

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 28 JUNE 2016

**Present:** Councillor Ayub (Mayor);

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ballsdon, Chrisp, Davies, Dennis, Duveen, Eden, K Edwards, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Grashoff, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Livingston, Lovelock, Maskell, McElligott, McGonigle, McKenna, O'Connell, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Singh, Skeats, Stanford-Beale, Steele, Terry, Tickner, Vickers, White, J Williams, R Williams and Woodward.

**Apologies:** Councillors D Edwards, McDonald, Rodda and Stevens.

### 15. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Mayor referred to Jo Cox, the MP for Batley and Spen, who had been tragically murdered in a horrendous crime outside her constituency surgery in Birstall, West Yorkshire on 16 June 2016. The Council stood in silence in her memory.
- The Mayor also mentioned the result of the referendum about whether the United Kingdom and Northern Island should remain a member of the European Union, which had been held on 23 June 2016. He said that Reading had voted to remain a member of the EU, which was of course different from the national result overall and feelings were running high on both sides about the outcome in Reading and across the country. The Mayor urged the people of Reading to work together to ensure Reading's proud tradition as a thriving multi-cultural town was celebrated and we continued to welcome people from elsewhere, whether it be from the rest of the UK, from Europe or from the rest of the world. He emphasised that there was no place for division, hatred or intolerance in Reading.
- The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lovelock, to pay tribute to Ian Wardle, the Council's Managing Director, who would be leaving Reading at the beginning of July to take up the appointment of Chief Executive of Thirteen Group, a major housing landlord based in the north-east of England. Councillor Lovelock thanked Mr Wardle for his contribution to Reading over the past three and half years as Managing Director and wished him every success in his new role.

### 16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### 17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1.	Tanja Rebel	LED Street Lighting	Cllr Page

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### 18. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 10

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1.		WITHDRAWN	
2.	Cllr Steele	Potholes in the Borough's Roads	Cllr Page
3.	Cllr White	Cuts to Council Walking Programme	Cllr Hoskin
4.	Cllr J Williams	Benefits of Sport	Cllr Gittings
5.	Cllr Ballsdon	Idling Taxi Engines	Cllr Page

### 19. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - RENT SETTING 2016/17

Further to Minute 10 of the Policy Committee meeting held on 13 June 2016, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report recommending changing Council housing rents and service charges for 2016/17. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - PFI Area Rent Setting Options;
- Appendix B - Housing Revenue Account: 2015/16 Outturn and 2016/17 Budget Summary;
- Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment.

The report set out the recommendation of the Policy Committee to change Council housing rents and service charges for 2016/17, in the context of recently passed legislation mandating a 1% rent reduction each year for four years for most social housing tenants. A 1.98% rent decrease on 3 October 2016 was proposed, which would equate to a full year effect in 2016/17 of the required decrease of 1%.

The report explained that there were exemptions from the 1% reduction: for property that was subject to a PFI scheme (for all years), and for supported housing (which included sheltered housing and extra care housing) and temporary housing for homeless households (for one year). Rents for the exempt types of accommodation could be increased in line with the Council's adopted rent policy of CPI + 1%, which for 2016/17 would equate to a rise of 0.9%. Changes to service charges could also be implemented applying existing policies.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor James and CARRIED:

**Resolved -**

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Policy Committee held on 13 June 2016 (Minute 10 refers), the following be approved:

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- (a) That all rents for general needs accommodation be reduced by 1.98% from Monday 3 October 2016 (thus equating to a full year effect of a decrease of 1% in 2016/17) and that a full year effect increase in service charge be implemented from 3 October 2016;
- (b) That rents for supported and temporary accommodation be increased by 0.9% (CPI in September 2015 of -0.1% +1%) from 3 October 2016, in line with the Council's adopted rent policy, and that service charges also be adjusted from 3 October 2016 in line with agreed policy;
- (c) That officers be asked to report further to an appropriate Committee on the impact of Government legislation on the viability of the Housing Revenue Account to inform decisions for future rent setting policy.

(The meeting closed at 7.22 pm).