

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
19 NOVEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillor Hacker (Chair);
Councillors Davies, Dennis, K Edwards, Gittings, Hopper, James,
Livingston, O'Connell, Terry and J Williams.

Apologies: Councillors D Absolom, Anderson and R Williams.

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 8 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Community Safety Partnership - 9 July 2014.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

12. PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 36

Emily Meunier presented a petition in the following terms:

We want to work with our local community to improve our Green Spaces in the George Street Area.

“We believe that our local Green Spaces are essential to happy, healthy communities. We want to improve our local area and create more opportunities for friends, families, local groups, schools, people of all ages and local wildlife to meet, play and learn in a natural setting. We want to create spaces where wildlife thrives. The two local improvements we have in mind are creating an Orchard and improving Victoria Park on George Street.”

In her response, Councillor Hacker (Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee) stated:

“Thank you for your petition. I’m sure that this Committee would agree with you that, along with clean and safe neighbourhoods, access to decent and affordable homes, good schools and a range of leisure facilities, local green spaces are an essential element of happy, healthy communities. It therefore welcomes initiatives from local people that help enhance local green spaces.

The current planning application for the new Primary School at Hodsoll Road includes the provision of community facilities within the School and proposals to improve the adjacent Victoria Park. These improvements include removal of the buildings (Fairview Community Centre and Nursery) to the West of the Park, so increasing the amount of green space and opening up views into the Park from George Street.

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I propose that officers contact you to set up a meeting with local councillors to discuss how the local community may be able to help enhance green spaces in the local area.”

13. CEDAR COURT EXTRA CARE HOUSING

Jacqui Foster-Browne, Principal Property Development Officer, and Gill Rimmer, Tenant Support Services Manager, gave a presentation on the new Council-built Extra Care Housing Scheme at Cedar Court.

Cedar Court provided a housing setting for the provision of care and support for older people, providing an alternative for some to residential care but meeting a range of levels of need. Residents retained their independence and had their own front door. There was a mixture of 26 one bedroom and 13 two bedroom flats with access to day activities for the residents and the wider community and in addition there was a fully furnished and equipped assessment flat.

Cedar Court had achieved carbon reduction and Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) targets by having photovoltaics on the roof, a biomass boiler, modern building techniques and a sedum roof. The building had a simple and easily understood layout, was domestic and familiar in character, provided visual clues through the use of colours, objects and views and had visual accessibility. Care provision was flexible and tailored to the individual needs of the residents. Cedar Court also had a fully furnished visitors flat that could be booked by residents so that they could have family to visit and stay with them.

The facility would be open older people in the local community for a small annual members fee of £15 or £20 and would have a range of activities for older people that would include access to hairdressing, activities and clubs, social events and health care services.

Resolved - That Jacqui Foster-Browne and Gill Rimmer be thanked for their presentation.

14. READING FESTIVAL

James Crosbie, Regulatory Services Manager, gave a presentation on the 2014 Reading Festival.

In the build up to the Festival safety advisory groups and event specific meetings had been held along with a table top exercise for all services and partners and a residents on-site meeting. The campsite had opened on 20 August 2014 and by midday on 21 August 2013 there had been 40,000 people on-site and 75,000 people camping on the site over the weekend.

On 21 August 2014 traffic had been busy, but was flowing, street traders had been inspected and some illegal traders had been found and told to move on. On 22 August 2014 the Council's Licensing Department and Thames Valley Police had worked together to disrupt ticket touts, the main arena had been inspected and opened and new VMS signs had been introduced on the site. There were no major issues on 23 August 2014 and when issues had been identified they were picked up

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and communicated quickly. The Safety Advisory Group had met twice during the day. 24 August 2014 had also seen no issues on-site but off-site a sewer had blocked which had caused disruption, this had been dealt with by officers and Festival Republic who had worked with Thames Water and secured a 30 minute response time. There had been significant traffic disruption on 25 August 2014 because an unusually large number of people had stayed on site on the Sunday night.

