

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
4 JULY 2018**

Present: Councillor Davies (Chair);
Councillors Eden, Emberson, Ennis, Grashoff, Hacker, Hoskin, James,
Manghnani, McDonald, McGonigle, Rowland, and R Williams.

Apologies: Councillors Gavin and Stanford-Beale.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Community Safety Partnership - 1 February 2018.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

3. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Councillor McGonigle	Trade Waste Bins Wokingham Road	Councillor James
Councillor McGonigle	Palmer Park Café	Councillor Hacker

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

4. READING ON THAMES FESTIVAL 2018

Nigel Horton-Baker, Executive Director of Reading UK CIC, and Steph Weller, Producer of the Reading on Thames Festival, gave a presentation on the Reading on Thames Festival taking place between 6 and 16 September 2018.

The Reading on Thames Festival took its inspiration from Reading's waterways and set out to create a vibrant broad appeal arts and cultural festival programme set in venues and unusual outdoor spaces across Reading. The programme for 2018 included nationally-renowned performers and Reading-based arts groups working in collaboration to create a unique experience for audiences.

Steph talked about some of the headlines of the festival programme, which would include local, national and international partners working on music, literature, visual arts, film, theatre and walking trails and tours. The opening event would be GRRRL featuring Charlotte Adigéry - *In Place of War*, which would be held on Thursday 6 September 2018 in the Concert Hall at Reading Town Hall. The headline closing

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event would be Cirque Bijou; A Circus Siorée, which would be held in Caversham Court Gardens on Saturday 15 September 2018.

Steph explained that outside of the events programme, the festival was working on community engagement and skills development and employment for local residents.

Resolved - That Steph Weller and Nigel Horton-Baker be thanked for their presentation.

5. HIDDEN ABBEY PROJECT UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that provided an update on the Hidden Abbey Project.

Further to Minute 96 of Policy Committee on 11 April 2016, the report provided an update on the Hidden Abbey Project ('the Project') which was set up in 2015 to discover the extent and nature of the below-ground evidence of the Royal Abbey founded in Reading by King Henry I in 1121 and where he and other members of his family were buried. The Project was contemporary with, but not part of, the Borough Council's successful *Reading Abbey Revealed (RAR)* Project, which would run until 2020 and achieved the conservation and re-opening of both the Abbey Gateway and the Abbey Ruins in April / June 2018; and the future plans of the Ministry of Justice to dispose of Reading Gaol which was founded on part of the historic Abbey Quarter. It also anticipated the 900th anniversary of the Abbey's foundation, in 2021.

Reading Borough Council was coordinating the project, in tandem with the RC Diocese of Portsmouth and the Ministry of Justice, as the principal public landowners in the Abbey Quarter site, together with the Friends of Reading Abbey, Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP), and Philippa Langley (PL) of Little Marilyn Productions Ltd (LMPL). It was being taken forward by a Steering Group on which all of the above bodies were represented. Reading Borough Council was the lead partner and commissioning body for works associated with the project, and would procure, enter into, client and pay the contracts for associated works, although it would not itself provide any funding directly.

A plan showing the site covered by the Project is at **Appendix A**. The focus of the first phase of the Project was on the Abbey church. The land on which this was located was now owned by three landowners and their interests were as follows:

Owner	Site	Reference to Plan
Reading Borough Council (RBC)	Forbury Gardens	Site C
	Abbey Ruins	Site D
RC Diocese of Portsmouth (DoP)	St James Church	Sites A and J2
	St James Presbytery	
	Forbury Nursery	
Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	Reading Gaol site	Site B1 and B2

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The Project commissioned a Ground-Penetrating radar (GRP) survey of the above sites in the summer of 2016, funded by the RC Diocese of Portsmouth. This was undertaken by Stratascan SUMO. The survey identified some interesting anomalous features in all three sites, which the Steering Group considered to be worthy of further exploration, including by keyhole archaeology. The Steering Group had agreed a provisional exploration brief, this was attached to the report at Appendix B.

