

COUNCIL MEETING – 18 APRIL 2000

Present: Councillor Waite (Mayor);
Councillors Bello, Borgars, Canning, Day, Durkin, Edwards, Fenwick, Ferriday, Goodall, Green, Hanley, Hingley, Hughes, P Jones, T Jones, Lovelock, Morris, J Orton, M Orton, Page, Peak, Powers, Pugh, Putt, Ruhemann, Scaife, Silverman, Sheibani, Skeats, Sohpal, R Stainthorp, S Stainthorp, Sutton, Thomas, White, Wild, Williams, Winfield-Chislett and Yeo.

Apologies: Councillors Corti, Edwards and Hartley.

124. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) Councillor Maureen Lockey

The Mayor reported that Councillor Maureen Lockey had died on 5 April 2000.

He stated that Councillor Lockey had been first elected to the Council in 1983 and had served as Mayor in 1989. During her seventeen years on the Council, she had served on a large number of committees and represented the Council on many outside organisations, a selection of which he quoted. He commented that it was a tribute to her great courage that she had chosen to keep the burden of her illness to herself.

The Council then stood in silence as a tribute to her memory

(2) Retiring Councillors

The Mayor referred to the fact that Councillors Canning, Corti, Hughes and Yeo were to retire as Councillors at the forthcoming Elections, and thanked them for their hard work, humour and patience during their time on the Council.

(3) Mr Richard Tyndall

The Mayor referred to the fact that Richard Tyndall, Director of Environment, was shortly to leave the Council after 18 years service. He thanked Mr Tyndall for all his hard work and wished him well for the future.

(4) Councillor Sheibani

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Sheibani on having completed the London Marathon, which had been held on 16 April 2000.

125. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2000 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

126. PETITIONS

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The following petitions were presented in accordance with Standing Order No 8:

Request for Pelican Crossing in Burghfield Road

Ms R Richardson presented a petition, containing 361 signatures, in the following terms:-

“Following a meeting with our local Councillor, Mr Askar Sheibani to discuss the changing of the zebra crossing to a pelican crossing, we ask you to sign our petition to the Council asking for the pelican crossing in Burghfield Road”.

In his response, Councillor R. Stainthorp, Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, stated that the receipt of this petition had coincided with a request from local Ward Councillors to undertake a review of transport issues in the area, following the introduction of the Southcote Lane rising bollard. The review would look at local bus services and pedestrian and cycle links.

The consideration of upgrading this Zebra Crossing would be included within the area review and if improvements were merited, then funding would be sought for the scheme. This did mean that improvements in the short-term were unlikely, but this proposal might form part of the medium-term strategy.

127. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 9

(1) Ms C Wilton asked the Lead Member for Environment and Consumer Affairs:

Farmers' Market

“Could the Lead Member for Consumer Services tell me the current position and the future of the Farmers Market in Reading?”

REPLY by Councillor Morris (Lead Member for Environment and Consumer Affairs):

“I can confirm that The three trials last year based at Napier Road Car Park proved to be very successful with over 4000 customers attending the final November market.

The site was not suitable for a permanent market as it was a cause of traffic congestion on market days, was exposed to the vagaries of the weather and took too long and cost too much to set up each market.

A new site – The Cattle Market at Great Knollys Street – was agreed just after Christmas. It has many advantages such as cover, electrics on site, storage space, large car park and help to set up/take down.

At a meeting in mid Feb attended by 40 farmers/stallholders the dates for the year 2000 and the guidelines for the market were agreed.

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There are two markets planned each month – these started on April 1st. Numbers of stallholders attending the market will vary depending on season. The busiest markets will be June to October when the fruit and vegetable harvesting is at its peak. There will be some themed markets ie apple celebrations, children days etc.

The first market on April 1st had about 5000 customers. Some stallholders sold out. It was a great success.

A Farmers Market steering group has been established which will manage the market. The group consists of 10 farmers and council representatives. They will set themselves up as a community business. The cost of running each market is £400. The charge for pitches should cover these costs over the year and any excess will be put back into market promotion and encouraging more local food consumption in the Reading area.

The future of the market looks very healthy and will continue to grow throughout the year as it becomes established and shopping patterns change to take account of the fresh, locally produced food. Enquiries about the market come from all over the country as its reputation grows.”

- (2) Ms V Lloyd asked the Lead Member for Education:

Standards in Reading Schools

“Can the Lead Member for Education tell me how much money has been available to raise standards in Reading schools, since Reading became a Unitary Authority, and how much will be available next year?”

