

# MINUTES OF COUNCIL

19 MARCH 2025

## PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Ward), Councillors Barnett, Bennett, Brown, Daly, Dumbleton, C Edwards, S Edwards, Freeman, Gillias, Harrington, Hassell, Henderson, Howling, Karadiar, D Keeling, J Keeling, Lawrence, Lewis, Livesey, McKenzie, Maoudis, Mistry, Moran, New, O'Rourke, Parker, Picker, Poole, Robinson, Roodhouse, Russell, Sandison, Sayani, Simpson-Vince, Srivastava, Thomas, Timms and Willis.

Note: Councillors D Keeling, J Keeling and Parker left the meeting after agenda item 6(a)(1) – Local Plan preferred options consultation – and, therefore, took no part in the voting and discussion on any further items on the agenda.

## 85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Garcia, Slinger and Trimble.

## 86. MINUTES

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 February 2025 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

## 87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a)(3) – Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2025-29 - Councillor Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a Director of Healthwatch UK).

Item 6(a)(1) – Local Plan preferred options consultation – Councillor Maoudis (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being an employee of Dunchurch Parish Council).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – English Devolution Paper and Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Councillors Brown, D Keeling, Roodhouse and Simpson-Vince (non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being Warwickshire County Councillors).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – English Devolution Paper and Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Councillor Timms (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a Warwickshire County Councillor and Ward Councillor for Revel and Binley Woods).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – English Devolution Paper and Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Councillor Gillias (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a Ward Councillor for Revel and Binley Woods and a Parish Councillor).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – English Devolution Paper and Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Councillor Willis (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being Chair of Wolston Parish Council).

## **88. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had been delighted to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough on local Olympians, Lauren Henry MBE and Kimberley Woods, at a reception at the Benn Hall recently. Fellow local Olympian Chelsie Giles would be receiving the honour later in the year due to her busy schedule. The Freedom of the Borough is one of the most significant civic honours that the Council can confer upon an individual or organisation. It is more than a title - it is a symbol of our borough’s admiration and respect. Lauren, Kimberley and Chelsie have made us proud, not just through their victories but through their perseverance and the values they embody. They have not only competed at the highest level of sport, but have carried the hopes, dreams, and spirit of our borough onto the world stage, training with relentless dedication, making sacrifices, and pushing beyond limits to achieve excellence. They have also inspired future generations, showing young athletes that with determination, anything is possible.

The Mayor informed the meeting that local athlete, Josh Faulds, from Rugby and Northampton Athletics Club, qualified for the recent European Indoor Athletics Championships in Holland representing Team GB. Josh, from Rugby, competed in the 4 x 400m mixed relay and the 4 x 400m men’s relay. This was his first time competing at this level after years of dedication to the sport. Josh won a bronze medal in the mixed relay and finished 4th in the men’s relay which is an incredible achievement. Josh is an inspirational athlete and the Mayor was looking forward to welcoming into the Parlour soon to hear more about his journey so far and his future aspirations.

The Mayor recently attended Roar Cheer and Dance at Harris School to meet some of their cheerleading teams and to see how they train and the routines they work on. Roar Cheer will be taking two teams ranging from 7-19 years in age to the USA to compete internationally for the first time in the Easter holidays. Both teams were invited to compete at these prestigious events after earning the highest marks in their competitions last season. Roar will be the first cheerleading team from Rugby to compete internationally and is excited to represent our town in the USA. As a club they are so proud that they have been selected to compete. Their athletes have been supported with choreography by head coach Ellen Burns, to financial support with over £10,000 in fundraising raised to help cover trip costs. Alongside this, the group offers mental and emotional support together with a safe space for their athletes. The Mayor wished them every success in the competition and looked forward to hearing all about it afterwards.

## **89. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10**

There were no questions.

## 90. REPORT OF CABINET – 4 MARCH 2025

Council considered the report of Cabinet (Part 1 – agenda item 6(a)(1) concerning a proposed consultation on preferred options with regard to the Local Plan.

