

Our Ref: hnl/agenda  
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2368  
Email: amy.bryan@reading.gov.uk

To: Councillor James (Chair);  
Councillors Debs Absolom, Davies, Dennis,  
Kelly Edwards, Ennis, Grashoff, Hacker,  
McDonald, McGonigle, O'Connell, Steele,  
Terry, Tickner and Rose Williams.

7 November 2017

Your contact is: Amy Bryan - Committee Services

**NOTICE OF MEETING - HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE -  
15 NOVEMBER 2017**

A meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee will be held on **Wednesday 15 November 2017 at 6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading.

**AGENDA**

|   | <b>WARDS<br/>AFFECTED</b> | <b>PAGE NO</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST<br>Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.   |                           | -              |
| 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JULY 2017  |                           | 1              |
| 3. PETITIONS<br>Petitions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers & Duties which have been received by Head of Legal & Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting. |                           |                |
| (A) PETITION REQUESTING THE REMOVAL OF COMMUNAL BINS AT AMITY STREET AND CHOLMELEY ROAD   | PARK                      | 7              |

*CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

|   | WARDS<br>AFFECTED | PAGE NO |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| 4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS   |                   | -       |
| <p>Questions submitted pursuant to Standing Order 36 in relation to matters falling within the Committee's Powers &amp; Duties which have been submitted in writing and received by the Head of Legal &amp; Democratic Services no later than four clear working days before the meeting.</p> |                   |         |
| 5. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES   |                   | -       |
| <p>To consider any requests received by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to Standing Order 42, for consideration of matters falling within the Committee's Powers &amp; Duties which have been the subject of Decision Book reports.</p>   |                   |         |
| 6. TENANT PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL HOUSING  | BOROUGHWIDE       | 9       |
| <p>This report outlines the approach that the Housing Service takes to involve tenants in improving and shaping the service.</p> <p>To receive a presentation from Reading Involved Tenants (Tenant Scrutiny Panel and the Building Cleaning Group).</p>                                      |                   |         |
| 7. HOME IMPROVEMENT SERVICES  | BOROUGHWIDE       | 12      |
| <p>This report updates the Committee following the Council bringing the Home Improvement Agency work in-house since June 2016 and details the outcomes for users of the service.</p>  |                   |         |
| 8. HOUSING SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE BENEFIT CAP  | BOROUGHWIDE       | 17      |
| <p>This report informs the Committee of the work of the Housing Services Welfare Reform Team in response to the reduction in the Benefit Cap.</p>   |                   |         |
| 9. UPDATE ON FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS POST GRENFELL TOWER   | BOROUGHWIDE       | 21      |
| <p>This report informs the Committee of the Council's response following the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington on 14 June 2017.</p>   |                   |         |

|   | WARDS<br>AFFECTED | PAGE NO |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| 10. PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR CHARTER   | BOROUGHWIDE       | 31      |
| <p>This report provides the Committee with an update on the progress made in delivering the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Charter action points.</p>  |                   |         |
| 11. ABBEY QUARTER PROJECT   | ABBEY             | -       |
| <p>To receive a presentation on the Abbey Quarter Project.</p>  |                   |         |
| 12. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE   | BOROUGHWIDE       | 40      |
| <p>This report provides the Committee with an update on two key developments relating to cultural services and activities. The report focuses on progress in taking forward Reading's successful bid to the 'Great Places Scheme' and the delivery plans being developed by the Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Museum consequent on being jointly awarded National Portfolio Organisation status by Arts Council England.</p> |                   |         |
| 13. ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY   | BOROUGHWIDE       | 50      |
| <p>This report provides an update on antisocial behaviour in Reading and recommends that the current Designated Public Place Order is converted into a Public Space Protection Order.</p>   |                   |         |
| 14. WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY 2015-2020 - HALF YEARLY UPDATE  | BOROUGHWIDE       | 59      |
| <p>This report updates the Committee on the progress achieved in the first two quarters of Year 3 of the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015-2020 Action Plan.</p>   |                   |         |

## WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
7 JULY 2017**

**Present:** Councillor Dennis (Vice-Chair in the Chair);  
Councillors Debs Absolom, Davies, K Edwards, Ennis, Grashoff,  
Hacker, McDonald, McGonigle, Steele, Terry, Tickner and Rose  
Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillor James (Chair) & O'Connell.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2017 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 - 2 February and 27 April 2017.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

| <u>Questioner</u>       | <u>Subject</u>                            | <u>Reply</u> |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|
| Councillor Debs Absolom | Fire Safety Following Grenfell Tower Fire | Cllr Ennis   |
| Councillor McGonigle    | Fire Safety Following Grenfell Tower Fire | Cllr Ennis   |

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

**4. WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE CHANGES AND CHARGEABLE GREEN WASTE COLLECTION**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which provided an update on the introduction of the revised waste collection service standard, the rescheduled collection rounds and the introduction of the chargeable green waste service.