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Lead member for Education):

“The additional resources, outside schools’ delegated budgets, directly available to raise

Source	1998/99 £	1999/2000 £	2000/2001 £
DfEE Standards Fund	1086833	2199911	4071571
Additional RBC resources	8500	99000	102000
Total	1095333	2298911	4173571

These additional resources are provided by the government through its Standards Fund. The Rate of Grant for most aspects is 50%, therefore the Council has met approximately half the cost of these amounts and demonstrates the Labour Government and this Labour Council’s commitment to raising standards.”

- (3) Ms V Lloyd asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport:

Home Zones/20mph Speed Limits

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“Could the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport inform me what plans Reading Borough Council has to introduce Home Zones and 20mph speed limits outside schools and in other residential areas? How soon are we likely to see some of these schemes implemented? Will you be carrying out a review of such proposals in light of Government announcements?”

REPLY by Councillor R. Stainthorp (Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport):

“Central Government recently announced the casualty Reduction Targets for 2010.

In the Government’s action plan, they clearly state their commitment to support Local Authorities in introducing “Home Zone” schemes, which slow vehicles down and give more priority to walking and cycling, and “20mph Zones” with suitable traffic calming around schools and in residential areas.

Measures such as these will feature within the Council’s own strategy for meeting these new targets and Reading’s Road Safety Plan is currently being drafted for submission to the Government with the Local Transport plan. We are confident of producing a strong bid for funding, which will cover a 5 year period, and this will enable us to begin the process of installing this type of measures in many locations around the Borough.”

(4) Mr G. Hoskin asked the Lead Member for Education:

Education Consultations

“Could the Lead Member for Education tell me what steps have been taken to ensure that parents and the wider community have been fully consulted before major education decisions have been taken since Reading became a Unitary Authority?”

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Lead Member for Education):

“Since Reading Borough Council became Unitary Authority on the 1st April 1998 major public consultations have been held over:

- The Admission of Rising Fives to Primary Schools
- The Future of Christ Church Primary School
- The Provision of Primary Education in Caversham
- The Provision of Secondary Education in West Reading

This latter consultation is subject to a full report later on the Council agenda.

The Authority has also consulted widely in establishing its Early Years and Childcare Plan, its Class Size Plan, its School Organisation Plan and its Education Development Plan.

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In addition public meetings have been held on the future provision of Secondary Education in East Reading, while a consultation is planned during the summer term on the possible Amalgamation of George Palmer Infant and Junior Schools.

In all of the major consultations which I have outlined above, there has been a poster and publicity campaign in all the schools affected. Leaflets have been sent to all parents, including, where appropriate, local early years settings as well as schools. Leaflets have also been placed in libraries and in other community facilities, such as Doctors surgeries. Public meetings and informal 'drop-in' sessions have been held in the Christ Church, Caversham and West Reading consultations, while both in Caversham and in West Reading leaflets were distributed to every household in the affected areas."

128. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 10

- (1) Councillor Sohpal asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport:

Kings Road Bus Lane

"Could you please update the Council on the progress of the consultation on the Kings Road Bus Lane?"

REPLY by Councillor R. Stainthorp (Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport):

"We are now at the end of a second phase of consultation on the Kings Road outbound bus lane proposal. A second consultation leaflet has been distributed to 6,000 households in the area. The leaflet covers a revised scheme that has been developed to take on board comments from the first phase of consultation and covers Sidmouth Street as well as Eldon Road for inbound traffic. The leaflets were due back by 7 April and are currently being analysed. Results so far:

423 leaflets returned.
65% in favour of the proposal.
5% no view
30% don't support.

A public exhibition and meeting were also held on 31 March to seek comments on the revised scheme. 20 people attended the exhibition and 41 people attended the public meeting. Comments so far indicate that in general people support the principle of the outbound bus lane and, subject to resolving the detail of the traffic management measures in the surrounding St Johns Road and Eldon Terrace areas, residents are supportive of the revised scheme."

- (2) Councillor Hingley asked the Lead Member for Social Services and Health:

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Domestic Violence

“What action is being taken to progress the policy of opposition to Domestic Violence agreed at the Council Meeting in November?”

REPLY by Councillor Ruhemann (Lead Member for Social Services and Health):

“Early in the New Year the Mayor of Reading approached a wide range of organisations across the town asking them to give support to the policy of opposition to Domestic Violence and they were also invited to a public signing in the Civic Offices on the 8th March, International Women’s Day.

