



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Summons and Agenda 8 June 2021

**Chief Executive
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU**



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Peter Sloman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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To: All Members of the Council

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31 May 2021

Your contact is: Michael Popham - Democratic Services Manager

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Reading Borough Council to be held at **Concert Hall, Town Hall, Reading, on Tuesday, 8 June 2021 at 6.30 pm**, when it is proposed to transact the business specified in the Agenda enclosed herewith.

Yours faithfully

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

Please Note: Access to this meeting for members of the public will be limited and will be on a strictly first-come first-served basis.

Please Note: Public access at this meeting will be limited and on a strictly first come first served basis.

1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive Mayor's Announcements.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

9 - 20

The Mayor to sign the Minutes of the proceedings of the previous Council Meeting.

4. **PETITIONS**

To receive petitions in accordance with Standing Order 8.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Questions in accordance with Standing Order 9.

6. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions in accordance with Standing Order 10.

Reports and Recommendations from Committees

7. **UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF NEW LEISURE FACILITIES**

21 - 28

Report by Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Motions

8. **GOVERNMENT VOTER IDENTIFICATION PROPOSALS**

Councillor Davies to move:

This Council notes that:

- The recent Queen's Speech contained Government proposals to require people to show identification including a photograph in order to vote in General Elections.
- There is no evidence of widespread electoral fraud by voter impersonation in the UK. Of the 595 alleged cases of electoral fraud investigated by police in relation to the 2019 General

Election, only 33 were related to voter impersonation at a polling station, a vanishingly small proportion of the more than 58 million votes cast.

- Turnout at the local elections in Reading in 2021 was 36%. It is estimated that at the 2019 General Election in parts of Reading, turnout was as low as 50%.
- According to an Electoral Commission report on a proof of identity scheme for polling station voters, 11 million people have no driving licence or passport and 3.5 million people have no access to photo ID at all.
- It is estimated that it will cost about £20 million per election to implement photo ID at polling stations.

This Council believes that:

- Voting at elections is the cornerstone of democracy at both local and national level.
- In a democracy the authority of all levels of government is derived from belief that those governing us have been chosen by the will of the majority of the people.
- Participation in elections should be encouraged in all those who are qualified regardless of age, ethnicity, income or ableness.
- Unnecessary barriers to voting is likely to reduce voter participation in elections, proper representation of all parts of the community and so legitimacy of those elected to office.
- The requirement to produce photo ID is likely to disproportionately discourage younger people and people from disadvantaged communities from voting so this measure amounts to voter suppression affecting specific groups of people.

Consequently, this Council resolves to:

- Oppose the introduction of photo ID as a requirement to vote at polling stations.

And, should mandatory photo ID be passed into law, this Council further resolves to:

- Make all reasonable efforts within the Council's means and available budget to introduce a low-cost ID scheme, available to all voters in the Borough, that will qualify as legitimate ID for voting purposes and encourage take up of the same.

9. **HYDROTHERAPY POOL AT THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL**

Councillor Hoskin to move:

This Council notes that:

- The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust have taken the decision to permanently close the hydrotherapy pool at the

Royal Berkshire Hospital and is commencing an 'engagement' exercise which will report back to the RBFT Board in July 2021.

- There was no public consultation by the trust before it took this decision
- There is a suggestion that NHS commissioners (the Berkshire West NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) are looking at other hydrotherapy facilities to provide Individual Funding Request referral hydrotherapy - a much more limited service than that previously offered.
- On a number of occasions, this Council has, unanimously and across parties, passed motions opposing the closure of NHS hydrotherapy in Reading.

Consequently, this council resolves to:

- Request that the Reading Borough Council chief executive writes to the chief officers of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Berkshire West NHS CCG expressing this Council's strong opposition to the decision to permanently close Reading's NHS hydrotherapy pool with no confirmed replacement.
- Request that the lead councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport seeks to gain the support of Reading's two MPs, as well as Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council, and works with various interested groups to oppose permanent closure of Reading's NHS hydrotherapy pool without adequate replacement and, instead, pushes for the expanded provision of NHS hydrotherapy in our town.