

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
14 MARCH 2018

Present: Councillor James (Chair);
Councillors Debs Absolom, Davies, Dennis, Kelly Edwards, Ennis,
Hacker, McDonald, McGonigle, Steele, Terry and Tickner.

Apologies: Councillors Grashoff and Rose Williams.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 15 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

A question on the following matter was submitted:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Councillor McGonigle	Palmer Park Building	Councillor Hacker

The full text of the question and reply was made available on the Reading Borough Council website.

22. READING FESTIVAL

James Crosbie, Regulatory Services Manager, gave a presentation on the 2017 Reading Festival.

James highlighted the Council's multiple roles in the planning and regulation of the festival. For 2018 the Council would have a new safeguarding co-ordinator post and a range of measures to ensure the safety and well-being of festivalgoers.

The Council had received fifty-five complaints about the festival in 2017, twenty-three of which had been noise-related. Other complaints had referred to matters including air quality, pricing, litter, illegal mooring, parking and drugs. Residents' concerns were always reviewed and direct action taken either during the festival or as part of the debrief process after the festival, where learning points from each year were captured and actioned.

The Festival Licence had permitted a capacity of 94,999 people in 2017 and for 2018, Festival Republic had taken the option to increase the licence capacity to 99,999.

Noel Painting, Festival Republic, attended the meeting and responded to questions from the Committee.

The presentation was made available on the Reading Borough Council website.

Resolved - That James Crosbie be thanked for his presentation and Noel Painting thanked for his participation.

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23. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME FOR LEISURE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 2018-202

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report requesting scheme and spending approval for new capital projects starting in 2018. A detailed description of the projects was attached to the report at Appendix I.

The report set out the projects included in the proposed capital programme for 2018-2020 for which approval was being sought, with an indication of the amount of money earmarked to fund each scheme, to the estimated total value of £786,700. These schemes would be funded from Section 106 receipts.

The report also set out the current progress of a number of schemes that had previously been approved by Policy Committee, at its meeting on 10 June 2013 (Minute 10 refers), and Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 8 July 2014 (Minute 7 refers) and 18 November 2015 (Minute 16 refers), which were yet to be completed. These included Louisehill Copse, Thames Parks and Victoria Recreation Ground.

Resolved -

- (1) That scheme and spending approval be given for the Capital Projects outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report and also detailed in Appendix 1;**
- (2) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services and the Head of Finance, be given delegated authority to finalise details of individual schemes and programmes within the overall approval given.**

24. WASTE MINIMISATION UPDATE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the current position of the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 - 2020 Action Plan, most notably the introduction of the facility to recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays (PTT) in February 2018.

The report explained that the Council had adopted the *Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 - 2020* in March 2015, demonstrating its commitment to promoting waste minimisation through reuse, recycling and composting, to minimise disposal and to achieving the EU Directive target recycling rate of 50% by 2020. Reading was currently sending 19.55% of its municipal waste to landfill with 80.45% being recycled, composted or sent for Energy from Waste. The current recycling rate for Reading was 31.46% compared to the national rate of 45.2%.

The Committee also received a presentation from Oliver Burt, re3 Strategic Waste Manager, on the recycling of Plastics.

The report explained that re3 was currently updating its strategy and as a result the Council's Waste Minimisation Strategy and activities would be reviewed and updated

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to ensure work was focussed and co-ordinated in the short term. The revised Strategy for Reading would be reported to the HNL Committee at its meeting in July 2018.

The report stated that new waste collection service standards had been introduced in February 2017. However there were five elements of work which focused on improving the way waste was collected, increasing recycling rates, identifying means of changing behaviour and getting the right waste in the right bin. The report provided details on the results of the trial around continually contaminated recycle bins, which had demonstrated the importance of direct contact with residents in order to change recycling behaviour.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress to date of the Waste Minimisation Strategy and the current work streams be noted;**
- (2) That subsequent Waste Strategy update reports be presented annually to the Committee at the July 2018 meeting;**
- (3) That the Head of Transportation and Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods, be delegated authority to make amendments to the action plan as required.**

25. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS: CONSULTATION REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute 18 of the previous meeting, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the outcome of the consultation on the proposed introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Reading. The report made recommendations on the number and nature of restrictions to be included within a PSPO, in the context of the consultation feedback.

