

SUPPLY AND CONFIDENCE AGREEMENT **between the Labour and Liberal Democrats groups** **on Rugby Borough Council 2024**

The Liberal Democrats and Labour groups acknowledge that no Party has overall control of Rugby Borough Council. Both Groups are fully committed to ensure we provide the people of Rugby Borough with services in an open and democratic way, and that the council has a strong, stable and open leadership.

This is an agreement for the municipal year from date _____ and has been drawn-up following detailed discussions between the two groups. It will be monitored monthly by the Leaders of both Groups to ensure progress and adherence to the values outlined in this agreement.

The Liberal Democrats Group will support the Labour Group to form an administration on the basis of:

1. Supporting their nomination for Leader of Rugby Borough Council.
2. That discussions between the two groups have revealed a shared understanding of the importance of the services Rugby Borough Council offers to the residents, businesses and other organisations operating in the Borough.
3. The Liberal Democrats and Labour want the strongest possible support to be offered and will support the building of a Better, Fairer, Greener, Borough that promotes a “Wellbeing Economy” and reduces inequalities whilst protecting the vulnerable using protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
4. Both groups believe the council should be a fair employer and should always treat its staff fairly and with respect.
5. Councillors from all political groups will treat staff, fellow Councillors and the general public with respect and adhere to an updated code of conduct along with following the standards expected of a person in public office. Consideration also to be given to a reporting process from the Monitoring Officer to the Audit & Ethics Committee and encompass Code of Conduct training. In addition, consideration to be given to the possible renaming of the Audit & Ethics Committee.
6. A Cllr Champion position will be created that Councillors and staff can speak to if this is not being followed. To be overseen by the Independently Chaired Audit & Ethics Committee.
7. A collective commitment for all parties to work to ensure the Council operates in a more effective and transparent manner in all areas alongside an urgent and honest assessment of the current culture within the Council (potentially

assisted in the short term with further engagement with the LGA and/or others for outside advice). Within this there needs to be a commitment to seeking to improve the standard of reporting with clearer focus on anticipated outcomes, evidenced based decision making, financial implications, KPIs, risk analysis and general scenario planning.

8. Whilst other matters which go to Full Council will be decided on a case-by-case basis (supply and confidence), it is the full intention wherever possible to use all best endeavours to reach a consensus on policy and budget decisions before Full Council meetings in line with the aspirations of each party's recently published manifesto. A programme of meetings will be planned to facilitate discussions on these decisions.

In addition, support for the Labour nomination as Leader of the Council will be **conditional upon the following issues:**

1. **A fair review of the council's Standards** Processes updating the code of conduct, so they are fair, proportionate and uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, the Nolan Principles including respect of how Cllrs work with staff.
2. **Budget**, In moving forward there will be full discussion of the annual budget, an intended restructuring of Council departments (and reporting lines to new Portfolio/Cabinet positions) and performance issues between the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups.

To facilitate the above, the Liberal Democrats (and potentially representatives from the Conservative group) will be invited to participate, alongside Senior Council Officers, on a new **Services, Workforce and Performance Board** led by the Labour Leader.

The CEO is asked to bring forward a paper on a Committee Scrutiny system that enhances governance, improves decision making and enables all councillors to have a voice.

3. **Getting answers from the Town Hall, introduce a "Customer Service Charter" of Standards you can expect from the Council**

We will appoint one senior Cllr from each of the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and a senior Officer at the Council to be responsible for urgently putting in place a "Customer Charter". We will review opening hours and improve phone answering. The Charter then to be presented at Full Council at the first available opportunity. We will publish key performance data on the Council's website.

4. **Getting value for your money a full spending review is needed of RBC (All political groups, if possible, must take part in this)**

All services will be to be reviewed to establish the most cost-effective way of delivering services. We will want to see what the costs of statutory services are and also non-statutory. We will publish key performance data on the Councils web site.

This work clearly needs to take place as quickly as possible and feed into the coming budget setting process. The latter to have the objective of establishing a fair and sustainable financial future for RBC.

This process to be supported by independent review and assistance from the LGA and other independent outside expertise as necessary.

5. **Bringing life back to our town centre Everyone must work together in partnership to deliver an improved town centre (Chaired by a Liberal Democrat with the Leader of the Council)**

We will develop a cultural quarter in the town centre that draws together independent shops and entertainment. We will back this by introducing new festivals building on the existing programme celebrating Rugby taking inspiration from both Labour's 'Love Rugby' and Liberal Democrat manifestos We will improve the public realm of the town.