Those who signed the pledge included the Mayor, the leaders of the three political parties on this Council, the two Members of Parliament, the Bishop of Reading, leaders of the Roman Catholic, Free Church, Muslim and Hindu faiths, the Editors of the *Evening Post* and the *Reading Chronicle*, leading figures in the business community, representatives of all the major voluntary organisations in the town, and representatives from many local community groups.

The signing demonstrated an abhorrence of domestic violence across the town as a whole and I hope victims of domestic violence will take heart from this widespread understanding of their plight and the perpetrators be left in no doubt that they are without sympathy or support in our community. The ceremony featured on the BBC lunchtime news programme and on BBC Radio Berkshire as well as the local press.

The multi-agency strategy group on Domestic Violence is continuing and is working with the Area Child Protection Committee to help raise awareness of this issue, with a conference scheduled for later this year.

The Government has invited bids for projects on domestic violence under the banner of *Living without Fear* and the strategy group has submitted a funding bid for data collection and monitoring systems, multi-agency training for front line staff, general and specific publicity which is multi lingual, and follow up and legal advice for members of the public. If successful, this project will function under the auspices of the Crime & Disorder Partnership.

Domestic Violence was recognised in the Reading Crime Audit as a significant issue and I am delighted to say that this is taken up in the local Policing Plan published by the Thames Valley Police. The joint Crime Reduction Plan detailed a Domestic Violence Reduction Team as a priority project for future funding under the auspices of the Safer Reading Campaign. The East Reading Safer Communities Forum are also preparing some localised work on advice and support of women in that particular area of Reading.

The public statement of opposition to domestic violence made by this Council last year was a key example of Reading Council leading our community, in a way and on an issue that to the best of my knowledge has not happened elsewhere. What we have done since is to bring together the whole community

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of Reading in public support of that statement and taken a whole series of actions, with our partners, to make it effective. I would thank you, Mr Mayor, and all three parties for their support.”

- (3) Councillor Hanley asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport:

Speed Enforcement Fines

“Could the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport comment on the success of Thames Valley Police and its partners in its submission to be a pilot project with regard to the recycling of speed enforcement fines?”

REPLY by Councillor R. Stainthorp (Lead Member for Strategic planning and Transport):

“Thames Valley Police and its partners have been successful in their bid for inclusion in the speed camera Hypothecation scheme, which had its official Berkshire launch on the 7th April 2000 at the Transport Research Laboratory in Crowthorne. Reading Borough Council are working closely with Thames Valley Police, the DETR and other Local Authorities to meet the government’s target of a 40% reduction in road traffic casualties by the year 2010. The Thames Valley partners aim to achieve this by increased enforcement of the speed limits at sites with a casualty record through use of fixed and mobile speed cameras. It is hoped that an increase in enforcement will reduce the number of casualties whilst the increase in fines will be used to fund the pilot project.”

- (4) Councillor Page asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport:

Reading Business Community Seminar

“Does the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport feel that the Reading Business Community breakfast seminar “Working Together for a Sustainable Reading” was worthwhile?”

REPLY by Councillor R. Stainthorp (Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport):

“This meeting was very worthwhile as it gave us an invaluable input and insight from representatives of larger businesses in Reading on the concept of sustainable communities and what role they might be able to play in securing sustainable communities in Reading.

This meeting was held as part of our strategic dialogue on sustainable communities.

We began this dialogue following the consultation on the council’s vision document, Reading City 2020. From this consultation we quickly learnt that people wanted to explore in more depth and develop the concept of what

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sustainable communities in Reading might be. Developing Reading as a sustainable City is also one of our strategic aims.

We began the sustainable communities dialogue last November with a large meeting attended by over 100 community group representatives at which David Bellamy spoke. The Prudential sponsored this meeting and a video of the issues in the dialogue.

During January and February we ran several discussions at our regular Area Consultative Committees on the subject to enable more people to participate.

On 2nd March we held the business meeting which was attended by over 100 people representing 90 of Reading's bigger businesses and statutory agencies. An expert on sustainability and land use/development from the university spoke at this meeting and the Prudential again sponsored it.

We are planning to hold one further meeting in June which will be an action planning event. The purpose of this will be to invite people who have participated in the dialogue so far to work with us to plan the actions and changes that need to happen if sustainable communities are to become a reality in Reading in the years to come.. At each of the stages of the consultation so far we have asked for interested people to help us with this work, so far we have over 70 who have expressed an interest in working with us.