Councillor Robinson moved and Councillor Moran seconded the recommendation of Cabinet as detailed in the report.

Further to lengthy debate, the Mayor proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded and it was resolved that a separate vote be taken on the item.

Three Members then requested, pursuant to Standing Order 15.4, that a recorded vote be taken.

**For the motion:** Councillors Barnett, Bennett, Brown, Dumbleton, C Edwards, S Edwards, Freeman, Harrington, Henderson, Karadiar, Lewis, Livesey, McKenzie, Mistry, Moran, O'Rourke, Robinson, Roodhouse, Sandison, Sayani, Srivastava, Thomas – **22 votes**

**Against the motion:** Councillors Daly, Gillias, Hassell, Howling, D Keeling, J Keeling, Lawrence, Maoudis, New, Parker, Picker, Poole, Russell, Simpson-Vince, Timms, Ward, Willis – **17 votes**

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

### **RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Preferred Option Local Plan, attached as at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report, and policies map be approved for an eight-week public consultation;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to make amendments and corrections as necessary to the Preferred Option Local Plan prior to its publication for consultation;
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to publish evidence documents and topic papers as part of the consultation; and
- (4) delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to, in liaison with the portfolio holder, agree a list of locations for in-person consultation events.

Further to debate, the Mayor put agenda items 6(a)(2) and 6(a)(3) to the vote and declared they be confirmed and adopted.

**91. REPORT OF AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE – 6 FEBRUARY 2025**

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be confirmed and adopted.

**92. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

**(a) English Devolution White Paper – Local Government Reorganisation**

Council considered the report of the Acting Chief Executive (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning the English Devolution White Paper and local government reorganisation in Warwickshire.

Councillor Moran moved and Councillor Mistry seconded the recommendation as detailed in the report.

Councillor Picker then moved and Councillor Poole seconded the following amendment (in italics):

- (1) “The Interim Plan at Appendix C to the report be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Acting Chief Executive to make minor changes to the Interim Plan, in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
- (3) a supplementary General Fund budget of £0.025m be approved for 2025/26, to be financed from the Budget Stability Reserve, for additional support required to complete the formal November submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation;
- (4) an All Leaders Working Group be established to support the development of the formal submission Local Government Reorganisation in November 2025;
- (5) *the All Leaders Working Group engages Warwickshire Association of Local Councils at the earliest opportunity to identify best practice and progress proposals for Town and Parish Councils in any future unitary structure;*
- (6) *Council notes the approach being taken by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) in developing an Interim Plan and seeks to agree joint working arrangements with WCC to develop a submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation in November; and*
- (7) formal submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation be considered by Council prior to submission by 28 November 2025.”

The amendment was accepted as a friendly amendment and the Mayor, therefore, took the debate as a single item.

Further to debate the Mayor put the friendly amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Interim Plan at Appendix C to the report be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Acting Chief Executive to make minor changes to the Interim Plan, in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
- (3) a supplementary General Fund budget of £0.025m be approved for 2025/26, to be financed from the Budget Stability Reserve, for additional support required to complete the formal November submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation;
- (4) an All Leaders Working Group be established to support the development of the formal submission Local Government Reorganisation in November 2025;
- (5) the All Leaders Working Group engages Warwickshire Association of Local Councils at the earliest opportunity to identify best practice and progress proposals for Town and Parish Councils in any future unitary structure;
- (6) Council notes the approach being taken by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) in developing an Interim Plan and seeks to agree joint working arrangements with WCC to develop a submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation in November; and
- (7) formal submission to the invitation for Local Government Reorganisation be considered by Council prior to submission by 28 November 2025.

**(b) Constitution updates**

Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning updates to the Constitution.