The report explained the changes to restrictions which were recommended to be introduced, in relation to:

- Begging
- Busking
- Dog Control
- Drug activity
- Public Urination and defecation
- Street Drinking
- Littering

The consultation questions were attached to the report at Appendix A and a summary of the consultation results were attached to the report at Appendix B.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outcome of the consultation be noted;**
- (2) That the restrictions to be introduced as part of the PSPO as set out in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.13 of the report be agreed.**

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26. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND CIVIL PENALTIES

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which set measures introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (the “Act”) and guidance which followed in 2017, to tackle criminal (rogue) landlords and agents.

The report explained that the new measures included Civil Penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecutions, and Rent Repayment Orders. The Government intended to introduce, in 2018, Banning Orders, a Rogue Landlords database and likely an extension of mandatory HMO Licensing. The use of Civil Penalties would give the Council an additional tool to tackle landlords and agents who rented out sub-standard properties in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Unlike prosecutions where the Council could only recover its costs, any income from the fines would be re-invested into private sector housing enforcement.

The report also provided details of the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015, which placed a duty on landlords to fit smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in private rented properties. The penalty for non-compliance could be a charge of up to £5,000.

The Council’s Policy for Housing Standards Regulation including Houses in Multiple Occupation was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The report sought delegations to authorise officers to carry out these functions and approval to amend policy and introduce a charging scheme.

Resolved -

- (1) That the scheme of delegations relating to Section 128 and Schedule 9 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 be approved and the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be delegated authority to implement the scheme to issue Civil Penalties and Penalty Charges;**
- (2) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to discharge the Council’s duties and powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 along with subsequent Regulations and Orders as well as policies and procedures relating to this legislation;**
- (3) That the proposed charging process for Civil Penalty Notices detailed in the Policy for Housing Standards Regulation (Appendix 1) be approved;**
- (4) That the Statement of Principles for the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 detailed in the Policy for Housing Standards Regulation (Appendix 1) be approved;**

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- (5) That the revenue arising from Civil Penalties and Rent Repayment Orders be reinvested in the Private Sector Housing Team as part of Regulatory Services to continue improving the Private Rented Sector as detailed in Regulation 4 of the Rent Repayment Orders and Financial Penalties (Amounts Recovered) (England) Regulations 2017.

27. PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO COUNCIL STOCK 2018-2019

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report highlighting key achievements during 2017/18 in the day to day repairs, planned maintenance, cyclical repairs and void works to approximately 5,600 Council homes. The report also presented the planned programme of works to Council stock for 2018/19.

The report stated that improvements delivered by the Housing Property Services Team in 2017/18 had included:

- Consolidating the work from the Home Improvement Agency contract, clearing the backlog on jobs and significantly reducing the turnaround time on completing major adaptations
- Completing the refurbishment of the second of five blocks of flats as part of the Hexham Road refurbishment project
- Developing an innovative scheme of 28 units of modular temporary accommodation at Lowfield Road for homeless families
- Housing stock had been benchmarked as the most energy efficient within the Council's peer group of 20 similar social housing providers by Housemark, an independent benchmarking organisation

The planned programme of works for 2018/19 was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Resolved - That the improvements implemented in the past financial year and the planned programme of works to Council stock in 2018/19 be noted.

28. UPDATE ON HOUSING FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Further to Minute 14 of the previous meeting, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the Council's response following the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington on 14 June 2017. This included action taken in relation to the Authority's own housing stock, other corporate buildings and schools, as well as wider work in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in respect of privately owned high rise residential blocks within the Borough boundaries.

The report to the previous meeting (Minute 14 refers) had advised that the Housing Service had appointed an external, qualified Fire Engineer (FireSkills) to carry out a review of fire safety practices in respect of the management and maintenance of Council housing stock. The report explained that the review had now been completed and provided an update on findings and recommendations from FireSkills.