This dialogue is the first time the council has undertaken such a strategic piece of work in this way. It is strategic because the results will help the council produce a number of strategies and policies that we are required to produce by government; such as an Agenda 21 strategy, an Economic Development strategy, a Local Transport Plan, a Development Plan and others. We are required to consult on these during their production so by being through and getting this right should help us reduce costs and speed things up in the longer term because we won't have to consult several times on a lot of overlapping issues."

- (5) Councillor R. Stainthorp asked the Leader of the Council:

Partnership Working

"Reading has been identified as a Best Value Pilot for its partnership working across various sectors of the town. Would the Leader of the Council give me an update on the Council's progress in Partnership working?"

REPLY by Councillor Sutton (Leader of the Council):

"I would like to thank Councillor R Stainthorp for this question, which is worthy of a fairly detailed reply.

A partnership in relation to the activities of Reading Borough Council's Best Value pilot is defined as follows:

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- A. An activity involving cross-boundary working by a service or services of Reading Borough Council with individuals, organisations or institutions, in the public, private or tertiary sector, or combination thereof, which is designed to have a definite and clearly identified purpose and will result in a quantifiable outcome.

This activity must be susceptible to recognised methods of evaluation and audit prior to its inception, by which it can be monitored and benchmarked in accordance with the principles of Best Value.

- B. The practices of dialogue with the community for the purposes of consultation, participation and feedback to gather information on service provision, to identify community needs and to empower the community in the authority’s decision making process.

In 1997 at the beginning of the Best Value Pilot process the Council observed that it was working with over 90 individual partners in approximately 150 partnerships.

Following the transition to unitary status, the number of partnerships the Council is involved with increased to over 250 separate partnerships.

The following table is an estimation of the number and types of partnerships that exist across the authority. This was part of the analysis conducted by Newchurch & Co.

Number of Different Partnerships Across Service Areas						
		B	C	D	E	
Construction & Property	3	5	3	3	5	
DSO	4	15	3			
Economic Development	2			5	1	
Education	5		4		7	
Environment	2	3	4		6	
Professional Support Services	12	10	15	7	15	
Housing	5	7	15	5	15	
IT		1				
Sport & Leisure	5	4	4	3	5	
Benefit Services	2	1	3			
Waste Management	2	2	2			
Social Services (41 in total)						
Total	43	47	53	23	54	261

Key

	A partnership involving 2 or more local authorities
B	A partnership involving the local authority and a private sector organisation
C	A partnership involving the local authority and one or more voluntary organisations
D	A partnership involving one or more local authorities and one or more private, voluntary or public sector organisations

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E	A partnership involving a combination of public, private and voluntary organisations
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When Cllr Mike Orton and I held a meeting with Newchurch to discuss this partnership working, we found that we could add a wide range of other partners to their list – notably WOMAD and the Reading Rock Festival.

The Best Value Pilot study into partnership working has identified the following information:

- The Council seeks to use partnership working to provide additional services to the people of Reading. The Council doesn't use partnerships to replace in-house provision of statutory services
- Partnerships are initiated from all levels of the organisation
- The monitoring of partnerships is determined by their size and perceived importance
- Members are significantly involved in the development and monitoring of a significant number of the Council's partnerships
- Members are more likely to be involved in large scale or strategic partnerships, or in partnerships that have a high level of interface with the general public
- The majority of service partnerships are contractual arrangements, although the Council does operate a large number of strategic and not-for-profit partnerships.

The Best Value Pilot

On 1 April 1998 Reading Borough Council was named as one of 37 Best Value Pilots. The purpose of the pilots was to examine how local authorities could develop the 12 principles of Best Value into operational practice, and therefore improve service delivery.

The essential aim of Reading's Best Value pilot was to look at the contribution that 'cross boundary' working (partnerships) could make to service delivery. In order to do this the pilot had four specific aims:

1. ***Evaluating Partnerships*** - To develop and implement a mechanism that can facilitate measurable improvements in the service delivery of a partnership.
2. ***Analysis of Existing Partnerships*** - To conduct a quantitative and qualitative audit of the Council's partnership work.
3. ***Develop new partnerships*** – To examine new ways that the authority could work in partnership to increase the range and quality of services it provides.
4. ***Guide to Partnerships*** - To publish a guide to the full range of partnership opportunities per service, as established by the project, including advice on best practices and principles and how to avoid failures.

