

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**8 JULY 2014**

**Present:** Councillor Hacker (Chair);  
Councillors Davies, Dennis, K Edwards, Gittings, James, Livingston,  
Stanway, Terry, J Williams and R Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillors D Absolom, Hopper and O'Connell

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of 1 April 2014 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 - 12 March 2014.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

A Question on the following matter was submitted, and answered by the Lead Councillor:

Questioner	Subject
Councillor K Edwards	Culture and Heritage - Abbey Quarter

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

**4. WORKING BETTER WITH YOU IN NEIGHBOURHOODS**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which presented 'Working Better with You in Neighbourhoods' for endorsement. 'Working Better with You in Neighbourhoods' set out the Council's vision and approach to neighbourhood working and to working with local people to identify and tackle the issues that mattered most to them in their local areas. The Council's statement 'Working Better with You in Neighbourhoods' 2014 was attached to the report.

The report explained that the Council's vision was to create cohesive, attractive and thriving neighbourhoods where people wanted to live and work, and to address inequality by closing the gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods. The report set out the key principles which underpinned the approach and the Council's commitments to improving the quality of life in Reading's neighbourhoods, creating inclusive places where local people were empowered to shape, feel ownership of and contribute to the life of their neighbourhood.

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The report set out how the Council had created new area based teams to bring together all of the elements of 'caring' for the streets within the same service and that a team of Neighbourhood Initiative officers were funded to support local communities to bring about social change and improve the quality of life in their local areas.

Annemaire Byrnes, Zoe Brown and Lucy Drake gave a presentation on the Southcote Community Association. Councillor D Edwards read out a statement by Leanne Henderson. Copies of the Southcote Echo, the local community newspaper run by the Community Association were available at the meeting.

Resolved -

- (1) That the approach and commitments outlined in 'Working Better with You in Neighbourhoods' be endorsed;
- (2) That the implementation of new area-based teams to provide a greater neighbourhood focus to ensure the effective coordination of services for local residents, building on the success of the Love Clean Reading programme, be welcomed;
- (3) That the budget provision to support and enable communities to improve their neighbourhoods, be welcomed;
- (4) That it be agreed that 'Working Better with You in Neighbourhoods' was a living document forming a basis for continued dialogue with stakeholders to continue to develop the Council's approach to neighbourhood working.

#### 5. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the planned improvements at Rivermead Leisure Complex and requesting approval to proceed with the three highest priority schemes, which were: the replacement of the outdoor synthetic turf pitch, new boilers and the refurbishment of the swimming changing facilities. A cost breakdown for the proposed artificial pitch replacement was attached to the report at Appendix I.

The report set out the rationale for proceeding with the schemes as a matter of some urgency and the financial provisions in place that would enable the Council to fund the works in accordance with the agreements in place with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL), the company who operated Rivermead Leisure Centre.

The report stated that with regard to the artificial pitch replacement, it was recommended that a sand based surface was specified in order to facilitate the continued use of the facility for hockey as well as football.

Resolved -

- (1) That scheme approval be given to proceed with the replacement of the synthetic turf pitch at Rivermead as outlined in the report;

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- (2) That scheme approval be given, in principle, for the proposals to replace heating equipment and to remodel the wet-side changing facilities at Rivermead as outlined in the report;
- (3) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in liaison with the Head of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services, be given delegated authority to approve the detail of proposals to replace boilers and remodel the wet-side changing facilities at Rivermead;
- (4) That the proposed investment of approximately £1.15m to improve facilities at Rivermead be welcomed and that the budget cover for this investment was being provided for in the approved capital programme be noted.

6. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO BERESFORD ROAD AND KENSINGTON ROAD RECREATION GROUNDS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report requesting scheme and spend approval for a range of capital improvements to parks facilities at Beresford Road and Kensington Road. The report stated that following a public consultation in 2013, Policy Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2013 (Minute 35 refers) resolved to set up a Councillor Working Group to develop proposals for the £1.615m Section 106 financial contribution received from the development of the former Battle Hospital site. Three of the priority areas identified were health and wellbeing, leisure facilities and green spaces including play.

