

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 21 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillor Eden (Mayor);

Councillors Edwards (Deputy Mayor), Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Carnell, Challenger, Cresswell, Cross, Davies, C Dennis, G Dennis, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Griffith, Hornsby-Smith, Hoskin, Keeping, Khan, Kitchingham, Kretchmer, Lanzoni, Leng, Lovelock, McCann, McElroy, McEwan, Mitchell, Mpofu-Coles, O'Connell, Page, Robinson, Rowland, R Singh, Terry, Thompson, White, Woodward and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors Hacker, Moore, Sultan and Williams

41. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Reading Pennsylvania 275th Anniversary

The Mayor was presented with a gift by Alderman Tony Jones and Councillor Tony Page on behalf of Reading Pennsylvania's Mayor on the occasion of the 275th Anniversary of their city, which had taken place on 16 March 2023 with Alderman Jones and Councillor Page in attendance.

(b) Retiring Councillors

As this was the last meeting prior to the Council elections on 4th May 2023, the Mayor invited the Group Leaders to pay tribute to Councillors who would not be standing for re-election. Councillor Brock spoke about Councillors Khan and Sultan; Councillor Mitchell spoke about Councillor Kretchmer; and Councillor White spoke about former Councillor McGonigle who had stood down from the Council recently.

42. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

43. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Cllr White	Tackling Fly Tipping	Cllr Rowland
2.	Cllr White	Tree Strategy Monitoring Failure	Cllr Rowland

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

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44. INVESTING IN READING'S FUTURE: READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2022-25 (2023/24 UPDATE)

The Chief Executive submitted a report on an updated version of the Council's Corporate Plan 'Investing in Reading's Future: Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-25', for 2023/24. The final draft plan was attached to the report for approval at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Corporate Plan described the major achievements and progress made over the last year and set out the Council's work priorities and future work programme to deliver against the three themes of: Healthy Environment; Thriving Communities; and Inclusive Economy, which were underpinned by the foundational activity of an efficient and effective organisation. The Appendix to the Corporate Plan detailed the projects and measures that would continue to be monitored and reported to Policy Committee on a quarterly basis.

The Corporate Plan had been agreed by Council on 22 March 2022 (Minute 49 refers) as a 3-year Plan, the Plan had been refreshed for 2023/24 to take account of:

- A review of the performance measures, targets and projects (as set out in the Corporate Plan appendix) that would be used to monitor delivery of the plan;
- The Council's achievements over the last year;
- Updates to 'Our Reading' infographic; and
- Updates regarding any other elements of the narrative to reflect new or completed key projects and initiatives and any other priorities, such as the cost-of-living crisis.

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

Resolved -

That the update of the Council's Corporate Plan, titled 'Investing in Reading's Future: Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-25' be adopted, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

45. APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report on the appointment of a deputy Electoral Registration Officer. The report explained that, under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must appoint an Officer to the position of Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) to be responsible for maintaining the Electoral Register for the area. The ERO would be required to hold a hearing in respect of any objections received for an application to be included on the Register of Electors. These hearings must be held no earlier than the third day and no later than the seventh day after the notice of objection had been received. In order to avoid a breach of the legislation, the report recommended appointing a Deputy ERO who would have the full powers to act in the absence of the ERO and in particular ensure hearings took place within the required timescale.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Terry and seconded by Councillor Brock and CARRIED:

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Resolved -

That the post of Legal Services Manager be designated as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer with full powers to act as Electoral Registration Officer in the absence of the Electoral Registration Officer.

(The meeting closed at 7.30 pm)