

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 26 JUNE 2018

Present: Councillor D Edwards (Mayor);

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Davies, Eden, K Edwards, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, James, Jones, Kaur, Khan, Lovelock, Manghnani, Maskell, McDonald, McEwan, McGonigle, McKenna, O'Connell, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, D Singh, Skeats, Stanford-Beale, Stevens, Terry, Vickers, Warman, White and J Williams.

Apologies: Councillors Grashoff, R Singh, R Williams and Woodward.

14. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) The Mayor announced, as previously reported at Policy Committee on 11 June 2018, that the Head of Legal & Democratic Services had exercised his delegation at the request of the Conservative Group Leader to appoint Councillor McDonald to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees' Sub-Committee.
- (b) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5(3)(a), the Mayor announced she had decided to change the order of business on the agenda to enable item 4 'Petitions' and item 7 'Leisure Procurement' to be taken concurrently immediately following item 6 'Questions from Councillors'.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

16. PETITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

Jeremy Muscroft and Katie Hooper presented a petition in the following terms:

RG50 Make a Big Splash !!

We the undersigned residents of Reading and its environs, fully support the need for a new 50m swimming pool facility being opened within 3 years of Reading Borough Council closing Reading Central Swimming pool. We call upon RBC to:

- Work with the residents, and Aquatic Clubs of Reading and the ASA to deliver this much needed facility; and
- Ensure that it is opened by 1 January 2021 at the very latest.

In his response, Councillor Hoskin (Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing & Sport) stated:

Thank you Mr Muscroft and Ms Hooper. As you are aware the Council shares your desire to deliver much improved swimming facilities for Reading and has embarked on a process for achieving this. This has involved the planned closure of outdated, ageing facilities at Central and Arthur Hill pools; the development of a demountable pool at

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Rivermead, that opened in January this year, to provide some continuity of provision; and the procurement of a new leisure operator to manage existing retained facilities and to develop new pools, including a competition standard pool with provision for diving to replace Central. This procurement process has commenced and it is anticipated that a new leisure operator will be awarded a contract in June of next year. On that timescale it is eminently possible that new facilities could be open by the 1st of January 2021 but I cannot guarantee that at this stage given the many variables and uncertainties when delivering major construction projects.

With regard to a 50m pool, the Council is not specifying that this is essential and nor is it ruling it out and we will ensure that those bidding for the contract are fully aware of the aspirations of our aquatics clubs and others for such provision. If a 50m pool is affordable then I can assure everyone in Reading that we will work hard to deliver it. It cannot be repeated enough that for a council that has suffered over £50 million per year national government cuts to its budget affordability is critical.

I am also aware that many of the members of the aquatics clubs of Reading live outside of the Borough and pay their council tax to neighbouring boroughs. This is not their fault but is a result of the ridiculous council boundaries we work with. However I do urge anyone here tonight who lives in a neighbouring council area to contact their councillors and demand a financial contribution towards a competition pool for our region.

I would also like to thank the RG50 campaign and Mr Muscroft and Ms Hooper for making clear on their public website and petition site that their campaign is explicitly for Reading to build one 50m competition pool rather than the two pools we have planned. RG50 may well be right that, in their words, a 50m pool “is cheaper to build and more economical to operate than two 25m pools on separate sites.”

This Council does not agree to drop our plans to build a new leisure pool for East Reading. As Lead Councillor I am particularly concerned that we provide convenient local access to swimming for all of Reading’s communities and this includes provision of a pool at Palmer Park. This is a commitment of this council and was a manifesto commitment on which Reading Labour Party fought and won the recent council elections. In this context the Council will be seeking to deliver a major and significant improvement in the quality of swimming facilities for all in the Borough whilst ensuring affordability and value for money. We cannot agree to sacrifice a new and permanent pool for East Reading in order to deliver a 50m pool.