The report explained that the revised waste collection service standards had been re-introduced on 13 February 2017 at the same time as a revised collection round structure. The revised rounds had bedded in well after a few minor problems and collection staff were enforcing the service standards. There had been issues with excess domestic waste being fly-tipped, and this was being addressed by two new Environmental Enforcement Officers who had issued 102 Community Protection

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
7 JULY 2017

Notices since February 2017. The effects of the changes on collection tonnages, recycling and contamination rates would be reported to a future meeting when the data was available.

The chargeable green waste collection service had started on 1 April 2017. Prior to the charge being introduced 16,700 residents had taken advantage of the free green waste collection, and the number of subscribers to the paid service at the end of June 2017 was 14,000 with new enquiries coming in at a rate of 50 per week. Revenue for the green collection service to date is £700,000.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

## 5. PEER REVIEW OF CULTURAL SERVICES

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report summarising the findings of a 'Peer Review' of cultural services and setting out the recommendations made by the review. The full Cultural Services Peer Challenge Feedback Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Council had secured an external 'Peer Review' of cultural services funded by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Arts Council England (ACE). The report summarised the findings of the review, which had been very positive, and key recommendations for further enhancing the contribution of cultural activity to the town's success and the well-being of its residents in line with the aspirations of the Culture & Heritage Strategy 2015 - 2030.

The Feedback Report had identified the following key recommendations:

1. Develop a SMART action plan to set out the Council's priorities against the Culture and Heritage Strategy;
2. Re-engineer the governance structure for the Culture, Arts and Heritage portfolio, clarifying the structure's role, purpose and function;
3. Develop a prospectus evidencing how culture supports corporate and commissioning priorities;
4. Establish multi-disciplinary teams for key projects like the Abbey Quarter to break down silo working and enhance project delivery;
5. Lead a high level conversation about relationships with business and agree a fundraising strategy for Reading with the University and Reading UK CIC;
6. Coordinate the upfront planning for legacy from culture and heritage projects and programmes with Reading UK CIC, the University and partners.

The report noted that a focus of the recommendations was on the strategic partnership context with an opportunity for the Council to redefine its role as the leader of a diverse and collaborative partnership, and that the 'Great Place Scheme' bid (see Minute 6 below) included a proposal for the Cultural Partnership to act as

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
7 JULY 2017

the 'Great Place Board' providing strategic governance and oversight. Once in place this would deliver on recommendation 2 and provide the partnership infrastructure to take forward recommendations 5 and 6. The Great Place Scheme would also support delivery of recommendation 3 as it had a focus on cultural commissioning to support delivery of priority outcomes. Recommendations 1 and 4 would be further considered and taken forward by Council officers.

The report also proposed that the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee provide scrutiny of the activities and associated work-streams of the Cultural Partnership on either an annual or twice yearly basis. It was agreed at the meeting that this should take place twice a year.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outcomes of the Peer Review be noted;
- (2) That the Committee endorse the proposed next steps, including the role of a refreshed Cultural Partnership to provide strategic leadership;
- (3) That the Committee receive an twice-yearly report on the activities of the Cultural Partnership and associated work-streams.

#### 6. GREAT PLACE SCHEME - SUCCESSFUL BID

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of a successful bid to the Great Place Scheme, and seeking endorsement of the proposals and support for their ongoing implementation. The narrative section of the bid was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Great Place Scheme was a new joint funding initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England (HE). Following a successful expression of interest the Council had submitted a full application entitled 'Reading-on-Thames' and learned in April 2017 that the bid had been successful with a grant award of £558,400. The bid had referenced the emerging 'Place-shaping' 2050 Vision and the Vision's strong thematic references to rivers, parks, festivals and culture, and the proposals had been framed within existing activities including: a new Culture and Heritage Strategy, the Abbey Revealed project, the revamp of the Museum of English Rural Life and an associated engagement and development programme, refurbishment of South Street Arts Centre, the newly-launched Cultural Education Partnership, developing a legacy programme for the Year of Culture 2016, and complementary opportunities relating to the 'Ambition for Excellence' ACE funding of £450,000 for the 'Reading International' visual arts programme.