Resolved -

That the position be noted, the exploration brief (Appendix B) be endorsed, and the Steering Group's decision to hold discussions on next steps with the University of Reading Archaeology Department, as set out in para. 4.4 of the report, be welcomed.

6. RE3 WASTE STRATEGY 2018-2020 AND THE WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR READING

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating the Committee on the re3 strategy 2018-2020, which had been endorsed and recommended by the Joint Waste Disposal Board, and to inform the Committee of the current work on the Reading Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015-2020. The re3 strategy 2018-2020 was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that the two principal aims of the re3 strategy were to reduce the net cost of waste and to recycle 50% by 2020.

The report stated that the Reading Waste Minimisation Strategy was currently being replaced with a Waste Action Plan for Reading, which would set out a clear path for the delivery of the high-level strategic objectives of the re3 Strategy and the specific service development priorities for Reading Borough Council, including the need to deliver substantial savings as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key objectives of the emerging Waste Action Plan would focus on reducing cost and would include:

- Introduction of weekly kerbside food waste collection;
- Steps to improve diversion of recyclable material from the residual bin to recycling;
- Reductions in the contamination of recyclable material with non-recyclable wastes, by way of a dedicated team of Waste Officers;
- Improved and sustained communications campaigns, including schools;
- Improved direct contact with residents, businesses and landlords;
- Further promotion of the Council's trade waste offer;
- Hard market testing of waste services.

The Waste Action Plan would set out the actions and milestones relating to each objective and performance against the objectives would be monitored regularly and reported to the Committee as appropriate.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the re3 Strategy 2018-2020, as recommended by the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on 27 April 2018, be noted;
- (2) That the outline objectives of the emerging Reading Waste Action Plan and the intention to develop a more detailed action plan to deliver the aims of the re3 Strategy, be noted.

7. EXTENSION OF MANDATORY LICENSING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY REGULATIONS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) due to come into force from 1st October 2018. This was the latest addition to a series of measures introduced by Government to tackle criminal landlords and improve standards in the sector. This was in addition to other measures that had been brought to the Committee on 14 March 2018 (Minute 26 refers) which included Civil Penalty Notices, protection from revenge evictions, banning orders, the Rogue Landlords database and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations.

The report stated that from 1 October 2018 the three storey criteria would be removed and all HMOs occupied by five or more people forming two or more households where facilities were shared would require a HMO licence. In relation to purpose built flats, if a flat was occupied by five or more people and it was in a block comprising of up to two flats this would be licensable but a purpose build flat occupied by five or more people in a block comprising three or more flats it would not need a licence. The introduction of minimum room size standards was also being introduced.

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 meant that from 1st April 2018 it had become illegal for landlords to rent out property unless it met the minimum energy efficiency rating of E. However, there were some exemptions, which were detailed in Appendix A.

The report set out the maximum fines detailed in the regulations and the Council's proposed fines. The proposal was to levy a lower fine in the first instance and then the full fine for any subsequent breaches at the point of a new tenancy. The proposed fines were:

Breach of the Regulations	Maximum financial penalty	RBC proposed fine (1 st Offence)
a) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for less than 3 months	£2,000	£1,000
b) Landlord has let a sub-standard property for 3 months or more	£4,000	£2,000
c) Landlord has included false or misleading information on the PRS Exemption Register	£1,000	£500
d) Landlord fails to comply with compliance notice (this is a request for information on measures undertaken at a property)	£2,000	£1,000

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Resolved -

- (1) That the scheme of delegations be amended and the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance be delegated authority to implement the scheme for the extension of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and enforce the requirements of The Energy Efficient (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015;**
- (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 Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018 and the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 along with subsequent Regulations and Orders as well as policies and procedures related to this legislation;**
- (3) That the proposed penalty fines detailed in the report be approved.**

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.48pm).