

## EXTRAORDINARY CABINET – 8 JANUARY 2026

### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – AGENDA ITEM 3

#### QUESTION C

**Devenne Kedward, submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Moran:**

“What lawful and exceptional justification exists for cancelling a scheduled election and thereby extending the terms of the Leader and Cabinet without voter consent, and on what basis does the administration claim this is compatible with democratic accountability?”

**The Leader of the Council, Councillor Moran, provided the following response:**

“Thank you for the question.

Tonight’s Extraordinary Cabinet meeting is focused on the Government letter dated 18 December 2025, sent by Alison McGovern MP, which asked the Leader of the Council by midnight of Thursday, 15 January 2026, to set out their views on the postponement of elections. – *‘Consider if taking this step would release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation in the area and so allow reorganisation to progress more effectively.’* The letter in full is an appendix to the report.

We have been asked because we have submitted our proposal for local government reorganisation, but Government has made no decision on which unitary councils are to be formed.

I want to clarify that any decision to postpone an election can only be taken by the Government and would require a statutory instrument to be laid in Parliament and approved. By example, the statutory instrument to postpone some local elections in 2025 was the Local Authorities (Changes to Years of Ordinary Elections) (England) Order 2025. Rugby BC cannot postpone the local government elections for May 2026.

It is important to recognise that the Council's response to the Minister’s invitation must balance the potential benefits of postponement - such as releasing vital capacity for effective delivery of Local Government Reorganisation - with the need to ensure democratic continuity and public confidence in local governance arrangements.

The Council remains committed to engaging constructively with stakeholders during this period of uncertainty, seeking pragmatic solutions to both operational and financial pressures that may arise and ensuring that any transition is managed transparently and in the best interest of the borough, residents and communities.

The Ministerial letter invites the Council to provide its comments, which the Minister will then take into consideration in determining whether to bring forward the election's subsequent postponement.

In relation to the Council's process to enable it to make comment, as this is an election matter, there are no clear delegations available which would enable a response to be collected on behalf of the Council and for those comments to be returned to the Minister. The Council constitution is clear that the Cabinet has the executive responsibility for resources, which is why tonight's Cabinet report has been prepared to enable them to consider the matter of the resource and a response then made to the Minister.

63 different councils throughout England in the same position as this Council, who have been asked to respond, have approached this in different ways. This Council looked to its Constitution and identified that Cabinet is the appropriate governance to express its views, through me.

I welcome the fact that members of the public are so interested in how this Council conducts its affairs and does so in such a transparent manner. Once Cabinet has debated the report and made its view known, then I will respond to the Minister."