

MINUTES OF CABINET

8 SEPTEMBER 2026

Held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby

PRESENT:

Councillors Robinson (Chair), C Edwards, S Edwards, McKenzie, Mistry, O'Rourke and Roodhouse.

Councillors Kedward and Willis were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:

Dan Green (Chief Executive), Andrew Grant (Strategic Director – Operations and Transformation), Michelle Dickson (Strategic Director – Communities), Nicola Smith (Strategic Director – Place) and Claire Waleczek (Democratic and Support Services Manager).

39. MINUTES

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 3 August 2026 were approved and signed by the Chair.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Pimm.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

42. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

43. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL

There were no matters to be considered.

Growth and Investment Portfolio

44. TOWN CENTRE WAYFINDING PROJECT

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director - Place (Part 1 – agenda item 6) concerning the proposed allocation of a supplementary budget from the Town Centre Strategy Reserve to implement new wayfinding signs throughout the town centre.

Options considered

The alternative option would be to not agree the spend.

Reasons for decision

Approval of the allocation of budget would ensure that the quality wayfinding in the town centre is improved, attracting visitors to dwell in the town centre, building civic pride and improving the quality of places as outlined in the Council's Corporate Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan 2026-2027.

RESOLVED THAT – IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT –

- (1) a supplementary General Fund budget of £0.120m (revenue) be approved to fund a new wayfinding system, to be financed from the Town Centre Strategy Reserve; and
- (2) a supplementary General Fund budget of £0.275m (capital) be approved and added to the capital programme for 2026/27 to fund a new wayfinding system, to be financed from the Town Centre Strategy Reserve.

Note: this decision is not subject to call-in.

45. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director - Place (Part 1 – agenda item 7) concerning progress on town centre regeneration programme in 2026.

Options considered

The recommendation was for noting. No alternative options were provided in the report.

Reasons for decision

The report ensures Council is kept up to date on progress with the delivery of Town Centre Regeneration to instigate positive change and to realise the development and investment opportunities in the town centre.

RESOLVED THAT – IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT the Town Centre Regeneration update report be noted.

Note: this decision is not subject to call-in.

Communities, Housing and Safety portfolio

46. DEMONSTRATING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE 2025/26

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities (Part 1 – agenda item 8) concerning the Council's compliance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2025/26 in relation to the housing service.

Options considered

The following two options were considered:

- (1) endorse the action plan set out in Section 5.7 of appendix 1 and approve the self-assessment against the provisions of the Complaint Handling Code.
- (2) not endorse the action plan set out in Section 5.7 of appendix 1 and does not approve the self-assessment against the provisions of the Complaint Handling Code.

Reasons for decision

This is an opportunity to ensure that Members have oversight of complaints within the housing service and the measures that the Council is taking to improve complaint handling in the housing/landlord service

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the action plan, as set out in Section 5.7 of Appendix 1, be endorsed;
- (2) the self-assessment against the provision of the complaint handling code set out in appendix 2 be approved;
- (3) the improved performance during 2025/26 in respect of complaints handling be noted;
- (4) the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Safety be appointed as Member Responsible for Complaints, as per the requirements set out at appendix 4; and
- (5) a cross-party Member Working Group be appointed by the Strategic Director Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities Housing and Safety, to consider the proposals to be submitted to Cabinet in September 2027, in respect of the 2026/27 Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and 2027 self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

47. REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities (Part 1 – agenda item 9) concerning a high-level improvement plan and proposed governance arrangements to drive the required service improvement from the Regulator for Social Housing following a routine inspection in October 2025 and a regulatory judgement in February 2026 of C3 grading.

Options considered

The following two options were considered:

- (1) Cabinet approves the content of the report and appendices and endorses the approach to service improvement, including the proposed governance and assurance arrangements.
- (2) Referral to Scrutiny Committee for further review.

Reasons for decision

A C3 judgement, with identified failures and weaknesses in the delivery of two consumer standards, requires a proactive, sustained and focused approach. The proposed improvement plan is intended to move Rugby Borough Council, in a timely and sustainable way, towards a C1 judgement, demonstrating that the Council is delivering the outcomes required by the consumer standards for its tenants.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the improvement plan be approved;
- (2) the proposed governance arrangements be approved; and
- (3) Cabinet notes the progress being made against the improvement plan and receives regular updates on its implementation and impact.

48. IMPACT OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT 2025/26

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities (Part 1 – agenda item 10) concerning an Impact Report, highlighting the positive impact and achievements of the voluntary and community sector organisations grant funded by the Council during 2025/26.

Options considered

There were no options as the report was for information.

Reasons for decision

The report ensures that Members are aware of the positive outcomes achieved by voluntary and community sector organisations in receipt of grant funding during 2025/26, and the resulting valuable contribution to supporting the outcomes of the Corporate Strategy.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the content of the report be noted; and
- (2) the achievements of the organisations supported through Council grant funding during 2025/26 be commended.

49. COUNCILLOR GRANTS SCHEME 2026/27 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities and the Monitoring Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 11) concerning the proposed delegation to a named officer of the Council to determine individual awards under the Councillor Grants Scheme 2026/27, within the policy and budget already approved by Council on 9 February 2026, and authorisation of a consequential minor amendment to the Constitution.