The report explained that the bid proposed five key strands of activity as follows:

- A new Delivery Board - effectively a revamped Cultural Partnership providing strategic drive and creating effective sub-groups for delivery;

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**7 JULY 2017**

- Research and Evaluation - identifying best practice, researching local needs and ongoing evaluation to inform the development of new initiatives and interventions;
- Cultural Outreach and Commissioning - linking to the research strand above, connecting cultural organisations and partners such as public health, adult social care and education to create a platform for commissioning of cultural activities to deliver on key social outcomes;
- A new 'Reading-on-Thames' Festival celebrating Reading's identity and providing a platform for cultural excellence, engagement of local cultural organisations and widely accessible for local people (the Great Place Scheme would provide funding to support this new festival for three years from 2018 but it would be piloted in September 2017 with the support of a separate grant by ACE to Reading UK CIC);
- Economic Development and Business Engagement - building on the strong support from the business community for the Year of Culture 2016 and embedding culture and heritage in economic development and business strategies.

The report explained that following approval of the bid there were a number of requirements to be satisfied, in order to receive approval from the funders to commence delivery. Officers were currently working on these requirements with a view to obtaining 'permission to start' by the end of July and for delivery to commence from September 2017. Some elements were being fast-tracked including recruitment of a project development post by the Council and a facilitated workshop to reconfigure the Cultural Partnership. The required legal agreements with the University and Reading UK CIC as lead partners were also being progressed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report and the key work-streams to be supported by the Great Place Scheme Grant be noted;
- (2) That the link between the Great Place Scheme and delivery of the recommendations of the Cultural Services Peer Challenge (Minute 6 above refers) be noted;
- (3) That the work undertaken to date to secure the Great Place Scheme grant and the proposals for the Council and its partners to take forward implementation be endorsed.

**7. USE OF S106 AND RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the current Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme and asking the Committee to recommend to Policy Committee the proposals and funding arrangements for the next phase of the programme.



HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
7 JULY 2017

The report set out the government requirements and current position regarding the retention and use of Right To Buy (RTB) receipts, and stated that the Council had a total of £3.2m of unallocated RTB receipts, with a further £2.2m projected to be received by March 2018. When match funded by Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or General Fund borrowing of up to £12.6m (based on the requirement that RTB be used to cover no more than 30% of development or acquisition costs) this would result in a development budget of c£18m. An additional c£1.9m of s106 receipts were also allocated for affordable housing development, providing a potential total budget of c£19.9m to continue the LANB programme. This would deliver around 100 new Council homes, depending on cost inflation, and the report sought initial spend approval for this budget.

The report listed the sites included in Phase 1 of the Council's new build housing programme, which would deliver 148 new units with a capital spend of £26.6m. 63 of the new homes were now completed and tenanted and the remaining 85 units would be completed over the next two years. Feasibility work was being undertaken to assess a number of sites owned by the Council, and a shortlist of potential development sites for the next phase of the LANB programme were being assessed in detail. It was also proposed to continue a small programme of purchasing properties, often within existing Council housing blocks, and to expand this to include purchasing of properties for temporary accommodation funded via a combination of RTB receipts and General Fund borrowing. The Housing Service had also identified opportunities for conversion of storage/ancillary spaces in blocks of flats to create a small number of additional flats.

The report recommended that, in order to expedite the process of delivering viable sites through to completion, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services be authorised to agree which sites to progress within the spend approvals and restrictions set out in the report, and be authorised to enter into contracts with the winning bidders in respect of multi-disciplinary/consultancy services and works to deliver the schemes. Delegated authority was also requested for the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services to approve the purchase of existing properties from the open market to be held within the General Fund for the use of Temporary Accommodation, limited to a purchase price of £500k or below.

Resolved -

That the current position regarding site appraisals and funding capacity to support the next phase of the Council's Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme be noted.

Recommended -

- (1) That Policy Committee grant spend approval of up to £19.9m to deliver new Council homes on identified sites, and support the acquisition of market sale properties to provide affordable homes;
- (2) That Policy Committee authorise the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Members for Housing and Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Director of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services,

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
7 JULY 2017

to agree which sites to progress within the spend approvals and restrictions set out in the report;

- (3) That Policy Committee authorise the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the Director of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into contracts with the winning bidders in respect of multi-disciplinary/consultancy services and works to deliver the schemes, as set out in the report;
- (4) That Policy Committee delegate authority to the Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Head of Finance, to approve the purchase of existing properties from the open market to be held within the General Fund for the use of Temporary Accommodation, with a limit of £500,000 per single unit.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.11pm).

