

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

19 NOVEMBER 2025

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Brown), Councillors Barnett, Bennett, Daly, Dumbleton, C Edwards, S Edwards, Freeman, Gillias, Harrington, Hassell, Henderson, Howling, Karadiar, J Keeling, Lawrence, Lewis, Livesey, McKenzie, Maoudis, Moran, New, O'Rourke, Picker, Poole, Robinson, Roodhouse, Sandison, Sayani, Simpson-Vince, Thomas, Thompson, Timms, Trimble, Ward and Willis.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Garcia, D Keeling, Mistry, Parker, Russell, and Srivastava.

48. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a)(1) of Part 1 – Local Government Reorganisation – Councillors Karadiar and Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Warwickshire County Councillors).

Item 6(a)(1) of Part 1 – Local Government Reorganisation – Councillor Freeman (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Chair of Governors at a school in Warwickshire).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Freeman (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Chair of Governors at a school in Warwickshire).

Item 7(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor McKenzie (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Vice-Chair of Governors at a school in Warwickshire).

50. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were recently informed of the sad news that Honorary Freeman of the Borough and former Chief Executive of the Council, John Scott Reynolds Lawton (known as Jack), passed away peacefully on 6 November. Jack joined Rugby Borough Council in 1972 as Assistant Town Clerk and went on to serve as Chief Executive from 1979 to 1996. He was conferred the honour of Freeman of the Borough in recognition of his leadership and dedication upon his retirement in 1996.

The Mayor, Councillors O'Rourke and Roodhouse paid tribute to Jack highlighting his high regard for public service and civic pride within the borough, as well as the respect he earned from colleagues and Members as Chief Executive with his fair but efficient leadership of the Council.

The Mayor, together with all those in attendance, stood in a moment's silence in memory of Jack.

51. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

Councillor Poole asked the Operations and Traded Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Livesey:

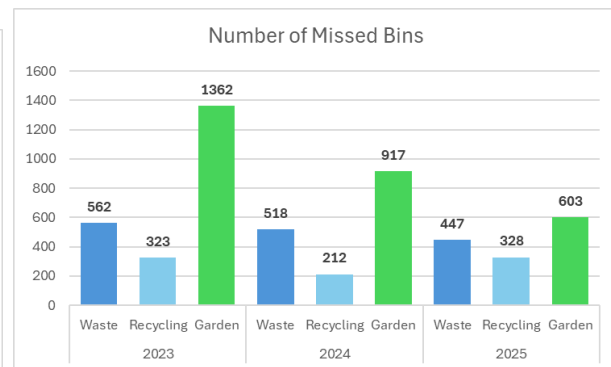
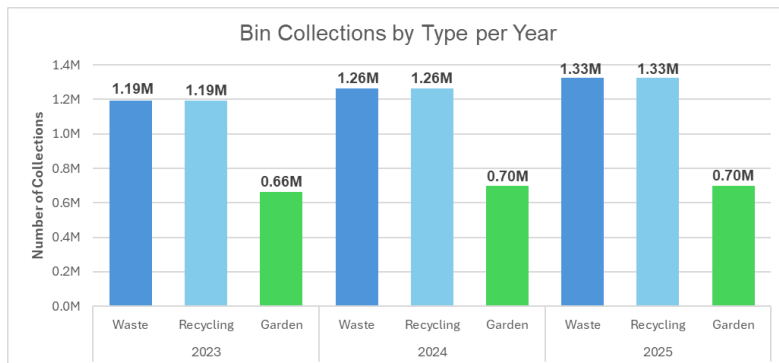
“Can the Portfolio Holder please explain to Council why there are persistent logistical problems with waste collections. Residents are having to wait up to five extra days for the bins to be collected. Can the Portfolio Holder also please advise Council as to the extra cost to the council tax payer for the crews to be paid overtime for Saturday working?”

Councillor Livesey, Operations and Traded Services Portfolio Holder, provided the following response:

“Thank you for the question.

Firstly, I want to reassure Council that the service continues to improve. The Council takes its responsibilities very seriously and we apologise unreservedly to all residents impacted by any missed bin collections.

The recent suspended rounds have, understandably, increased the perception of missed collections, however the situation across the Borough is one of improvement since 2023, these account for an average of 0.04% of the more than 250,000 bins emptied each month. To be clear that is 0.04% too many and we are working on delivering continual improvement.



