

Extraordinary Council – 14 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **14 June 2022** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr Mrs D L Belton
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr Mrs T L Carter
Cllr M R Carter
Cllr J E Cripps
Cllr A G Cross
Cllr D S Efde
Cllr A H Eves
Cllr I A Foster
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon
Cllr J N Gooding
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Cllr M Hoy
Cllr Ms T D Knight
Cllr R Lambourne
Cllr J L Lawmon
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr R Milne
Cllr G W Myers
Cllr J E Newport
Cllr L J Newport
Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr D W Sharp
Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman
Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M J Webb
Cllr A L Williams
Cllr V A Wilson
Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr S E Wootton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R P Constable, J R F Mason and M G Wilkinson.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
S Summers	- Strategic Director
I Winslet	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets and Commercial
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place and Environment
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People and Communities
D Tribe	- Assistant Director, Customer and Transformation
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
H Lock	- Democratic Services Officer
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

111 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Note: the Motion on Notice received by Cllrs J E Newport and C M Stanley was withdrawn.

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13, the following motion had been received:-

- (1) From Cllrs L J Newport, Mrs C M Mason, Mrs T L Carter, T D Knight and Mrs C A Weston:-

"This Motion proposes that the Council actively supports the right for everyone, especially women and girls, to be safe from violence and harassment and will commit to working in partnership with key stakeholders by as part of its wider community safety approach.

This Motion calls on the Council to consolidate various initiatives and publish a policy that gives information and clarity to all so that our residents can rest assured that the Council is doing its utmost to tackle violence against women and girls and that information to empower women and girls to feel safe is both published, promoted and easily accessible.

This Council agrees the following:

1. Believes everyone should have the right to be safe from violence and harassment on our streets.
2. Recognises that the killing of Sarah Everard has, again, brought the issue of behaviour towards women and girls and their safety to the forefront.
3. Acknowledges it is not just women who are at risk but that any individual may be vulnerable to an attack for various reasons.

The Council also notes:

4. There are already many excellent initiatives and campaigns by local and national organisations aimed at safeguarding the welfare of individuals, e.g., "Got Ya Back", "As for Ani" scheme and "Ask for Angela".
5. That this Council is the only SE local authority to have a housing options officer, trained as an independent domestic violence advocate.
6. Violent incidents are thankfully rare in the Rochford District and our police force already work closely with Council officials to combat sexual harassment and other types of aggression.
7. However, every occurrence of intimidation or attack is one too many.

Council therefore:

8. Resolutely rejects behaviour and actions which may cause women and girls from any background to have to modify their activities in order to feel safe.
9. Champions the right of women and girls to be protected from violence and harassment in public places within Rochford District.
10. Believes that this principle should be embedded in our Council strategies going forward.
11. Will actively support schemes such as "Ask for Angela" and call on licensed businesses to participate and to take active steps to ensure harassment and sexual intimidation is taken seriously through participation in this scheme.
12. Calls on all Council departments and other bodies responsible for public spaces, e.g., housing associations, parish council, schools, transport providers to improve the security of public spaces by encouraging them to review lighting (in streets, car parks and parks), CCTV provision and other pertinent means to improve safety.
13. Calls on schools, colleges, universities and youth organisations to renew their efforts to promote a 'safety and respect for all' agenda among their students.
14. That the Leader of Rochford District Council ensures that White Ribbon Accreditation is secured for the organisation and promote the wider awareness of the accreditation in our District. As part of this, appoint a male Councillor as an Ambassador; mark White Ribbon Day on 22 November each year with a fundraising event; and encourage participation amongst council staff and local primary and secondary schools.
15. Requests an update on progress on these matter to Council in 6 months.

Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act."

Reference

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/>

This Motion was moved by Cllr L J Newport and seconded by Cllr Mrs C M Mason.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Health stated the following:-

"I doubt that there are any Members, organisations or indeed any other councils in this country that would disagree with the sentiments of this motion.

It goes without saying that this Council actively supports the right for everyone, especially women and girls to be safe from violence and harassment on our streets. The safety of our residents is paramount.

There is currently a lot of work going on nationally and locally to progress this agenda.

Officers currently sit on a newly formed County wide safety advisory group and I am a member of the Safer Essex Board and what I have learnt from this Board, is that it is key we make sure that all partners, have shared awareness about what we are all doing, as lots of projects are underway. In addition, the joint Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership (which I currently hold the position of Vice-Chairman) has recently adopted Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) as a standing agenda item so that regular updates are received and actions to follow.

There should be no jump to solutions and all county partners have agreed that we should understand what Essex looks like and understand what the findings are from the Police insight data, which is currently underway.

In the meantime, we will continue as a council to support all those projects that come through this central board.

As Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, I fully support this motion but would like to propose that it be enhanced by not only noting its contents, but giving our ongoing commitment to continue work in partnership, with all responsible bodies, including the County wide safety advisory group, Safer Essex partners and our local community safety network, in order to achieve the objectives set out in this motion, and report on progress to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the time of the community safety partnership annual update.”

Cllr A L Williams moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson to amend this Motion on Notice to include the proposed enhancement.

A Member spoke in favour of the amendment stating that including other organisations was widely beneficial in order to successfully deliver the objectives of the Motion.

Voting on the amendment, it was unanimously agreed.

A Member queried whether the appointment of a male Councillor as an Ambassador of the White Ribbon Accreditation was appointed to an outside body or appointed by the Portfolio Holder.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Health advised that this had not yet been decided.

The Leader spoke in favour of the Motion commenting that the Motion addressed critical issues. The Leader further advised that £130k was set aside

for Community Partnership in the District with a portion of this budget dedicated to CCTV across Rochford and Rayleigh. Regarding point 12 within the Motion, the Leader advised that an opportunity would be given to Parish Councils being granted £2,500, match funded by the Parish Councils to total £5,000 for a Community Safety Initiative within their own Parish.

The Leader endorsed point 14 within the Motion; however, requested that the scope of responsibility was widened to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety to address appropriate areas.

A Member requested that Members were given guidance on what the Community Safety Initiative fund could be utilised for. This was referred to be addressed outside of the meeting.

A Member spoke in favour of the Motion and thanked the Assistant Director, People and Communities for assisting Cllr L J Newport with formulating the Motion.

A Member thanked the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities and Health for supporting the Motion.

The Motion, as amended, was declared carried.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.