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |  |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE |              |  |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017                              | AGENDA ITEM: | 3  |
| TITLE:           | AMITY ROAD - ON STREET WASTE BINS - PETITION  |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR LIZ TERRY                          | PORTFOLIO:   | NEIGHBOURHOODS   |
| SERVICE:         | TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE                 | WARDS:       | PARK   |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | DAVID MOORE                                   | TEL:         | (0118) 937 2676  |
| JOB TITLE:       | NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER                | E-MAIL:      | <a href="mailto:David.moore2@reading.gov.uk">David.moore2@reading.gov.uk</a> |

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The properties at 83 to 101 Cholmeley Road and 22 to 34 Amity Street front directly onto the street, consequently, residents are not able to store wheelie bins at the front of their properties. Residents previously presented their residual waste in sacks on the pavement for weekly collection on a designated collection day.
- 1.2 Following the receipt of a petition from residents and an informal consultation an on-street 1100l bin scheme was designed and installed in 2015. The bins are collected weekly.
- 1.3 A second petition of 22 signatures has been received requesting that the bins be removed and that the previous sack collection is reinstated because of concerns over smells, vermin and fly-tipping.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the receipt of the petition.
- 2.2 That an informal consultation is carried out by officers of residents in 22 -34 Amity Street and the section of Cholmeley Road between numbers 83 and 101 asking residents whether they want to retain the current on-street bin or to return to a weekly sack collection.
- 2.3 That the results of the informal consultation are reported to a future meeting of the Committee.
- 2.4 That the lead petitioner be informed.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The receipt of a second petition, this time requesting that the communal bin be removed is indicative of differing views amongst the residents affected by this issue. It is proposed that Officers conduct another informal consultation with residents including an opportunity to discuss the issue face to face, in order to gain a more comprehensive view of the problem and what the majority of residents want.
- 3.2 The results will then be reported to the HNL Committee meeting in March for a decision as to whether to remove the bins and return to a sack collection.

### 4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 The waste collection service contributes to the council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 objective of 'Keeping the Town Clean, Safe, Green and Active'.

### 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 5.1 The proposal will be subject to an informal consultation with residents of Amity Street and 83-101 Cholmeley Rd.

### 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has duties under various UK and EU legislation to deliver waste collection and disposal services, principally the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the revised EU waste framework directive 2008.

### 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage.

### 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None for this report.

### 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Corporate Plan  
9.2 HNL Committee July 2015  
9.3 HNL Committee November 2015

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |                             |
|------------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE |              |                             |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017                              | AGENDA ITEM: | 6                           |
| TITLE:           | TENANT PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL HOUSING       |              |                             |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | CLLR ENNIS                                    | PORTFOLIO:   | HOUSING                     |
| SERVICE:         | HOUSING                                       | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE                 |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | ZELDA WOLFLE                                  | TEL:         |                             |
| JOB TITLE:       | HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER                    | E-MAIL:      | zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the approach that the Housing Service takes to involve tenants in improving and shaping the service.
- 1.2 The aim of tenant involvement is to work in partnership with tenants to develop and influence how services are delivered in order to continuously improve and drive up standards and thereby increase tenant satisfaction.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 Housing Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee to note the Housing Service's approach to Tenant Involvement.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Co-regulation is an approach that was first put in place by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) in 2010 and despite changes to the regulatory framework since the TSA was abolished, the approach of co-regulation has remained in place.
- 3.2 This approach includes robust 'self-regulation' including checking the quality of the service and performance through self-assessment, external challenge and regular reporting and accountability to tenants.
- 3.3 Engagement with tenants should be transparent and meaningful and provide tenants with the opportunity to shape and influence service delivery.

#### 4. TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

4.1 The Housing Service has a flexible approach to tenant involvement providing a range of both formal and informal opportunities for tenants to participate. Tenants are able to opt in or opt out of opportunities as they arise.