We will work closely with health colleagues in the development of greater access to services in the town centre.

Where absentee landlords are blocking the revitalisation of our town centre, we will use the Council's compulsory purchase powers to achieve redevelopment.

Forcing residents to use the "Ring-Go" app to park in the town centre is driving away trade. We will review "Ring-Go" as part of a wider Town Centre parking strategy and allow residents to use cash, credit and debit cards to directly pay to park Investigate 2-hour free parking.

To instigate an urgent update of a high level town centre strategy that sets out key priorities and deliverable next steps

Formulate a financial budget plan detailing Council resources and third party sources of grant funding

Review and prioritise Town Centre workstreams and align with RBC resources

Establish a long-term investment strategy for the town centre to engage and align with local major property owners and potential institutional funds

Urgently review the town centre market operations and re-engage with operator CJ Markets with a view to activating engagement with existing Borough businesses to populate an expanded market offer

Urgently address the outstanding SLA matters with Rugby First

6. **Greening our borough introduce action on climate change adaptation.**

Increasing biodiversity, by supporting local groups including the newly formed Rugby Eco Hub as a centre of excellence.

Urgently seek out best practice from other local authorities on the most effective green initiatives and actively look to implement in Rugby where possible

Making more liveable neighbourhoods increasing tree planting and flower meadow planting.

Within the Local Plan process create at least two new Country parks for residents.

Invest into increasing connector paths for walking and cycling.

We will support greater engagement and education on recycling along with the resources needed for the extra responsibilities on food waste collection.

Not solely limited to Climate Change but a commitment to improving RBC's means of consultation across all areas with residents and businesses (in all areas) and a recognition that RBC's relationships with key organisations such as Warwickshire County Council, local partners in the statutory and voluntary sector needs to improve.

- 7. Ensure that the Local Plan is Climate Change friendly and that we have an ambitious and diversified Economic Strategy (working group lead Liberal Democrat with the relevant Portfolio Holder)** that is circular and increase the prosperity of the Borough is a keen Labour aspiration so as a statement of intent it is fully agreed. Increased number of festivals in the town

Within the Local Plan process to review next steps in light of recent government legislation and to further align the conclusion and adoption of a new ambitious and climate change friendly Economic Strategy.

Ultimately the Local Plan should be clear in promoting the Borough as a progressive and sustainable Council that promotes the ideals of a sustainable circular economy.

RBC should also be clear in its ethical and committed stance on climate change and diversity within our community. There should also be a clear statement of intent to address inequality in the Borough.

- 8. Establish a new Rugby Partnership Board (Chaired by a Liberal Democrat with a Labour Councillor Vice Chair)** Bringing together NHS, Police, WCC and the voluntary sector bringing our partners together into one place with the aim of working together in delivering improved local services for residents and driving forward the healthy and safe communities agenda. (Note Rugby Place Health Partnership will be a subcommittee of the strategic body)

Labour will support the above Board being Chaired by a Liberal Democrat at all times when in parallel to the Council being led by a Labour Councillor.

9. Notwithstanding the issues listed above, the Liberal Democrats and Labour retain the option of disagreeing both privately and publicly on those matters not mentioned above, where agreement is not possible.

10. It is further agreed that on all matters covered by this agreement, any Press Releases and/or Statements made by the Council with regard to all Council services will be shared with the Liberal Democrat Group Leader and Deputy at least 48 hours before being issued and will also include a quote/comment from the Liberal Democrat leader, or a relevant group colleague, if they so wish. Final draft press releases to be shared and signed off by both parties.

 An exception here for Press Releases covering genuine emergency matters for which a 48-hour timeframe is not possible. In these instances, the Labour Leader or Deputy will reach out to their Liberal Democrat counterparts as soon as possible using all reasonable endeavours.

11. Should it be felt that any part of this agreement has not been honoured, the Liberal Democrat Leader/Deputy will inform the Labour Leader/Deputy immediately and give the latter 24 hours to respond/review/address the issue before they withdraw their support for the Labour administration. The Liberal Democrats will continue to act in the best interests of the people of Rugby Borough and those residents who have elected them as their ward councillors.

12. This agreement is in place for one municipal year and may be extended, following a full review by the two Groups, before the final regular Council meeting of the subject municipal year.

Signed _____
 Date _____
Liberal Democrat Group Leader

Signed _____
 Date _____
Liberal Democrat Deputy Group Leader

Signed _____
 Date _____
Labour Group Leader

Signed _____
 Date _____
Labour Deputy Group Leader