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Reading's Best Value Pilot officially ended on 31 March 2000, below is a brief summary of the work that was conducted within it.

1. Evaluating Partnerships – the Council's Best Value Steering Group developed a mechanism to evaluate the operational management of partnerships. This mechanism allows partnerships to ensure that all the relevant objectives of each of the individual partners are being met and that each of the partners is fulfilling its obligations in relation to the partnership.

The mechanism was tested on a wide range of partnerships across the Council and proved a successful management tool.

2. The BV Steering Group conducted an audit of a selection of Council partnerships (we had to use a selection as the Council has so many partnerships) to examine such factors as the drivers for establishing partnerships, partnership finance, monitoring, Member involvement, etc. The results of this are currently being analysed.
3. Developing new partnerships – Members gave their endorsement for services to examine how partnerships could expand and improve the range and quality of services that the Council offers. This has produced some major successes – Housing PFI, Green Freight, etc....
4. Guide to partnerships – the results of the above and other separate studies that the Council has been involved in (DETR study into partnerships, risk analysis of partnerships conducted by Zurich Municipal, etc), are being fed into the Guide to Partnership Working. This is currently under production within the Council's Policy Unit and will be ready shortly.

The Council's pilot is soon to be examined by the Warwick Business School on behalf of the DETR.”

- (6) Councillor Williams asked the Lead Member for Social Services and Health:

Social Services Homes Inspections

“Could the Lead Member for Social Services & Health tell me what percentage of:

- a) RBC Children's Homes

and

- b) RBC Old People's Homes

have been inspected at the statutory frequency in 1999-2000 and were any serious adverse comments made?”

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REPLY by Councillor Ruhemann (Lead Member for Social Services and Health):

“I am pleased to say that in 1999-2000:

- (a) 100% of children’s homes were inspected to the statutory frequency
- (b) 100% of Old People’s Homes were inspected to the statutory frequency.

Furthermore, no serious deficiencies were identified for either group.”

- (7) Councillor Page asked the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport:

39 Castle Street

“Would the Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport comment on continued deterioration of number 39 Castle Street and would he not agree that the seeming inability of this authority to prevent the wanton neglect of derelict listed buildings in the Borough, conflicts markedly with all our policy statements?”

REPLY by Councillor R. Stainthorp (Lead Member for Strategic planning and Transport):

“The Council has over a period of years granted a number of planning and listed building consents relating to 39 Castle Street which is a three storey Grade II Listed Building . These include the removal of existing shop front and reinstatement of windows and change of use to offices with ground floor retail (A1 Use) and internal and external alterations.

Planning Committee last considered a report by the Head of Planning and Transport regarding the condition of 39 Castle Street in June 1998 when it was reported that the owners had told the Council that they intended to commence refurbishment of the building for office use in May 1998 but had delayed in order to enter into discussions with a Housing Association regarding potential purchase of the building. A temporary but full cover of the roof had been undertaken, scaffolding supports within the building and ties across it had been checked and all ground floor window and openings were made secure. Vegetation growing out of the roof and the rear of the building was also removed. A visit by the Council Conservation Advisor in 1998 found that except for the need to secure openings on the upper floors, the building was of a condition not to cause immediate concern or deterioration or the need to serve a wind and weather proofing repairs notice. Planning Committee authorised officers to write to the owners of the site and take appropriate action to bring the temporary repairs up to scratch, to monitor the condition of the building and report on the current development situation at the premises.

Since 1998 the owners have been discussing the potential purchase of the building by a Housing Association for conversion to flats. The Council wrote

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to the owners again in February this year regarding the continued absence of repair and restoration work. The owners replied that the Housing Association still appeared to wish to purchase the building. However in view of the considerable delay, their architects had met planning officers in November 1999 to discuss viable schemes for redeveloping the building themselves, including retaining the front and rear facades and removal of all interior features. They also confirmed that the building had been inspected by an architect specialising in works to historic buildings who was satisfied that the building was adequately protected and stabilised for the time being and that the building had not seriously deteriorated. They stated that they appreciate the current condition of the building does not contribute to the street scene and are keen to see the building brought back into productive use at the earliest opportunity.

The housing association concerned has confirmed that no contractual arrangement exists between themselves and the owners. As agreement could not be reached regarding a purchase price, negotiations had ceased in October 1999.

