

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Council Meeting

14 July 2021

## Supplementary Information

Please note that the business will be subject to short breaks at approximately 90-minute intervals.

**Apologies:** None received

**2. Have Your Say!**

**4. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

A.... Motion that the minutes of the meeting on 26 May 2021 be confirmed as a correct record (see page 9 of the Council Summons) .

**6. Items (if any) referred under the Call-in Procedure**

None

**7. Recommendations of the Cabinet, Panels and Committees**

To consider the following recommendation:-

**7(i) Financial Regulations 2022-23**

B... Motion that the recommendation contained in draft minute 260 of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting of 22 June 2021 be approved and adopted (see page 15 of the Council Summons).

**8. Notices of Motion pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11**

**(i) *Unlocking the potential of Colchester's High Street & Town Centre***

*Motion C*

Proposer:- Councillor Fox and Councillor Goss

*This Council believes that healthy high streets are essential for community cohesion, civic pride, employment, shopping, services and leisure. But many shops and businesses were struggling even before the Covid pandemic: high street retail employment fell in more than three-quarters of local authorities between 2015 and 2018 according to the Office of National Statistics and more than half of all UK consumers were shopping online before the pandemic. Colchester's Town Centre has fared better than many High Streets across the country but has lost many shops that were valued by residents and visitors alike.*

*This Council notes that retail is among the sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and retail workers have been on the frontline of the crisis throughout. The almost complete shutdown of non-essential shops between March and June 2020 has hit businesses hard, and the need for social distancing has changed the way many businesses operate, reducing footfall. The pandemic has accelerated what, in many cases, has been a longer trend of lower footfall and changing shopping habits. As the Portas Review a decade ago acknowledged, the form and function of many high streets needs to radically change if they are to adapt and survive.*

*This Council welcomes the willingness of Government to acknowledge the problems and come forward with initiatives in response to these challenges such as the furlough scheme, the Covid support business loans, and the High Street Taskforce. However, as the Treasury Select Committee stated in 2019, the current system of Business Rates places an unfair burden on "bricks and mortar" businesses compared to online ones, and the Business Rate system needs radical overhaul. This council also welcomes the Town Deal funding secured by a range of partners to deliver £18.2million of investment in Colchester.*

*This Council resolves to:*

- Write to the Government to urge them to undertake an urgent review of business rates in order to support high street businesses recover from the pandemic and level the playing field between online and high street businesses, to make it fair and sustainable for all.*
- Explore the creation of Community Improvement Districts to reconnect communities with the levers that drive economic development in town centres and create an equal partnership of business and community organisations to galvanise action at a local level.*

- *Make any data held by the council on ownership of high street properties public and in an accessible format, so that community groups seeking to buy empty shops through a community share offer have the information they need to do so.*
- *Make full use of s215 planning enforcement powers where empty units are attracting antisocial behaviour or creating an eyesore on the high street.*
- *Proactively contact landlords of vacant premises, working with the Colchester Business Improvement District, to explore meanwhile use options and/or encourage alternative rental models (e.g. turnover rather than market rent) to enable new co-operatives, SMEs, social enterprises and community businesses to open their doors on the high street.*

As the motion relates to an executive matter it will stand referred direct to Cabinet, Council Procedure Rule 11(2) is suspended to allow Council to debate the motion.

**(ii) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

Motion D

Proposer: Councillor Crow

*As Britain's first city Colchester has a unique past and heritage which has played an important role in this country's history. In addition we have enjoyed many proud years as a garrison town playing host to the British army. Therefore this Council is delighted that next year we will be joining the nation to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee to mark her 70 years on the throne of this great nation.*

As the motion relates to a non-executive matter, it will be debated and determined by Council at the meeting.

**(iii) England Football Team**

**Motion E**

**Proposer: Councillor Scordis**

Note; the Mayor has agreed that this motion should be added to the agenda as an urgent item. The Mayor has requested that the debate be limited to one speaker per political group.