Trading Standards had tested 33 alcohol retailers and only one had failed on-site and had been dealt with immediately by Festival Republic. Two retailers had failed off-site and more resources would be targeted at local retailers in 2015.

Joint work had taken place between the Council and Vangaurdia, acoustic engineers, both on and off-site and there had been 17 complaints about noise. Updates had been posted on the web before and during the Festival and there had been no negative feedback. In addition changes made to the drop off point for shuttle buses had been successful, 132 food retailers had been inspected on and off-site and feedback from residents had been generally positive. There had been some issues around waste which would be addressed as part of a consent holders waste management plan in 2015. A residents debrief would take place on 8 December 2014 and all debrief reports would be collated and presented to Festival Republic.

Nicky Hodgson, Festival Republic, attended the meeting.

Resolved - That James Crosbie be thanked for his presentation.

**15. CULTURE & HERITAGE STRATEGY CONSUTLATION AND ENGAGEMENT:
RESULTS AND FEEDBACK / YEAR OF CULTURE 2016**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report outlining the key results from the 'Your Say: Arts, Heritage and Sport' consultation and a community engagement programme, which would help to shape Reading's new Cultural Heritage Strategy. The report also set out a proposal for a Reading Year of Culture in 2016. A copy of the full consultation report for 'Your Say: Arts, Heritage and Sport' was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that residents, visitors and businesses had been asked for their views on sport and culture in Reading as part of the 'Your Say: Arts, Heritage and Sport' consultation which had taken place from 9 June until 30 September 2014. The feedback from the consultation would help to shape Reading's new Culture and Heritage Strategy for which there was strong support and for the generation of ideas on how culture could play an even bigger role in promoting wellbeing and be an integral part of an even more vibrant and economically successful town. It had been proposed that a summary of the consultation feedback would be made available on the Council's web site and work would continue to develop the Strategy with the intention that a draft for consultation would be submitted to the next Committee meeting.

Emerging from the enthusiasm that had been generated by the consultation and the acknowledged need to raise the profile of cultural activity in the town was the concept of a 'Year of Culture' that would be owned and delivered by local people and organisations under the umbrella of the Cultural Partnership and would be

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championed by the Local Strategic Partnership. The Year of Culture 2016 would be a means of showcasing, enhancing, promoting and increasing engagement with the wide range of activities, events and networks that existed in many fields of arts and heritage.

Resolved -

- (1) That the results of the 'Your Say: Arts, Heritage and Sport' consultation be noted;**
- (2) That the next steps for developing the Culture and Heritage Strategy be noted;**
- (3) That the proposal for the development of a 'Year of Culture' for Reading in 2016 be endorsed.**

16. DEVELOPMENT OF A WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY FOR READING

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with information on the development of a Waste Minimisation Strategy and setting out a timetable for the consultation and implementation of the Strategy.

The report stated that as the Council services would soon be delivered on a neighbourhood basis, there was a real opportunity to consult and engage within neighbourhoods to promote waste minimisation on the doorstep and within communities and neighbourhood centres. Doorstep collections were carried out by the Council for general waste, recycling and green waste and additional recycling was available at bring-banks for glass, textiles, tetra-packs, foil, batteries, books and shoes. These waste streams were then recycled or disposed of at the re3 Materials Recycling Facility at Island Road. There were obvious environmental benefits of reuse and recycling but it was essential that the Council continued to promote reuse and recycling with a corresponding reduction in general waste which would be disposed of at a landfill site. A combination of housing growth, increasing landfill costs and increased levels of waste being disposed of, meant that the cost to the Council would increase unless general waste was converted to recycling. As a result of these challenges it had been proposed to produce a comprehensive Waste Minimisation Strategy which would set out how the Council was going to achieve this for the period 2015 to 2020, it would also form the basis for the future Strategy beyond 2020. The draft Strategy would have four key objectives:

- Increase recycling and re-use rates;
- Minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill;
- Increase understanding and engagement in waste and recycling for the local community and key stakeholders;
- Effective, efficient value for money delivery.