With regard to possible further action by the Council, the policy context is provided by Policy CUD 3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. This states that the Council will use its powers to secure the preservation of a listed building where the fabric of the building is not being maintained to its satisfaction. It is clear that 39 Castle Street remains in an unrepaired and unrestored state although it appears to be weather proofed. However as there is no indication when an acceptable repair and restoration scheme will take place it is proposed to report on the building at the next available meeting of Planning Applications Committee in order to decide what further action if any should be taken by the Council. The report will be preceded by a letter to the owners requesting their intended course of action and informing them that the Council is considering all the options available to it.

If the Council considers that formal action is required, the potential options open to the Council include the serving of a notice to make the premises wind and weatherproof OR to serve a full repairs notice.”

- (8) Councillor Day asked the Lead Member for Environment and Consumer Affairs:

Doorstep Recycling of Waste Materials

“As Reading Borough Council was one of the first Councils to recycle waste materials, will the Lead Member give urgent attention to the possible introduction of doorstep collection for recycling in Reading?”

REPLY by Councillor Morris (Lead Member for Environment and Consumer Affairs):

“As you will be aware Reading Borough Council has recently submitted an application to the Government for Private Finance Initiative funding for the

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development of a sustainable waste management service. This is being done as part of our continuing partnership with Wokingham District Council and Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

Any new waste management contractor will be required to achieve challenging recycling targets that will almost certainly require the introduction of a borough wide kerbside collection.

It is however prudent to delay the introduction of a borough wide kerbside collection until the outcome of the forthcoming tendering process so that we can be sure any collection method and range of materials collected fits in as part of an integrated scheme.

I am, however, keen that we are not static on this issue and to that end have instructed officers to investigate the setting up of a kerbside recycling trial collection. While not providing all residents in the Borough with a collection of recyclables from home, it would be valuable in terms of operational knowledge, participation rates etc.

Reading residents should still be pleased with their overall recycling performance. We should soon be able to announce a recycling rate of 10% for the year 1999/2000 which is above average for the Country (average is 8.9%), and is close to the rate achieved by a number of Authorities that do offer kerbside collections.

It is also worth noting that we have recently initiated a green waste recycling scheme, with green garden waste being collected and then recycled by our landfill operator and this should push our recovery figure up higher in the coming year.”

As there was insufficient time, pursuant to Standing Order 10(4), for the following questions to be put, written answers would be provided:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Councillor Green	Caversham Park Primary School	Councillor Lovelock
Councillor Pugh	CCTV	Councillor Powers
Councillor Pugh	Councillors' Courier	Councillor Sutton
Councillor Green	Trinity Day Centre	Councillor Ruhemann
Councillor Fenwick	Signs in Parks and Open Spaces	Councillor Hartley
Councillor Fenwick	School Caretakers' Housing	Councillor M Orton

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129. CAPITAL SPENDING PROPOSALS, 2000/2001

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report setting out a request for scheme and spending approval for new Capital Schemes to the value of £12.4 million, in addition to approved expenditure of £9.9million, giving a total approved programme of £22.3 million, of which £21.2million was planned to be spent in 2000/01, with the balance of £1.1 million falling to be spent in 2001/02.

The schemes concerned were listed in Appendix 1 to the report, as follows:

NEW CAPITAL SCHEME APPROVALS FOR 2000/01

	2000/01 CAPITAL £000	2001/02 CAPITAL £000	REVENUE EFFECT £000
HOUSING			
SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEMES	3116		-228
RENOVATION GRANTS	925		88
HOUSING SURVEY	50		0
WINDOW REPLACEMENTS	1086		0
FIRE PROTECTION WORKS	400		0
RETENTIONS	60		0
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS	270		0
MAJOR VOIDS	460		0
	6367	0	-140
EDUCATION			
CAPITAL GRANTS TO SCHOOLS	500		58
CAVERSHAM SCHOOL PROVISION	400	400	92
FEASIBILITY STUDIES & DESIGN WORKS FOR FUTURE SCHOOL PROVISION (WEST READING, ASHMEAD, PRIMARY SCHOOLS)	400		46
EDUCATION PROVISION (AMERSHAM RD SECTION 106)	37		0
WORKS TO HIGHDOWN SCHOOL	194		22
	1531	400	218
ENVIRONMENT/TRANSPORT/CONSUMER SERVICES			
WORKS TO CREMATORS	25		3
HIGHWAYS WORK (AMERSHAM RD SECTION 106)	20		0
HEALTH & SAFETY WORKS TO BUILDINGS	106		12
	151	0	15
SOCIAL SERVICES			
HEALTH & SAFETY WORKS TO BUILDINGS	180		21