4.2 After a review of tenant participation earlier this year involving the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TACT) our refreshed strategy for tenant involvement involves the following:

- Offering tenant participation opportunities that range from one off or short-term limited involvement such as focus groups or task and finish groups to ongoing commitments such as the Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Holding an annual tenant consultation day
- Using impact assessments techniques and reality checking such as mystery shopping
- Evaluating the connection between what tenants said and what we did to assess the overall outcomes of service improvement and reporting back through a variety of methods including newsletters, website and the annual report
- Exploring the use of social media and electronic forms of engagement

4.3 In addition to methods of direct tenant involvement, we also seek to identify the needs and aspirations of tenants through the use of customer intelligence:

- A comprehensive survey of tenants and residents (STAR) which identifies trends in satisfaction.
- Gathering equality and diversity statistics through our customer contact points such as tenancy sign up, verification, exit surveys and logging a complaint to help determine whether our processes create unintended barriers to service for key groups.
- Tenant complaints analysis to identify trends in dissatisfaction and help to solve the systemic problems for all tenants as well as addressing individual tenant complaints.
- Carrying out a tenant census, enabling us to better understand the profile of tenants.

#### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Consultation with tenants enables the Housing Service to ensure that its services promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

#### 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The Housing Service uses tenant involvement to develop and improve services. An annual report to tenants is published on the Council's website, the link to our 2016 report is here: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7001/Housing-Report2016final170317/pdf/Housing\\_Report2016final170317.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7001/Housing-Report2016final170317/pdf/Housing_Report2016final170317.pdf)

6.2 In addition the Council publishes and posts out a 6 monthly Housing News publication to all tenants and 'patch' or estate area newsletters are also produced 6 monthly providing updates on local issues to our tenants.

6.3 Data from our 15/16 survey shows that 68% of tenants are satisfied that their views are being listened to and acted on and this compares with a comparator group average of 59% and top quartile (best) performance of 71% - so is well above the average for similar providers.

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Housing Service funds tenant participation through the Housing Revenue Account (the ring-fenced account which deals with Council housing and rental income). This includes staff dedicated to supporting tenant involvement, the cost of regular surveys and other incidental costs. This equates to a cost of circa £68 per tenant per year.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |  |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE                             |              |  |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017  | AGENDA ITEM: | 7  |
| TITLE:           | HOME IMPROVEMENT SERVICES   |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR JOHN ENNIS   | PORTFOLIO:   | HOUSING  |
| SERVICE:         | HOUSING   | WARDS:       | ALL  |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | ZELDA WOLFLE<br>YASMIN AHMAD  | TEL:         | 0118 937 2285<br>0118 937 2246                             |
| JOB TITLE:       | HOUSING OPERATIONS<br>MANAGER<br>PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING<br>TEAM MANAGER | E-MAIL:      | zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk<br>yasmin.ahmad@reading.gov.uk |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Home Improvement Agencies are small, locally based not for profit organisations that help vulnerable residents who are older, disabled or on low incomes to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes to meet their specific needs.
- 1.2 Home Improvement Agencies support a number of strategic priorities including preventing hospital admissions, enabling timely discharges from hospital and helping people to remain living independently in their own homes in a safe and secure environment for longer.
- 1.3 Reading Borough Council has supported the provision of Home Improvement Services in Reading since 1996. Aster Living was commissioned to provide a Home Improvement Service in November 2013 for a period of 3 years with an option to extend for a further two years. The contract was for the provision of services to Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils.
- 1.4 In October 2014 Aster Living were issued with a Default Notice as a result of failing to meet the performance level set out in the contract. The service was closely monitored and improvements were made in service delivery over a 6 month period. However, Aster chose to end the contract early, giving a notice date of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
- 1.5 In view of Aster's inability to deliver on the contract and the short timescale for procurement of a new contract, the 3 local authorities felt it would be more cost effective and provide a better service to residents for each authority to bring the work in-house.
- 1.6 This report sets out the position for Reading Borough Council since taking the service in-house in June 2016 and details the outcomes for users of the service.



## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the work undertaken to date and the improved outcomes for users of the service further to bringing Home Improvement Services in-house to be delivered directly by the local authority.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council has supported the provision of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) since 1996. Having an HIA in place has assisted with the delivery of the Council's Private Sector Renewal Policy and the Housing Adaptations Policy.

3.2 These policies provide the framework for the delivery of financial and other assistance to homeowners and Council tenants for disabled adaptations and other home improvements for private sector residents.

3.3 Aster were commissioned as the Council's HIA from November 2013 until June 2016 when they ended the contract as they confirmed that they were no longer able to fulfil their obligations as required by the contract.

3.4 The services provided by Aster under the contract consisted of:

i) Core Agency Service - to deliver

a) Services linked to the Council's Private Sector Renewal Policy and Housing Adaptations Policy and involved the delivery of grants and loans to homeowners in the private sector and

b) The Council's Housing Adaptations Policy via Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) across tenure.

ii) Minor Adaptations - the provision of minor adaptations such as grab rails, handrails, key safes and ramping - across tenure where the cost is no more than £1,000.

iii) Handyperson Service - this service was for Reading residents only and delivered low level repairs and maintenance work to ensure independence is maintained. Examples of work include replacing light bulbs, changing tap washers etc.