*This Borough sends its thanks to the England team for bringing hope and unity to the Borough during Euro 2020 in what has been a tough year for everyone.*

*We recognise not only the achievement of the team performing better than any other England football team since 1966, but we also recognise the professionalism and inclusivity of this squad of players, many of whom have*

*shown their dedication to Britain via their charity work. Their actions, on and off the pitch, have inspired millions across the country.*

*The Borough also stands by those players facing abuse and discrimination and condemns any form of racism. Colchester is a town known historically for its inclusivity and diversity and we are proud of this.*

As the motion relates to a non-executive matter, it will be debated and determined by Council at the meeting.

## **9. Questions to Cabinet Members and Chairmen pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10**

Pre-notified questions:-

(i) Councillor J. Young to Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy

*The safety of young women in our town has to be one of our highest priorities, I applaud the additional investment in safer streets work and investment can't come soon enough. However, while public money is being invested in more surveillance and lighting it would appear that our most prestigious school has been rated as requiring improvement largely it seems down to a culture of "boys will be boys" encouraging boys and young men to have an entitled attitude and turning a blind eye towards rape culture. I am sure the news that has come from Scarlett Mansfield and Ofsted has shocked us all. I ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Head Teacher expressing our concern over this matter. In addition, I ask the Leader of the Council to consider the roles and opportunities in this authority and the scope for allowing greater power for women members. I remember the Town Deal announcement: 5 Men featured. I note that the biggest project this authority is about to deliver, the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, will once again have a board of stale, male and pale representatives. Entitlement starts at a young age: we must do all we can to level the playing field and promote gender equality by offering roles to women to act as role models to our daughters and granddaughters.*

(ii) Councillor Harris to Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

*Could I ask about what Colchester Borough Council is going to do about electric plug-in points for electric vehicles in public places and can Colchester Borough Council amend planning policy to ensure that plug in points are included in all settings?*

(iii) Councillor Harris to Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy

*The investment in Colchester via Active Travel Fund is to be welcomed. Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that removing Monkwick from the original plan was a missed opportunity to play a real and meaningful part in climate change in South Colchester ?*

(iv) Councillor Cox to Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

*The Government has recently published proposals to reform the planning system. One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents' right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood if the area is zoned for growth or renewal.*

*As Portfolio Holder for Planning, what are your views on this proposed reform? Do you feel that the rights of communities to object to individual planning applications should be protected?*

(v) Councillor Lilley to Councillor B. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Communities

*Can the Portfolio Holder for Communities please tell me how she is planning to deal with grooming of children into drug gangs in Colchester now she and her Cabinet members have scrapped the Youth Zone which was one of the best chances to tackle this and has the support of Essex Police and the Police Commissioner and his deputy.*

(vi) Councillor Lilley to Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Communities

*Now the Mipermit app has been launched, since I introduced the idea, what work has been done to sign all the shops in town up to it.*

(vii) Councillor Lilley to Councillor B. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Communities

*How many hours have Zone Wardens worked in the Town Centre in Partnership with Colchester Police in dealing with begging and drinking in public in the last month.*

(viii) Councillor T. Young to Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy

*The overall turnout at this year's Borough Council Elections was under 34%. This ranged from under 20% in Greenstead ward to 43% in Lexden and Braiswick. Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that, given these disappointing statistics, we, as a council and political groups, need to do more to encourage voter turnout and lobby the government, through our MPs, to drop its plans for compulsory photo ID at polling stations which will only serve to suppress voter turnout and is pointless legislation to address a problem that doesn't exist?*

**10. Schedule of Portfolio Holder Decisions**

Council is invited to note the schedule of Portfolio Holder decisions covering the period 9 February 2021 – 3 July 2021 (see page 17 of the Council Summons).

**13. Exclusion of the Public**

In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential, personal, financial or legal advice) in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) may be decided. Exempt information is defined in Section 100(1) and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).