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The report included a brief update on joint work between the Council and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) in respect of cross tenure high rise residential buildings.

The report also outlined the key interim findings from the independent review of building regulations and fire safety led by Dame Judith Hackett. The interim findings had been published in December 2017 as 'Building a Safer Future'.

The report from FireSkills on the Review of Reading Borough Council's Fire Safety Management Procedures was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The report stated that the Housing Service had already implemented a number of system improvements in respect of fire safety, as previously reported. The recommendations and advice from the external review by FireSkills would now be incorporated into a live service action plan and had informed the programme of planned maintenance to the Council's housing stock. Proactive work was underway to cost, schedule and plan procurement of works to further improve fire safety in the Council's housing flatted blocks.

The report explained that the findings of the review would be presented to tenant representatives. Tenants and leaseholders would be consulted and advised of works planned as required at a local block level. Tenants were also carrying out their own review of fire safety, as detailed in the report.

Resolved - That the findings and recommendations of the external review of fire safety in Council housing stock be noted.

29. HOUSING SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which set out proposals to reconfigure the way that housing services for older people were delivered so that they were available for more residents, prioritised for those in most need and so as to develop resilience to current and future social and demographic pressures.

The report stated that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) projected that the number of over-65s living in the Reading Borough Council area would have increased by a third by 2030 and the number of over-80s increased by almost half. Key aspects of the proposals in response to changing needs included increasing the support available to the Council's sheltered housing tenants, implementing a 'hub and spoke' model of support provided from sheltered housing hubs on an outreach basis, so that it was also available to older people with support needs in the wider tenant community (in Council homes) and reducing the age limit for sheltered housing and de-designating the Council's other age-restricted properties so that allocations could be based on the individual household need for each type of accommodation.

The report explained that consultation had been carried out with sheltered housing tenants (and applicants). A summary report of findings was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and an Equality Impact Assessment was attached at Appendix 2.

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- (1) That the proposals set out in section 5 of the report be approved;**
- (2) That there be a reduction in the age limit for sheltered housing from 60 to 55, which alongside detailed housing assessments with prospective tenants would enable appropriate lettings to be made to those in most need;**
- (3) That the age criteria that were attached to some Council homes be removed and the Allocations Scheme be amended to introduce options designed to promote sustainable communities whilst maintaining a fair system of allocating new tenancies.**

30. CONTRACT AWARD - MEASURED TERM CONTRACT FOR GAS CENTRAL HEATING INSTALLATIONS 2017/18 - 2022/23

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for the award of a Measured Term Contract (MTC) for the provision of gas boiler and full central heating system installations and servicing. This contract related to the repair and maintenance of Reading Borough Council's Housing Stock.

The report stated that the contract would be split between two contractors. No volume of expenditure was guaranteed under the contracts as annual expenditure would depend on the actual level of work that was required to be sub-contracted during the course of a year. However, based on expenditure records, typically the total expenditure was estimated to be circa £1m per annum (£500,000 per annum per contractor).

Resolved -

That the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be delegated authority to award a Measured Term Contract for gas central heating installations to Correct Contract Services Ltd and AP Faulkner (Heating) Ltd for a period of three years with an option to extend for two further consecutive years in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

31. CONTRACT AWARD - MEASURED TERM CONTRACT FOR BATHROOM REPLACEMENT WORKS 2017/18 - 2020/21

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for the award of a Measured Term Contract (MTC) for the replacement of bathrooms to Reading Borough Council's Housing Stock.

The report stated that the contract would be split between three contractors. No volume of expenditure was guaranteed under the contracts as annual expenditure would depend on the actual level of work that was required to be sub-contracted during the course of a year. However, based on expenditure records, typically the total expenditure was estimated to be circa £450,000 per annum (£1.8m across the life of the contract).

Resolved -

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That the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be delegated authority to award a Measured Term Contract for bathroom replacement works to Build Trust Ltd, ENGIE Regeneration Ltd trading as Keepmoat Regeneration and Pilon Ltd. The MTC will be for a period of four years in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.07pm).