## 4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 In June 2016 the Council undertook to provide the Core Agency Service and the Minor Adaptations work. The Handy Person Service was commissioned externally.

4.2 In July 2016 the posts of Technical Officers, Administrator and Case Officer were recruited to. The work was split across Housing Property Services and the Private Sector Housing Team (Environmental Health). Housing Property Services now carry out major adaptations to properties for Council tenants who require them and minor adaptations across the Council's stock and the private sector. The Private Sector Housing Team delivers the Council's mandatory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants along with the provision of discretionary Home Improvement Grants and loans in the private sector.

- 4.3 In addition, a new Housing Occupational Therapist post was created to work across Council Housing and Social Services. The focus of the post has been able to:
- Reduce void turnaround times in Council housing stock by timely assessment of properties for potential tenants with a disability.
  - Consider creative solutions to enable tenants to remain independent in their homes for longer and make best use of the budget.
  - Carry out assessments and recommendations for minor and major adaptations.
  - Identify future needs of disabled tenants.
  - Work closely with Technical Officers and Surveyors to ensure adaptations are carried out effectively to meet the needs of tenants.
- 4.4 Officers across Environmental Health, Council Housing and Social Services also took the opportunity to review systems in place to make processes as efficient as possible for users of the service. As a result the following changes were made:
- Council tenants no longer need to make a Disabled Facilities Grant application as this budget is funded directly by the Housing Service. This enables time to be cut from the process.
  - Put in place customer feedback mechanisms to ensure that adaptations to properties increase independence for customers.
  - 2 part time Occupational Therapists were seconded to the Private Sector Housing Team to speed up assessments for Disabled Facilities Grants and joint visits with the Technical Officer has also meant faster turnaround of adaptations.

## 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 5.1 When the Council took over the Home Improvement Agency contract there was a backlog of 83 jobs outstanding. 81 of these jobs have now been completed and the other 2 jobs are currently in progress. In addition, there were 13 Home Improvement Grant cases outstanding, 11 of which have now been completed.
- 5.2 The average time taken to complete major adaptations has fallen significantly since bringing the work in-house from 45 weeks to 27 weeks for private sector adaptations and from 45 weeks to 24 weeks for Council properties.
- 5.3 The in-house service has improved communication and tightened up timescales for minor works. Completing these works at short notice and to a tight timescale is instrumental in ensuring people can be discharged from hospital quickly and safely.

## 6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The provision of the Home Improvement Agency work enables the Council to safeguard and protect those that are most vulnerable and provide suitably adapted and improved homes for those most in need
- 6.2 The provision of suitably adapted and improved homes for those in need promotes social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Initial customer feedback via the Occupational Therapist Team confirms that customers are happy with the current service. Further detailed consultation with

Council tenants who have received major adaptations to their home will take place later in the year.

- 7.2 On a monthly basis the Private Sector Housing Team contact all customers in the private sector where Disabled Facilities Grant works have been completed to carry out a customer satisfaction survey. Results from the last quarter show:

| Question   | Outcome                                       | Comments from customers  |
|--|---|--|
| How would you rate the process of getting the adaptation done            | 40% Excellent<br>40% Good<br>20% Satisfactory | Communication was good   |
| How would you rate the standard of the work carried out                  | 40% Excellent<br>40% Good<br>20% Satisfactory | None   |
| How would you rate the contractors including timekeeping and helpfulness | 60% Good<br>40% Excellent                     | None   |
| Has the adaptation/s met your needs and improved your quality of life?   | 100% Yes                                      | I can live independently now<br>It had made such a difference<br><br>Thank you so very very much, aunts will be thrilled, we honestly can't thank you enough for all your help |

- 7.3 The Housing Property Services Team carry out a survey on completion of minor adaptations works. The results following 136 jobs completed are as follows:

| Question  | Satisfaction Rate |
|---|-------------------|
| Quality of information received before work started                 | 97.79%            |
| Politeness of staff who booked the appointment for work             | 100%              |
| Workers politeness and helpfulness                                  | 100%              |
| Workers time keeping i.e. - did they come when they said they would | 99.26%            |
| Workers providing identification                                    | 99.26             |
| Cleanliness/tidiness of the work areas after the work was completed | 99.28%            |
| Standard of works carried out                                       | 99.16%            |