The report set out the current position at Beresford Road Recreation Ground and detailed the proposed improvements, which included refurbishing the multi-use games area (MUGA) to include new combination basketball/football goals, new improved surfacing and a new artificial cricket wicket, the installation of more benches and bins, replacing the fencing along Beresford Road, clearance of scrub and brambles, tree planting and replacement signs.

The report set out the current position at Kensington Road Recreation Ground and detailed the proposed improvements, which included extending the toddler play area and installation of additional equipment, installation of a second sports area, refurbishing the artificial cricket wicket, the creation of a circular asphalt route around the perimeter of the park with distance markers, installation of outdoor fitness stations, installation of a concrete pad around the base of the youth shelter, the installation of more seats and bins, bulb planting and replacement signs.

Resolved -

- (1) That scheme and spend approval be given to carry out a range of improvements at the recreation grounds in Beresford Road and Kensington Road as outlined in the report;
- (2) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services and the Head of Finance, be given delegated

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authority to finalise details of the individual projects within the approval given.

7. IMPROVEMENTS TO READING PARKS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report requesting scheme approval for new capital projects starting in 2014/15. A detailed description of the individual projects was attached to the report at Appendix I.

The report set out the projects included in the proposed capital programme for 2014/15 for which approval was being sought, with an indication of the amount of S106 contributions earmarked to fund each scheme, to the estimated total value of £188,000. It was anticipated that the majority of the schemes would be funded from Section 106 receipts.

The report also set out the current progress of a number of schemes that had previously been approved by Cabinet, at its meeting on 12 March 2012 (Minute 165 refers), and Policy Committee, at its meeting on 10 June 2003 (Minute 10 refers), which were yet to be completed. These included Caversham Court Garages, Forbury Gardens, Louisehill Copse, Palmer Park, Rabson's recreation Ground, Robert Hewett Recreation Ground and the Cowsey.

Resolved -

(1) That scheme approval be given for the following capital projects as outlined in the report and in Appendix I:

- Arthur Newbery Park
- Bear Wharf/County Lock
- Blagrove Recreation Ground
- Cintra Park
- Coley Recreation Ground
- Prospect Park
- Thames Parks

(2) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services and the Head of Finance, be given delegated authority to finalise details of the individual schemes and programmes within the approval given.

8. LOVE CLEAN READING - UPDATE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating the Committee on the Love Clean Reading initiative. The need to carry out a deep

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clean and vegetation clearance programme for certain areas of highway and housing land was identified and prioritised in response to concerns raised by residents and the wider community. The 134 streets and areas of open space that had been included in the programme was attached to the report at Appendix I.

The report set out the progress of the work and to date 102 streets had been completed, with a target to complete the remaining streets by the end of July 2014. There had been a number of contributory factors which had affected the programme, including strong vegetation growth experienced this spring and summer, verge siding works had been extensive, some tree works had been delayed until the autumn to avoid the bird nesting season and other priorities had taken resources away from the team. The report also set out the feedback that had been received following the works.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the Head of Transportation and Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods, be authorised to make changes to the Love Clean Reading initiative programme, as required.

9. REPORT ON PETITION REQUESTING COMMUNAL BIN AT AMITY ROAD AND CHOLMELEY ROAD

Further to Minute 17 of the meeting held on 1 April 2014, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the review of the petition from residents living in part of Amity Street and Cholmeley Road requesting a communal bin. A location plan, showing the proposed location of the bins, was attached to the report at Appendix I and photographs showing Amity Street and the relevant section of Cholmeley Road was attached to the report at Appendix II.

The report stated that it was proposed to introduce two 1100 litre residual waste bins which would be permanently located in the highway for residents to use. The bins would be secured so that they could not be moved and would be emptied weekly. The locations of the bins had been approved by highways officers. Provision had also been included for the siting of a trade waste 1100 litre bin for the commercial premises at 101 Cholmeley Road, should the business require this service. Recycling would continue to be collected fortnightly in recycling boxes.

The report stated that an informal consultation of all residents in Amity Street and of those residents in Cholmeley Road whose properties were in close proximity to Amity Street would be carried out. The Committee and the lead petitioner would be informed of the outcome.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;

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- (2) That an informal consultation be carried out for residents in Amity Street and residents in Cholmeley Road in close proximity to Amity Street and the results of the consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (3) That the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.55 pm).