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

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1.	Trevor Teer	Gladman Developments	Cllr Page
2.	Julian Ansell	Tree Planting by Developers	Cllr Page
3.	Peter Burt	Sports Forum	Cllr Hoskin

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4.	Roger Lightfoot	New 50m Swimming Pool	Cllr Hoskin
5.	Anne Jessel	New 50m Swimming Pool	Cllr Hoskin
6.	WITHDRAWN		
7.	Tamzin Morphy	East Reading MRT	Cllr Page
8.	Veronica Leeke	Gladman Developments	Cllr Page

As there was insufficient time, pursuant to Standing Order 9(6), a written reply to Question 8 above would be provided in accordance with Standing Order 9(8).

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

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

	<u>Questioner</u>	Subject	Answer
1.	Cllr White	Recycling	Cllr James
2.	Cllr Barnett-Ward	New Secondary School	Cllr Pearce
3.	Cllr Rowland	Station Hill	Cllr Page
4.	Cllr Emberson	Universal Credit	Cllr Lovelock
5.	Cllr J Williams	Swimming and Leisure Facilities	Cllr Hoskin
6.	Cllr D Singh	Road Surfacing	Cllr Page

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

19. LEISURE PROCUREMENT

Jeremy Muscroft and Katie Hooper addressed the Council on the topic of the petition as set out in Minute 16 above, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8(6)(f).

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the Council's strategic approach to the improvement and future management of its leisure provision including, in particular, swimming pools. The report had been prepared in response to and to inform a debate about the petition, which had been received, entitled 'RG50 Make a Big Splash', and having been signed by approximately 2,700 people allowed the Lead Petitioner to request that the issues raised should be debated by the-Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8(6)(e).

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The report explained that Reading had a range of leisure facilities that were of mixed quality and the Council had identified the need for investment to modernise the leisure estate. The Council recognised that the provision of suitable and readily accessible sports facilities underpinned participation in sports and physical activity and supported the delivery of the social and economic benefits that could be attributed to an active community. Reading needed a leisure offer that was aligned with the Council's wider policies and priorities, including public health objectives and tackling inequality.

The report stated that the Policy Committee had previously endorsed the key findings of a 'Leisure Review' carried out by external consultants and the recommended way forward. The findings of the facilities needs assessment were that whilst there was sufficient pool space in the Borough the quality of provision needed upgrading. The options appraisal recommended the replacement of the most outdated facilities with more modern cost-effective leisure facilities that would also offer a much better service to residents and users. Specific proposals included: a new competition standard pool and related indoor leisure provision, including sports hall, to replace Central Pool; a new 'neighbourhood' pool at Palmer Park to replace Arthur Hill Pool; and investment in other retained facilities. Re-provision of diving was also explicitly incorporated. Policy Committee had also agreed a planned closure of Central Pool with provision of a demountable pool at Rivermead to provide continuity of provision. The Policy Committee, at its meeting on the 31 October 2016, had endorsed the work being undertaken to progress the procurement process via a design, build, operate and manage (DBOM) contract. The nature of the specification that had been agreed by Policy Committee was included in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

The report stated that the procurement process had now formally commenced with the specification outlining the Council's requirements whilst providing bidders the flexibility to develop the best possible solution and deliver the optimum scheme whilst meeting affordability criteria and delivering the anticipated savings on current costs that the Council was required to make. It was anticipated that the contract would be awarded to the successful tenderer in June 2019 with the operator taking on responsibility for managing facilities from September 2019 following a mobilisation period. It was expected that new facilities to be developed under the DBOM contract would come on stream approximately 18 months after the award of contract, in January 2021, although because of the complexities of major construction projects this timetable could not be guaranteed at this stage. Consultation with key user groups, including the aquatics clubs, had commenced and the results of this consultation would be fed into the procurement process to inform bidding operators as they developed their proposals.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Hoskin and seconded by Councillor Gavin and CARRIED:

Resolved -

- (1) That the current position regarding the leisure procurement and the anticipated timetable for letting this contract as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report be noted.
- (2) That the procurement strategy and associated specification, which had been prepared in accordance with decisions taken at the Policy

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Committee meeting on the 31 October 2016 (Minute 48 refers) as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report be noted.