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	180	0	21
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S/CORPORATE			
WORKS TO THE CIVIC OFFICES			
- WINDOW BEADING	25		3
-REPAIRS TO STRUCTURAL COLUMNS	50		6
-NEW REFRIGERANT GASES: CHILLER	32		4
AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES	30		3
ORACLE ARCHAEOLOGY WORKS	75		9
	212	0	25
ARTS & LEISURE			
HEALTH & SAFETY WORKS TO BUILDINGS	107		12
PLAY AREAS (AMERSHAM RD SECTION 106)	38		0
	145	0	13
TOTAL	8586	400	151

EXPENDITURE LINKED TO SCA'S/CAPITAL GRANT

	2000/01	2001/02	REVENUE
	CAPITAL	CAPITAL	EFFECT
	£000	£000	£000
HOUSING			
DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT	453	0	21
TRANSPORT			
READING URBAN AREA PACKAGE	1768		203
CHARGING DEVELOPMENT POLICY	100		12
BRIDGES & CARRIAGEWAYS	534		61
	2402	0	276
EDUCATION			
CAPITAL GRANTS TO SCHOOLS	304	54	41
VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS	43		5
SEED CHALLENGE FUNDING	105		12
ACCESS INITIATIVES	70		8
	522	54	66
TOTAL	3377	54	363

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TOTAL APPROVALS REQUESTED

11963	454	514
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NOTE: TRANSITION SCA OF £1.978M AGREED WHEN BUDGET SET IN FEBRUARY

The following motion was moved by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor Lovelock and CARRIED:

- “(1) That scheme and spending approval be given to the Capital Schemes listed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) That the relevant Corporate Director, in consultation with the Head of Finance and relevant Lead Member, be given delegated authority to finalise details of individual schemes and programmes within the spending approval given, and record the delegation exercised in the Decision Book.”

The following amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Fenwick and seconded by Councillor Green, but was subsequently withdrawn by the mover, with the consent of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 14(11).

“In resolution (1), add the following words:

‘subject to:

- (a) the deletion of scheme and spending approval in relation to Area Consultative Committees; and
- (b) the addition of the following scheme and spending approval:

Education

	2000/01 Capital	2001/02 Capital	Revenue Effect
	£000	£000	£000

Crime Reduction Measures	30		3’ “
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Resolved –

- (1) That scheme and spending approval be given to the Capital Schemes listed in Appendix 1 to the report and set out above;
- (2) That the relevant Corporate Director, in consultation with the Head of Finance and relevant Lead Member, be given delegated authority to finalise details of individual schemes and programmes within the spending approval given, and record the delegation exercised in the Decision Book.

COUNCIL MEETING – 18 APRIL 2000

130. BROAD STREET EAST PEDESTRIANISATION

The Director of Environment submitted a report, further to discussion at the meeting of the Policy and Implementation Committee of 11 April 2000, informing Councillors of the nine tenders returned for the Broad Street East Pedestrianisation scheme, and recommending acceptance of the tender submitted by Ashridge Construction Ltd.

The following motion was moved by Councillor R.Stainthorp and seconded by Councillor Lovelock and CARRIED:

Resolved –

That the tender from Ashridge Construction Ltd to construct Broad Street East be accepted in the sum of £849,227.48, this being the lowest tender.

131. SECONDARY EDUCATION IN WEST READING

The Director of Education and Community Services submitted a report on the outcome of the consultation process with regard to secondary education in West Reading and making specific recommendations with regard to the closure of Meadway School and the significant enlargement of Prospect Technology College.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Lovelock and seconded by Councillor P.Jones and CARRIED:

Resolved -

- (1) That the Director of Education and Community Services be authorised to commence the statutory consultation process in respect of the closure of Meadway School and the significant enlargement of Prospect School.
- (2) That the Director of Education and Community Services be authorised to work with headteachers of both schools in providing a programme of support, explanation and reassurance to parents as the proposals develop.
- (3) That the Council continue to work with the Governing Bodies of Prospect and Meadway Schools, the relevant professional associations and trade unions to secure the interests of all staff currently employed at the two schools.
- (4) That the Council continue to work with the Governing Body of Prospect Technology College to develop plans for adequate and appropriate accommodation for likely future pupil numbers in the enlarged Prospect Technology College.