- 7.4 Further work is underway to develop and standardise performance monitoring across the new service to reflect revised processes.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 None required.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

**10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The total Home Improvement Services budget including staffing costs is £1.5m annually.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |                               |
|------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------------|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE |              |                               |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017                              | AGENDA ITEM: | 8                             |
| TITLE:           | HOUSING SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE BENEFIT CAP   |              |                               |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR ENNIS                              | PORTFOLIO:   | HOUSING                       |
| SERVICE:         | HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS                    | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE                   |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | NATALIE WATERS                                | TEL:         | 0118 937 2781 / 72781         |
| JOB TITLE:       | TENANTS SERVICES MANAGER                      | E-MAIL:      | natalie.waters@reading.gov.uk |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the work of the Housing Services Welfare Reform Team in response to the reduction in the Benefit Cap.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the work of the team and the outcomes for the affected households.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Benefit Cap was first introduced in August 2013 setting the maximum benefit entitlement to any household at £26,000 per year for couples and families and £18,200 per year for single claimants. In November 2016 this cap was reduced to £20,000 per year for couples and families and £13,400 for single claimants for households outside of London.
- 3.2 With an estimated 554 households likely to have their benefits capped RBC was highlighted as one of the largest affected Local Authorities. The Housing service identified that the reduction in the cap would pose two potentially significant risks. The first being an increase in homelessness due to those households affected not having the ability to pay their rent. The second being an increase in Social Landlords' rent arrears.
- 3.3 To mitigate these risks a bid was made for grant funding from the DWP for £45,874 which was match-funded by Housing to create 3 posts (1 Senior Welfare Reform Officer and 2 Benefit Cap Coordinators)) to create the Welfare Reform Team.

The overall aim of the work of the Benefit Cap Coordinators, along with other teams within Housing, is to move people affected by the cap into long-term secure, sustainable work thus reducing the risk to increased homelessness.

- 3.4 Early analysis of data from the DWP on the 554 households likely to be affected by the reduction in the cap showed that there were a large number of families who were also known to Children's Social Services and Troubled Families. It was therefore a key part of the officers' roles to ensure a joined up approach was coordinated between Housing and Children's Social Services and Troubled Families.
- 3.5 It was also clear from this early data that many of the households had either not worked for many years or had never worked. This meant that some of the clients would be a long way from the job market and would require more support than those who had worked more recently.
4. Current Position:
- 4.1 All the households identified by the DWP were written to, offering the team's support prior to the new lower cap being introduced. Those households that were already subject to the original cap were also telephoned to advise them that the team could support them prior to their benefits being capped further.
- 4.2 For any households that had not been spoken to directly, the Welfare Reform Team carried out a home visit to ensure every effort had been made to offer support to those affected.
- 4.3 When the new lower cap was fully rolled out in Reading on 19th December 2016 there were 338 households affected. This number was far lower than expected, partly due to the team starting to work with households prior to the cap being applied, but mainly due to the way that the cap was applied meaning that some households that had a recent change in circumstances were excluded from the initial implementation of the cap but were slowly picked up by the system and had the cap applied over the following few months.
- 4.4 As newly affected households had the cap applied, the Housing Benefit team notified the Welfare Reform team who then began to work with the household if they were not already working with them.
- 4.5 Co-location at the Job Centre one day a week enabled the team to observe Work Coach appointments and it became clear that clients did not always have much time to discuss any issues regarding finding employment with their Work Coaches as there was a significant amount of administrative work that had to be done in each 10 minute appointment. As a result of this, officers in the Welfare Reform Team adopted an approach affording clients as much time as was required to understand their personal circumstances in detail and discuss personalised options, enabling them to create an individual plan to move away from the cap.
- 4.6 There are four main options to enable clients to move away from the cap:
- find employment and qualify to claim Working Tax Credit
  - claim and receive an exempting benefit
  - move to cheaper accommodation
  - budget to be able to pay the shortfall
- Officers have found that being able to discuss the barriers to these options with clients at length has allowed them to show how those barriers can be overcome.
- 4.7 The Welfare Reform Team liaises closely with many other teams across the Council but, in particular, with the Housing Service Debt Advice Team (offering budgeting and debt advice as well as Discretionary Housing Payment assessments); Tenant Services on Council tenant cases; Housing Advice on helping to prevent homelessness for non-RBC

tenants; Housing Benefit on the Benefit Cap being applied, amended and removed; Customer Services and Troubled Families on those that are known to both teams with regular update meetings being held.