20. SHAPING READING'S FUTURE: OUR CORPORATE PLAN 2018-21

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking approval of a new Corporate Plan - 'Shaping Reading's Future: Our Corporate Plan 2018-21' to reflect the refreshed priorities of the Council set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which had been published at the Council meeting on 27 February 2018 (Minute 34 refers). The Plan was a forward looking document concentrating on the Council's key service priorities over the next three years and would provide focus to ensure that the right priorities were set and as many services were safeguarded as possible to meet Reading's challenges. In 2017/18 the Council had worked with partners at Reading University and businesses to develop a new Reading 2050 vision document which had been launched in October 2017. This document set out a shared view of key priorities for the future of Reading. The Council, in its role as community leader, had endorsed this vision to work alongside other agencies and organisations to realise the ambitions, which were reflected in the plan alongside the Council's refreshed priorities. The Corporate Plan was appended to the report for approval and outlined the following:

- The context for the Council's service delivery;
- The Council's contribution to Shaping Reading's Future; and
- What the Council would measure to show the difference that was being made by concentrating on the refreshed priorities.

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

Resolved -

That the Corporate Plan 2018-21, Shaping Reading's Future, as attached to the report at Appendix 1, be approved.

21. UTILISATION OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS TO PUMP PRIME SAVINGS DELIVERY, SERVICE TRANSFORMATION AND MANAGE DEMAND

The Director of Resources submitted a report on the use of capital receipts to help deliver the Council's agreed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which had set challenging savings targets for the coming three years amounting to £40.373m. The scale and front-end loading of these cost reductions would require significant initial investment in order to facilitate their implementation and generate the required savings and service improvement.

The report explained that local authorities had a dispensation to use capital receipts to invest in long term efficiency and improvement initiatives. The Minister for Housing Communities & Local Government had issued a Direction in February 2018 giving local authorities the continued freedom to use qualifying capital receipts from the sale of their own assets to help fund the revenue costs of transformation projects and savings delivery. As part of the MTFS, the budget setting process had identified a capital receipt backed Delivery Fund with a total value of £14.250m over the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 to fund the pump-priming costs of delivering the required ongoing savings. A gateway review process had been implemented to ensure that all

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expenditure from the Delivery Fund was validated and approved to ensure: it represented value for money; could not be contained within existing general service budgets; and fell within the definition of the Direction, and hence could be legitimately capitalised. This was particularly important as failure to comply with the conditions of the Direction could result in such expenditure having to be charged back to the revenue budget.

The draft report stated that the current value of calls against the Delivery Fund to support specific projects totalled £13.576m. A schedule of all proposed projects, together with the investment required to achieve delivery and the basis for capitalisation in accordance with the Direction had been attached to the draft report at Appendix 1.

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

Resolved -

That the governance arrangements being put in place to deliver the savings and service transformation as set out in the Council's agreed Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted and the associated Capital Receipts Strategy required to facilitate delivery be agreed, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

22. CAVERSHAM AIR QUALITY

Pursuant to Notice, a motion was moved by Councillor Hopper and seconded by Councillor Stanford-Beale.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Page and seconded by Councillor Barnett-Ward and CARRIED:

'Delete all after "This Council" and insert:

"...welcomes the March 2018 report and recommendations of the four Joint Select Committees on 'Improving Air Quality', and notes the Government response published on 20th June.

This Council agrees with the response of Neil Parish MP (Con, Tiverton and Honiton), Chair of the DEFRA Committee, who said 'we are concerned that the Government is shying away from the bold action needed to tackle this crisis. Our report called on Government to promote cross-departmental working, force car manufacturers to contribute to a Clean Air Fund, and commit real financial support to local authorities breaching NO₂ limits. We see little evidence of this happening. We are extremely disappointed that the Government has not taken stronger action on car manufacturers. The car industry is partly responsible for our toxic streets, and seeing the Government resist calls for an industry-financed Clean Air Fund is incomprehensible. The level of support available to local authorities is currently inadequate. DEFRA has instructed an additional 33 local authorities to tackle NO₂ breaches, but so far only £1.65m has been allocated to support them. That is clearly not enough. We expect a properly resourced national support scheme and urge the Government to commit to significant funding increases as soon as possible.'