The Waste Minimisation Strategy would be supplemented by a suite of three supporting documents which would effectively expand on how the Strategy would be delivered. The three documents were as follows:

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- Implementation Plan;
- Action Plan;
- Neighbourhood Engagement Plan.

The report explained that the Strategy and supporting documents were being developed with internal stakeholders and these discussions would take place throughout November 2014 with the aim of having a first draft of the Strategy during December 2014. Once the draft had been completed it would be subject to an online consultation in order to gain wider feedback from key stakeholders and from neighbourhood communities.

With regard to curb-side recycling of glass Councillor Terry reported that there were 57 bottle bank sites in the Borough with 217 bottle banks and accordingly residual waste was comprised of only 5% glass going to the re3 facility at Island Road. The Love Clean Reading Teams were being restructured and the bulky waste policy would be reviewed and it was acknowledged that there was a need to engage more people in recycling and change peoples' behaviour.

Resolved -

- (1) That the need for a comprehensive Waste Minimisation Strategy be acknowledged and the proposed timetable for consultation and adoption be supported at a future meeting;**
- (2) That the Head of Transportation and Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods, be given delegated authority to develop and make changes to the Waste Minimisation Strategy throughout the consultation and development process as required;**
- (3) That consultation feedback and the final version of the Waste Minimisation Strategy be submitted to a future Committee meeting.**

17. LOVE CLEAN READING - UPDATE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating the Committee on the Love Clean Reading initiative. The preliminary list of roads, footpaths and carriageways that had been identified by Councillors and officers was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that the Love Clean Reading initiative had been highly successful, both from the perspective of results on the ground but also in the positive customer feedback that had been received. Deep cleans had been carried out in 134 streets and areas of open space throughout the Borough using a combination of in house staff, agency labour and sub-contractors and 154 tonnes of waste had been removed. It had achieved the aim of restoring areas of poor environmental quality to a high standard of quality and safety as well as improving the public perception of an area and neighbourhood services in general. Following the deep cleaning works 443 pre-paid response cards had been returned and 98% of respondents had said that the standard of cleanliness after the visit was good or above. The initiative had also thrown up a number of challenges for the emerging Neighbourhood Services, namely

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to prevent environmental deterioration in the first place and to design a schedule of deep cleaning for the Borough which was embedded within the normal business of the Service which was preventive rather than reactive. The report included a number of recommendations about how the lessons learnt from the initiative might inform the reshaping of Transportation and Streetcare Services and the Neighbourhood Agenda.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That all staff who had worked on the Love Clean Reading initiative be thanked;**
- (3) That regular update reports on the progress of Love Clean Reading initiatives within the emerging Neighbourhood and Waste Minimisation works programme be submitted to future Committee meetings.**

18. FLOATING SUPPORT CONTRACT

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that sought authorisation from the Committee to enter into a new contract for the Floating Support Service. An Equalities Impact Assessment had been carried out and was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the purpose of the Floating Support Service was to reduce the number of vulnerable households that could become homeless in the Borough by assisting them to sustain their tenancies. Wherever possible and appropriate to do so, the service would enable residents to remain in their own homes and gain the skills required to sustain their tenancies effectively into the future.

The report stated that it had been proposed that the new contract would be awarded to the winning tenderer in March 2015 at the completion of the tender evaluation process. This course of action would allow the minimum anticipated lead-in period for the implementation of the new contract arrangements. Delegated authority would therefore be required in order to award the contract within the required timeframe for the successful completion of the tender exercise. The anticipated start date of the contract would be 1 July 2015 for a period of three years, with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The current contract arrangements had been extended up to the end of September 2015, although subject to the successful completion of the tendering exercise the target was to decommission the contracts at the end of June 2015. It had been proposed that a detailed implementation plan would be agreed for the three months to June 2015 so that there was no disruption to the service.

Resolved - That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be given delegated authority to award the contract for the provision of the Floating Support Service in Reading for a period of three years, with

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an option to extend up to a maximum of three years, to the successful tenderer in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.17 pm).