It was requested, and agreed that, the term of office for Chairs of Committees be reconsidered by the Constitution Review Working Group.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Constitution of the Council be amended to incorporate the changes set out in Appendix 1 to the report subject to the term of office of Chairs of Committees being reconsidered by the Constitution Review Working Group; and

- (2) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Constitution and to make such typographical amendments as required to undertake this.

**(c) Appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel and review of Members' Allowances**

Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 7(c)) concerning the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to undertake a review of Members' allowances.

**RESOLVED THAT – Council:**

- (1) notes the requirement for the formation of an Independent Remuneration Panel;
- (2) authorises the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance to undertake a recruitment process for the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- (3) delegates to the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance the power to appoint no less than 3 but up to 5 persons to the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- (4) approves the remuneration of the Panel at a rate of £547 per annum per panel member; and
- (5) notes that the Panel will report back to Council with its recommendations on the scheme of allowances.

**(d) Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund – Wave 3**

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Communities and Homes (Part 1 – agenda item 7(d)) concerning an allocation of funding for social housing received by the Council.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Social Housing Fund Wave 3 allocation be accepted to enable the delivery of a programme of energy efficiency improvements to upgrade approximately 1,100 homes currently rated EPC 'D' or below to EPC 'C';
- (2) a supplementary budget of £21,426,246 (made up of the £10,713,123 grant award plus the required £10,713,123 match funding) be approved in accordance with the match-funding requirements, to be met from the Housing Revenue Account Major Repairs reserve; and
- (3) regular updates on the progress of any resulting programme of works, including risks, be provided to the Climate Emergency Working Group.

### 93. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

Council considered the following three motions, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 11.

(a) Councillor McKenzie moved and Councillor Bennett seconded the following motion as set out at item 8(a) of the agenda:

*“This Council recognises that X (formerly Twitter) no longer shares our values of equality and diversity. This Council asks the Acting Chief Executive to remove Rugby Borough Council from the X platform immediately.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the motion to the vote and declared it carried.

(b) Councillor Thomas moved and Councillor New seconded the following motion as set out at item 8(b) of the agenda:

*“In Prostate Cancer month and in support of the Prostate Cancer UK campaign “Boys need Bins”, this Council recognises that men may have need of sanitary bins when out and about. This Council asks the Acting Chief Executive to install at least one sanitary bin in each set of toilets in Council premises.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the motion to the vote and declared it carried.

(c) Councillor Brown moved and Councillor Livesey seconded the following motion as set out at item 8(c) of the agenda.

*“This Council approves setting up a cross-party Working Group to produce a plan enabling the twinning of Rugby with a town in Ukraine. The Working Group will present the plan for approval at the July Full Council meeting.*

*Rugby has a proud tradition of twinning with towns in Europe, and this has encouraged understanding and opportunities for growth and partnership between us. This Notice of Motion asks us to consider a twinning arrangement with a difference.*

*Twinning with a town in Ukraine won't offer the same opportunities that we enjoy with Evreux or Russelsheim. But it will offer us the opportunity to stand overtly as friends of a strong, single-minded nation, in its third year of a devastating war. The establishment of this relationship will provide opportunities for cultural exchange, educational partnerships, and economic collaboration, benefiting the residents of both Rugby and the chosen Ukrainian city.*

*It will demonstrate this Council acknowledges and cares about the sacrifices Ukrainians have made, including those seeking refuge in our town, as they defend their freedom.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor put the motion to the vote and declared it carried.

**94. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**RESOLVED THAT** - under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds they involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**95. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 4 MARCH 2025**

**RESOLVED THAT** – the report be confirmed and adopted.

**96. PRIVATE REPORT OF OFFICERS**

**(b) Election Fees and Charges and Appointment of Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer**

Council considered the private report of the Returning Officer (Part 2 – agenda item 1(b)) concerning election fees and charges and the appointment of Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

**RESOLVED THAT –**

- (1) the Scale of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved;  
and
- (2) the appointment of Tom Kittendorf as Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer be approved.

**MAYOR**