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This Council also notes that poor air quality in Reading is caused mainly by traffic and diesel vehicles, and that this problem will be exacerbated by the continuing large-scale presence for many years to come of diesel locomotives being serviced at the Cardiff Road Train Care Depot following the failure to deliver full electrification of the western region.

This Council shares the concerns of residents of Reading about poor air quality in parts of the Borough and, therefore, notes that in March 2018 Caversham Globe carried out tests over a two week period on busy roads and junctions in Caversham which showed NO₂ levels above the EU's legal limits. Council notes that there are about 60 RBC diffusion tubes across the Borough, of which 9 are located in the Caversham area, and all site details and readings are available on the Council website. Following professional advice from its Environmental Health Officers, this Council resolves to change the location of its current diffusion tube near the Griffin Public House to facilitate the continuing collection of important data for the Council and to authorise any other location changes that officers regard as appropriate.

This Council resolves that its refreshed Local Transport Plan 4 will be the basis of campaigning for extra resources from central government so as to enable comprehensive demand management measures, such as a Clean Air Zone or Low Emission Zone, to be implemented in Reading as was originally included as part of the 2009 Transport Innovation Fund Bid subsequently scrapped by the Coalition Government in 2010.”

Resolved -

This Council welcomes the March 2018 report and recommendations of the four Joint Select Committees on ‘Improving Air Quality’, and notes the Government response published on 20th June.

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23. ILLEGAL TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENT ON LAND AT PORTMAN ROAD

Pursuant to Notice, a motion was moved by Councillor Lovelock and seconded by Councillor Hacker and CARRIED:

Resolved -

This Council:

- Shares the concerns of local residents who have been severely inconvenienced by the illegal traveller encampment on land at Portman Road;
- Supports the action taken by Thames Valley Police under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to remove the vast majority of the illegal encampment from the land at Portman Road;
- Endorses the Council's action in obtaining a Court Order on 11 June 2018 to remove the remaining four caravans of the illegal encampment from the land at Portman Road;

The Council notes that Thames Valley Police was not able to remove the entire travellers' encampment from the Portman Road site because some of the land was classified as 'Highway' land and as such fell outside the jurisdiction of Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994;

This Council therefore resolves to authorise the Director of Environment & Neighbourhood Services:

- to carry out all the necessary action to change the designation of the Highway land at Portman Road, which was used as part of the illegal traveller encampment, in order that any future incursions onto or abuses of the land could be dealt with promptly under this officer delegation and the powers available to the Thames Valley Police;

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- to investigate and assess the extent to which similar sites, to the one at Portman Road, exist within the borough, which could be exploited for illegal encampments and prepare a comprehensive list of these potential sites, with a view to them being considered for re-designation as non-highway land;
- to submit a report to the Policy Committee or Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee to seek a re-categorisation of the identified sites, where appropriate, subject to any necessary consultation processes and Equality Impact Assessments, with a view to minimising any potential future delays in dealing with unlawful traveller encampments or other abuses of the land at the identified sites.

24. 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NHS

Pursuant to Notice, a motion was moved by Councillor Eden and seconded by Councillor Emberson and CARRIED:

Resolved -

This Council notes that it is 70 years since the Attlee Government founded our NHS and it remains one of our countries greatest institutions with the principle of care free at the point of need funded by us all a mark of the decency of our society.

This Council believes that it is vital that this public service is properly funded, enabled to collaborate with local government particularly public health and social care.

This Council also believes that mental health services should be properly funded and respected and that this should be a priority.

As previous motions have stated this Council also believes that the NHS should remain a public service and not be privatised either openly or through stealth.

Therefore the Council resolves to:

- wish the NHS a very happy 70th birthday
- thank the dedicated staff of the NHS for their work and care
- continue to campaign to protect the founding principle of the NHS
- to resist privatisation of and cuts to our NHS services.

(The meeting closed at 9.35 pm).

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