Options considered

There following four options were considered:

- (1) executive delegation to a named officer post (recommended). A short Executive decision delegating to the post of Communities & Projects Manager the authority to determine — to approve or to decline — individual Community Grant and Direct Local Action awards, within the policy and budget approved on 9 February 2026. This mirrors the drafting already used for conservation grants ('Determine applications ... in accordance with policy and budget provision'). This is the route that confers the authority currently missing and is capable of taking effect immediately. It does not require a decision of, or a resolution by, Full Council: the underlying function is already held by the Executive, and the consequential Part 2B entry is made by the Monitoring Officer under the minor-change power at Article 15.2(a)(ii), taking immediate effect and reported to Full Council only for information. This is the recommended route.
- (2) Full Council resolution. Council could instead resolve to endorse the scheme and delegate its administration to officers. This is procedurally heavier and slower, and is not legally necessary because the Executive already holds the underlying function; it would, however, provide a higher-profile endorsement if that were considered desirable given the scheme's profile.
- (3) constitutional amendment alone. Amending Part 2B to add a delegation entry, without an underlying Executive or Council decision behind it, would not be effective. The Monitoring Officer can record a delegation but cannot create one — the delegation must come from the body that holds the function. This option is set out only to rule it out.
- (4) do nothing. Continuing to rely solely on the general administration power, now that the gap has been identified and documented, is not recommended.

Reasons for decision

- (1) To ensure that decisions to approve or decline individual awards are taken by an officer who holds a clear and express delegated authority, and to protect those decisions — and the members and applicants who rely on them — from challenge.
- (2) To do so by the route that actually confers the authority currently missing: a delegation from the body that holds the function (the Executive), followed by a recording amendment to the Scheme of Delegation.

- (3) Because the function is already an Executive function, this route does not require a Full Council decision or a Full Council amendment process; it can therefore be completed on the Executive's own authority and takes effect immediately.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the governance gap identified by the Monitoring Officer be noted, namely that no express delegation to officers is contained in Part 2B of the Constitution for the determination of individual Community Grant and Direct Local Action awards under the Councillor Grants Scheme 2026/27, that function resting with the Executive under Part 2A, s.5.5(e)(i);
- (2) delegated authority be given to the post of Communities & Projects Manager to determine (that is, to approve or to decline) individual Community Grant and Direct Local Action applications under the Councillor Grants Scheme 2026/27, in accordance with the policy and budget approved by Council on 9 February 2026, with authority to authorise a named officer post within Communities & Projects to exercise that function on their behalf under paragraph 1(b) of the Part 2B Introduction;
- (3) each determination be recorded formally by way of a written decision record, and that the delegation be exercised at, or countersigned at, Assistant Director level, to ensure decisions are taken at a level appropriate to withstand any perception of member pressure; and
- (4) following this decision, the Monitoring Officer will insert a corresponding express entry into Part 2B under Article 15.2(a)(ii) of the Constitution, taking immediate effect, and will report that change, for information only, to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council. No Full Council decision or resolution is required to give effect to this delegation.

50. FUTURE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE HOME ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE TEAM (HEART)

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities (Part 1 – agenda item 12) concerning progress by the HEART Board to develop new options for service delivery of disabled facility grants in Warwickshire following notice given by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to cease as host of the HEART project as of 31 March 2027.

Options considered

Options are being identified and being evaluated by the Board and will form the basis of a future report for the consideration of Scrutiny Committee. The feedback from Scrutiny Committee will be incorporated into a further report to Cabinet.

Reasons for decision

- (1) To ensure that Cabinet have oversight of the developing situation.
- (2) To utilise the opportunity to engage the views of the Scrutiny Committee in supporting the assessment of the identified options ahead of a recommended option being brought forward for consideration by Cabinet.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) notice given by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to cease as host of the HEART project as of 31 March 2027 be noted;
- (2) work in progress by the HEART board to generate options for the future delivery of disabled facility grants in Warwickshire be noted; and
- (3) intent to share the identified options for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee to help inform a recommended option for consideration by Cabinet be noted.

51. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL PENALTIES POLICIES: RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT 2025 IMPLEMENTATION

Cabinet considered the report of the Strategic Director – Communities (Part 1 – agenda item 13) concerning approval of a new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and a revised Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy, based on the nationally recognised Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (ACEHO) model, to provide a clear, consistent and legally robust framework for private sector housing enforcement.

Options considered

- (1) Approve the proposed Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy - this option would ensure the Council has an up-to-date and legally compliant framework for the exercise of private sector housing enforcement functions and implementation of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- (2) Do not approve the proposed policies - this option would leave the Council reliant on existing policy frameworks which pre-date the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and do not reflect the expanded duties, powers and enforcement requirements introduced by the legislation.

Reasons for decision

The proposed policies will ensure the Council has an up-to-date, consistent and legally robust framework for private sector housing enforcement. Adoption of the policies will support implementation of the Renters' Rights Act 2025, provide transparency in enforcement decision-making and civil penalty calculations, and assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties and regulatory responsibilities.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix A be approved;
- (2) the Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy attached at Appendix B be approved; and

- (3) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Regulation and Safety, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Homes and Safety and the Monitoring Officer, to make minor amendments required to reflect commencement regulations, statutory guidance, case law, organisational changes or consequential legislative amendments.

CHAIR