

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 22 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillor D Edwards (Mayor);

Councillors Woodward (Deputy Mayor), Debs Absolom, David Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Davies, Eden, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Grashoff, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, James, Jones, Kaur, Khan, Lovelock, Manghnani, Maskell, McEwan, McGonigle, McKenna, O'Connell, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, DP Singh, Stanford-Beale, Terry, Vickers, White and J Williams

Apologies: Councillors K Edwards, McDonald, R Singh, Skeats, Stevens, Warman and R Williams

34. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Ayotunde Sokule	Gosbrook Road Pedestrian Crossing	Cllr Page
2.	Roger Lightfoot	Council's Leisure Procurement Project	Cllr Hoskin
3.	Roger Lightfoot	Preferred Bidder for Arthur Hill Pool	Cllr Hoskin
4.	Ginnette Hargreaves-Lees	Drug Related Deaths	Cllr Hoskin
5.	Richard Stainthorp	Arts Awards	Cllr Hacker
6.	John Hoggett	Meetings in Closed Session	Cllr Lovelock
7.	Peter Burt	Reading Sport and Leisure	Cllr Hoskin

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

36. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
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1.	Cllr Eden	Illegal and Anti-Social Encampments	Cllr James
2.	Cllr McGonigle	Engine Idling	Cllr Page
3.	Cllr Josh Williams	Reading's Vision for the Future	Cllr Page
4.	Cllr White	Deaths of our Homeless Residents	Cllr Ennis

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

37. APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2019/20

Further to Minute 61 of the Policy Committee held on 14 January 2019, the Director of Resources submitted a report regarding the Council Tax support scheme, estimated Council Tax collection rate and Council Tax base for the 2019/20 financial year. The report explained that Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 required the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate a Council Tax Base for its area by 31 January each year. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Local Government Finance Act 2012 had replaced the Council Tax Benefit scheme with a locally determined Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as a local Council Tax Support Scheme), which was effectively a type of Council Tax discount. The legislation required the Council to approve the scheme by the end of January preceding the start of the financial year. The recommended scheme for 2019/20 was a continuation of the scheme that had been agreed by Council at its meeting on 23 January 2018 (Minute 28 refers) for the 2018/19 financial year.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Lovelock and seconded by Councillor Page and CARRIED:

Resolved -

- (1) That a Council Tax collection rate of 99% for 2019-20 be noted;
- (2) That the existing Council Tax Local Reduction Scheme be retained for 2019/20;
- (3) That the 2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Scheme allowances would be updated in line with the scheme's regulations, be noted;
- (4) That the Reading Borough Council's Council Tax Base for the financial year 2019/20 be set at 55,884;
- (5) That an estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund in 2018-19 of £200k of which the Council's share was £173k be noted.

38. UNPAID TRIAL SHIFTS FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

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Pursuant to Notice, a motion was moved by Councillor Barnett-Ward and seconded by Councillor Emberson and CARRIED:

Resolved -

This Council notes:

That legislation around the use of unpaid trial shifts for prospective employees is unclear and allows unscrupulous employers to exploit job seekers.

That Unite the Union has reported a six-fold increase in complaints related to unpaid trial shifts.

That an attempt to introduce national legislation to require trial shifts to be paid at least minimum wage failed the second reading because it was 'talked out' by the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility.

This Council believes:

That workers should be paid for their work, including training time.

That making a job offer conditional on the job seeker being willing and able to work for free is a discriminatory practice, particularly disadvantaging job seekers with caring responsibilities, or who require special accommodations to work.

That responsible employers who require trial shifts before making an offer of employment should pay the applicant at least the national minimum wage for the time they work.

This Council resolves:

To ask officers to report back to an appropriate committee on the development of an accreditation scheme that encourages and celebrates ethical recruitment practices by Reading's employers, including, but not limited to, a commitment to paying people during any trial period.

(The meeting closed at 7.53 pm)