In recent weeks, the service has faced an unexpected shortage of around eleven drivers due to a combination of sickness, annual leave, and vacancies.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2dr8gzdz1wo>

Despite every effort, agency providers were unable to supply the necessary drivers to maintain all rounds, which regrettably meant that a small number of collections had to be temporarily suspended. These were recovered, with regular crews working additional hours, including Saturdays, to ensure bins were emptied as soon as possible.

The overtime costs associated with these catch-up rounds will be offset by savings from existing vacancies within the service. Recruitment is underway, with interviews scheduled for the week commencing 17 November, to strengthen the resilience of the team moving forward.

On behalf of the Council, I wish to reassure all Councillors, that we have implemented measures to minimise the risk of future disruption, and while no service of this scale can ever be entirely immune to operational pressures, our

focus remains firmly on providing a long-term reliable, efficient, and responsive waste collection service for all residents.”

Councillor Poole then asked the Portfolio Holder if she could provide to him details of the extra cost to the council tax payer for the crews to be paid overtime for Saturday working. Councillor Livesey agreed to provide this information.

52. REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Local Government Reorganisation

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive (Part 1 – agenda item 6(a)) concerning local government reorganisation.

In order to ensure that Council's views were fully understood by Cabinet, the Mayor took a vote on Members' preferences for the single or two unitary case. Members voted in favour of a single unitary case with one abstention.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) Council comments on the two proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire (set out in Appendices A and B) to inform the submission to Government by 28 November 2025;
- (2) the preference of a single unitary case on the form of unitary Government for Warwickshire be used to inform Cabinet's submission of the final proposal to Government; and
- (3) IT BE RECOMMENDED TO CABINET THAT in making its decision, Cabinet include a statement setting out Rugby's specific requests of either option, as determined through the various debates held to date regarding local government reorganisation, including:
 - progressing the creation of a Rugby Town Council
 - initiating a Community Governance Review to consider the further formation of Parish Councils within the Rugby urban area.
 - ensuring that the future unitary council covering Rugby Borough maintains a significant local presence, in terms of a public office based within the Borough and services delivered from within the Borough.
 - ensuring that any future unitary council seeks to retain and develop RBC staff wherever possible.
 - Ensuring that the structures and governance associated with any future unitary council maintains and, where possible strengthens, democratic accountability.

53. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

Councillor McKenzie proposed and Councillor Bennett seconded the following motion, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 11.

“This Council notes with deep concern the reported letter written by Warwickshire County Council leader George Finch, Reform Party to the secretary of state for Education requesting a massive increase to the distances that children can be required to walk to school.

Reform’s George Finch requests:

- Children as young as 4 years old should walk up to 8 miles per day, and*
- Children aged 8 years should walk up to 10 miles per day.*

This Council has a duty of care towards its residents and is incredibly concerned over these proposals. It raises questions over educational access, child welfare and road safety. It disproportionately affects people who are unable to drive their children to school and is therefore more likely to affect poorer families and those with disabilities.

This Council believes that such distances are wholly inappropriate for children of such young ages and may pose risks to their physical health, emotional wellbeing, and ability to engage effectively in learning. The proposals could disproportionately affect families in rural areas, those with limited transport options, and children with disabilities or additional needs.

Furthermore, the Council recognises the importance of promoting active travel and sustainability but asserts that any such initiatives must be age-appropriate, inclusive, and grounded in evidence-based child development standards.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- (a) write to Warwickshire County Council to express our concerns regarding the proposed changes that seek to increase school walking distances to levels that are not developmentally suitable for young children;*
- (b) write to the Secretary of State for Education and Warwickshire Members of Parliament relevant parliamentary representatives to request ask them to refuse Reform’s request; and*
- (c) promote safe, accessible, and age-appropriate travel options for all children attending school within the Borough, our jurisdiction.”*

Further to debate, the Mayor took a vote and declared the motion carried.

RESOLVED THAT - this Council:

- (1)** writes to Warwickshire County Council to express our concerns regarding the proposed changes that seek to increase school walking distances to levels that are not developmentally suitable for young children;
- (2)** writes to the Secretary of State for Education and Warwickshire Members of Parliament (relevant parliamentary representatives) to request them to refuse Reform’s request; and
- (3)** promotes safe, accessible, and age-appropriate travel options for all children attending school within the Borough, our jurisdiction.

MAYOR