

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2022

Present: Councillor Eden (Mayor);

Councillors Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward (via Microsoft Teams), Brock, Carnell, Challenger, Cresswell, Cross, Davies, C Dennis, G Dennis, Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Griffith, Hacker, Hornsby-Smith, Hoskin, Keane, Keeping, Kitchingham, Kretchmer, Khan, Lanzoni, Leng, Lovelock, McEwan, McGonigle, Mitchell, Moore, Mpofu-Coles, O'Connell, Page, Robinson, Rowland, Singh, Terry, Thompson, White, Williams, Woodward and Yeo;

Apologies: Councillors McCann and Sultan.

15. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor stated that as this was the first meeting of the Council since the sad news of the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, she would be holding a minute's silence to mark the Council's respect for our former sovereign.

The Mayor invited Councillor Lovelock to pay tribute to Dave Peasley who had sadly died recently. Dave had served the Council with great distinction from the 1980s until his retirement at the end of the 2012/13 financial year in a wide variety of roles, including Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer. He had also held the equivalent role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service on an interim basis on three separate occasions. The Council stood in silence in his memory and as a mark of respect.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Mr Wellum	Public Speaking at Committee Meetings	Cllr Brock

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

18. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 10

	Questioner	Subject	Answer
1.	Cllr Moore	Recycling Electronic & Electrical Items	Cllr Rowland
2.	Cllr Moore	Kerbside Glass Recycling	Cllr Rowland

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2022

3.	Cllr Cross	Bin Collections (Redlands)	Cllr Rowland
4.	Cllr Thompson	Citizen's Advice Reading	Cllr Terry
5.	Cllr Cross	Improvement Works on Hexham Road Estate	Cllr Emberson
6.	Cllr Cross	Cost of Living Support	Cllr Brock
7.	Cllr Carnell	Henley Road/Caversham Lakes Junction	Cllr Page

As there was insufficient time, pursuant to Standing Order 9(4), written replies to Questions 5-7 above would be provided in accordance with Standing Order 11(3).

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

19. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report, on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, seeking Council approval to appoint Jackie Yates to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

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

Resolved -

That the appointment of Jackie Yates as the Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service be approved with effect from 19 October 2022.

20. CODE OF CONDUCT

Further to Minute 3 of the Standards Committee held on 10 October 2022, the Monitoring Officer submitted a report recommending the adoption of amended versions of Article 9 (terms of reference of the Standards Committee), the Code of Conduct for Reading Borough Council, the Arrangements Document, the Policy for Unreasonable and Unreasonably Persistent complaints and the Final Hearing Procedures be approved. The Standards Committee's review had been assisted by a new Model Code of Conduct, which had been produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) following a report of the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL), which had recommended local authorities should adopt a standard Code of Conduct.

The Standards Committee recommended some minor modifications to the LGA's model Code to reflect Reading's local circumstances. Firstly, the Committee agreed that the level of gifts and hospitality was too high and the provisions relating to disclosure of confidential or exempt information were unnecessarily complicated and that greater simplicity was to be preferred. The recommended Code, at Appendix 2 to the report, would be substantially in accordance with the recommended Model, and councillors

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2022

should find it a more helpful model and one which would accord with their responsibilities at other organisations such as the Fire Authority.

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

Resolved -

- (1) That the proposed Revision to Article 9 of the Constitution (as shown in Appendix 1), be adopted.
- (2) That the proposed Member Code of Conduct (as shown in Appendix 2), be adopted.
- (3) That the proposed Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct (as shown in Appendix 3), be adopted.
- (4) That the proposed Policy for Unreasonable and Unreasonably Persistent Complaints, (as shown in Appendix 4) be adopted.
- (5) That the proposed Hearing Procedures (as shown in Appendix 5), be adopted.

21. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS - CONSTITUTION & DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report seeking approval for the adoption of a revised Constitution for Reading Borough Council, which was appended to the report. The overall objectives of the recommended changes to the Constitution were to:

- streamline and improve efficiency of decision-making;
- simplify the Constitution and Delegations Register;
- make the Constitution simple and easy to navigate; and
- make the decision-making process easier to understand for officers, Councillors and members of the public.

The revised scheme of officer delegation set out those matters which were 'reserved' to Council or committees with officers being authorised to carry out all other functions. All 'key decisions' would be reserved to committees or Council. A 'key decision' revenue limit would be up to £500k per annum for up to five years. Rolling programmes of routine capital expenditure included on the capital programme, for instance housing and highways maintenance programmes, would no longer be defined as key decisions requiring Committee approval. The report explained that irrespective of the 'key decision' limits, officers should always ask themselves, whether the decision would have a significant effect upon residents or communities before exercising a delegation.

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

Resolved -

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2022

- (1) That the revised Constitution for Reading Borough Council, as attached to the report, be adopted, in accordance with Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000.
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to correct any minor typographical errors or inconsistent numbering or cross references which become evident in publishing the Constitution in its final form.
- (3) That the Monitoring Officer be asked to prepare a further report to Council in October 2023 to ensure that the aims of this review had been met and to present appropriate modifications or amendments if required.
- (4) That, in addition to (3) above, the Constitution be reviewed by the Audit & Governance Committee annually with any recommended changes arising from its review to be submitted to Council for determination.

22. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

The following motion was moved by Councillor Rowland and seconded by Councillor Challenger and CARRIED:

Resolved -

That this Council notes that:

- In 2019, more than 100,000 women had to attend a clinic that had been subject to anti-abortion protests. This figure represents more than half of all those who had an abortion that year.
- Since the Government last reviewed the issue in 2018, fifty clinics have been targeted by protesters in England and Wales, including the British Pregnancy Advice Service centre in Reading.

This Council believes that:

- Access to healthcare services must be understood as a universal right and must be protected.
- Women, whether in Reading or anywhere, have a right to make healthcare decisions privately and confidentially and that they should be able to access pregnancy advice and termination services without hindrance.
- The right to protest is legitimate and must also be protected, but this right must be balanced against the rights of women to access healthcare provision in confidence and without being subject to intimidation or other hindrance. Those who wish to campaign to restrict women's reproductive choices should have ample opportunities to do so, and have locations in which to do so, without coming into conflict with the rights of others.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2022

- Staff at all women's health clinics should be protected from bullying and intimidation at their place of work.

Consequently, this Council resolves to:

- Support the British Pregnancy Advice Service's 'Back Off' campaign for legislation to establish a buffer zone around relevant clinics in which protest is not permissible.
- Actively pursue a Public Space Protection Order to create a 'designated protest zone' and 'protest exclusion zone' should this become necessary in Reading to protect the right of access.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.38pm).