex	Councillor Knight, Executive Member for Housing and Benefits	Proposed Monthly Rents and Purchase Price at Council-led Housing Developments
Councillor Ritter	Councillor Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Pollinator Action Plan
Councillor McKenna	Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Extension of Permitted Development Rights
Councillor Sinden	Councillor Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Ground Floor Community Space – Former Youth Association Hall, Marketfield Way
Councillor Brown	Councillor Humphreys, Executive Member for Place and Economic Prosperity	Communal Working Hubs (Written response)
Councillor Brown	Councillor Horwood, Executive Member for Wellbeing and Intervention	Theatre on Earlswood Common (Written response)

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>

22. RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 11 June 2020 (Minute 11), concerning the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20, be adopted.

23. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S IRP ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2020/21

The Acting Chief Executive introduced the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel which recommended a Members' Allowances Scheme to apply from 1 April 2020, with applicable elements applied retrospectively back to that date.

Councillor Brunt proposed and Councillor Blacker seconded the recommendations, and it was noted that the report identified that consideration should be given for future reviews to be conducted on a lighter-touch or less frequent basis.

RESOLVED that

1. Recommendations (1) to (12) of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) be adopted
2. The Proper Officer be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020/21 (approved under Recommendation 1 above) arising from any amendment or non-adoption of the IRP's recommendations on Allowances
3. The payment to IRP members for producing their report be increased, in line with the general principle of adopting the January 2020 CPI (1.8%), from £563.20 to £573.34, in accordance with the general principle of the approach agreed by Council in December 2018
4. The IRP be thanked for its report
5. The Council agree to recruit two IRP Members for a three-year period

24. REVISED MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The recommendation of the Governance Task Group was moved by Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Rickman, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED that the revised Member Code of Conduct, and Member / Officer Protocol be adopted; and that consequential amendments to the Constitution of the Council be made accordingly.

25. STATEMENTS

There were none.

26. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader shared the sad news of the passing of former Councillor Mike Miller, who had been a Chairman of the Planning Committee, prior to holding a role as an Executive Member, during his time on the Council.

27. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since the last meeting of the Council, the Mayor had:

- Supported local businesses by safely attending those shops, cafés and restaurants that had re-opened due to the easing of lockdown restrictions
- Observed a flag raising ceremony, in recognition of Armed Forces Week
- Thanked volunteers by video link during Volunteers Week

The Mayor explained that her Charity, The Community Fund for Reigate & Banstead, had in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, been converted into a local Reigate & Banstead Coronavirus Emergency Fund which was assisting with the local social and welfare response. Since the start of the Covid-19 emergency, grants had been awarded to seven local organisations, including Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead, and the Children's Trust.

Whilst fundraising activities were limited due to the circumstances of the pandemic, donations to the Mayor's Charity were welcome. The first fundraising opportunity planned by the Mayor and Consort would be a sponsored walk around the borough.

Members noted that Heritage Open Day, with an emphasis on online content, and a theme of *Hidden Nature*, would run from 11 - 20 September.

Lastly, the Mayor congratulated Councillor Kanika Sachdeva on the birth of her daughter, and wished her and her family well.

28. EXEMPT - SENIOR MANAGEMENT UPDATE

RESOLVED that members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

- i. it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and
- ii. the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Council considered an exempt report, with seven recommendations relating to the senior management of the Council. At the request of five Members, voting was recorded in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.21.2, as follows:

For: Councillors Absalom, Ashford, Biggs, Blacker, Brunt, Buttironi, Horwood, Hudson, Humphreys, King, Knight, Kulka, Lewanski, Lynch, Michalowski, Moses, Neame, Parnall, Paul, Philpott, Rickman, Ross, Sachdeva, Schofield, Stevens, Turner and Walsh. (27)

Against: Councillors Adamson, Bray, Essex, Feeney, Harp, Harper, Harrison, McKenna, Ritter, Sinden and Whinney. (11)

Abstentions: (0)

RESOLVED that the seven recommendations set out in the exempt report, be approved.

Clerk's note: i) Councillor Foreman left the meeting prior to the vote being called; ii) the Acting Chief Executive, Mari Roberts-Wood left the meeting upon the conclusion of this item, and did not return.

29. EXEMPT - INTERIM APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESOLVED that members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

- i. it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and
- ii. the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Council considered an exempt report, with two recommendations relating to the interim appointment of statutory officers and responsibilities.

RESOLVED

1. That Mari Roberts Wood, Director of People, be appointed as the Interim Head of Paid Service, Interim Returning Officer and the Interim Electoral Registration Officer.
2. That the Recruitment Plan to appoint an Interim Chief Executive, Interim Head of Paid Service, Interim Returning Officer and Interim Electoral Registration Officer, be noted.

The Meeting closed at 9.11 pm