132. REVIEW OF SERVICES TO ROUGH SLEEPERS

COUNCIL MEETING – 18 APRIL 2000

Further to Minute 78 of the Council Meeting held on 21 December 1999, Councillor Hanley, Chair of the Social Exclusion Scrutiny Panel, introduced the Panel's report on its review of services to rough sleepers.

Councillor M. Orton, Lead Member for Housing, responded to Councillor Hanley in accordance with Standing Order 25, stating that the report would be submitted to the Executive Board, following which the matter would be considered by the Council

133. REVIEW OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SERVICE – FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute 78 of the Council Meeting held on 21 December 1999, Councillor T. Jones, Chair of the Best Value and Audit Scrutiny Panel, introduced the Panel's report on its review of the Electoral Registration Service.

Councillor Page, Lead Member for Corporate Services, responded to Councillor T. Jones in accordance with Standing Order 25, stating that the report would be submitted to the Executive Board, following which the matter would be considered by the Council.

134. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Chief Executive submitted a report summarising the response to the consultation on the draft Economic Development Strategy 2000/2001, and presentg the amended version of the strategy for approval by Council.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Silverman and seconded by Councillor Peak and CARRIED:

Resolved –

- (1) That the outcome of the consultation on the draft Economic Development Strategy 2000/2001 be noted;
- (2) That the amended strategy be agreed for publication.

135. COMMUNITY CARE PLAN

The Director of Social Services and Housing submitted a report on the document "Community Care in Reading: Achievements, Strategy and Objectives 2000-2001". This document was an update to the Community Care Plan 1999-2002, which had been approved by the Social Services Committee at its meeting on 30 March 1999.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Ruhemann and seconded by Councillor Thomas and CARRIED:

Resolved –

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That the overall direction and content of the document “Community Care in Reading: Achievements, Strategy and Objectives 2000-2001”, be approved.

136. VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT

The Director of Education and Community Services submitted a report advising the Council of the Reading Voluntary Sector Compact, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Powers and seconded by Councillor Hingley and CARRIED:

Resolved –

- (1) That the Voluntary Sector Compact, as attached at Appendix A to the report by the Head of Community Services, be approved;
- (2) That the Head of Community Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Member for Community Services, to make minor amendments to reflect comments made by the Council’s partners in the voluntary sector.

137. IMPROVEMENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ANTI-FRAUD TEAM

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report setting out the improvements in performance achieved by the Anti Fraud Team over the last year. The report stated that, for 1999/2000, the Anti Fraud Team had claimed Weekly Benefit Saving of £564,848, which was some £30,261 over and above the target set by the Government. In addition a further claim of £27,000 had been made to the Benefits Agency in respect of successful prosecutions for fraud.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor T. Jones and CARRIED:

Resolved –

That the improved performance achieved by the Anti-Fraud team over the last year be noted.

138. SOUTH-WEST READING PLANNING BRIEF – REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive submitted a report containing details of the results of the public consultation exercise on the draft revised South-West Reading Planning Brief, responding to the comments received and suggesting proposed changes to the Brief.

The report sought the Council’s approval to the proposed changes and to the adoption of the revised planning brief, as contained at Appendix A, as supplementary planning guidance.

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The following motion was moved by Councillor R. Stainthorp and seconded by Councillor Silverman and CARRIED:

Resolved –

(1) That the comments arising from the public consultation exercise be noted, and the Council's response to them as summarised in Section 4, be endorsed;

(2) That the proposed amendments to the brief, shown in bold italics in Appendix A to the report, be approved, subject to paragraph 5.3.10 being amended to read as follows:

“It is crucial that new residents feel connected to the surrounding area, and particularly with the existing residential communities of Whitley. If housing is to be acceptable on this site, it must be accompanied by a commitment from the developers to work with the Council to identify and secure opportunities for achieving continuity between this development and nearby residential communities and the wider area. In order to provide a framework for this objective and to carry it forward, a study will be undertaken to identify and assess opportunities for securing its realisation within a reasonable time.”

(3) That the amended revised planning brief in Appendix A, as further amended above, be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

139. LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Pursuant to Notice, it was moved by Councillor Fenwick and seconded by Councillor Borgars and CARRIED as follows:

Resolved –

That Council agrees that the subject of the next scrutiny to be undertaken by the Leisure and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel should be “Enforcement in the Environment Division.”

(The meeting closed at 9.35pm).