- 4.8 The team also works closely with many different external partners including Reading Job Centre with Officers co-located in the Job Centre one day per week. The team has worked hard to build partnerships with many different support organisations that cater to the individual needs of clients, including one with a recruitment agency that not only provides free CV and Interview Skill sessions for those households affected by the cap but also regularly sends the team job opportunities for clients.
- 4.9 The cap was designed to make work pay and it means that finding employment is the best way to move away from the cap. The team has found that the two main barriers to clients finding employment have been a lack of awareness about childcare and the funding arrangements and assistance for those with 'low level' mental health issues such as anxiety and depression who do not meet the threshold for formal help.
- 4.10 Being able to discuss what childcare is available and how clients can receive help to pay for that childcare has enabled clients to find employment. The team is now looking at trying to increase awareness of childcare and its funding to enable local residents to be more self-reliant. Reading Services Guide now has up to date information on childcare options that are available and includes details of the Welfare Reform Team. Both staff and clients alike have found the guide to be useful as well as the welfare reform information produced by the Housing Service which is available on the Council's web pages.
- 4.11 The team has gradually found and started to make links with local organisations that do support people with low level mental health issues. The team is working with the Wellbeing Team and Social Services to see if awareness of these organisations can be increased.
- 4.12 Between October 2016 and the end of September 2017 the team had 1,692 contacts with clients, made 719 referrals to other support agencies, helped 382 households out of the cap of which 189 households have now gained employment. To date only 3 households have been capped again after initially finding employment, showing that the majority of those who have moved into employment have gained long-term sustainable employment. As of 26th October 2017 there are 281 households who are currently capped. The amount of benefits lost to the cap per household per week varies from £0.08 up to £313.93, with the average loss of £56 per week per household.
- 4.13 The team has also utilised the Council's website to promote information on the cap and support available as well as to publicise events such as the CV and Interview skills sessions. Training has taken place with internal and external organisations around the cap, the team and support available as well as how assistance can be given to clients. This has been put in place in an effort to have a sustainable position for residents of Reading once the DWP grant for posts ceases in November. The Housing Service will continue to fund elements of the team moving forward to carry on this work as well as to take on the challenge of Universal Credit which will be fully rolled out in Reading in December 2017. New Burdens funding from DWP will be in place from November which will cover off the shortfall once the grant ends.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Measures put in place by the Welfare Reform team have helped to safeguard and protect those that are most vulnerable and promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Benefit cap questionnaires and closed cases surveys are due to be sent out to those affected households that the team has worked with to establish what has worked well and where improvements could be made.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Grant funding of £45,874 was received from the DWP for 16/17 and New Burdens funding of £101,000 will be received from November 17/18 which will cover posts to work with clients affected by the Benefit Cap and/or Universal Credit. 382 households have been supported and assisted by the team to no longer be affected by the cap. The average cap reduction for each household was £56 per week; therefore the work of the team has saved these households from a total loss of £1,112,384 for the financial year.



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |  |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE   |              |  |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017  | AGENDA ITEM: | 9  |
| TITLE:           | AN UPDATE ON FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS POST GRENFELL TOWER   |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | CLLR ENNIS, CLLR<br>LOVELOCK, CLLR<br>JONES   | PORTFOLIO:   | HOUSING/PROPERTY/<br>EDUCATION   |
| SERVICE:         | HOUSING/REGULATORY<br>SERVICES  | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE  |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | SARAH GEE/<br>GIORGIO FRAMALICCO  | TEL:         | 0118 937 2973 (x72973)<br>0118 937 2058 (x72604)   |
| JOB TITLE:       | HEAD OF HOUSING AND<br>NEIGHBOURHOOD<br>SERVICES<br><br>HEAD OF PLANNING,<br>DEVELOPMENT AND<br>REGULATORY SERVICES | E-MAIL:      | <a href="mailto:Sarah.gee@reading.gov.uk">Sarah.gee@reading.gov.uk</a><br><br><a href="mailto:giorgio.framalicco@reading.gov.uk">giorgio.framalicco@reading.gov.uk</a> |

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the Council's response following the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington on 14<sup>th</sup> June. This includes action taken in relation to the Authority's own housing stock, other corporate buildings and schools, as well as wider work in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in respect of privately owned high rise residential blocks within the Borough boundaries.

1.2 In summary the local authority has taken the following action post the Grenfell Tower incident:

- Published information on the Council's website in respect of our own housing stock and advice to residents more widely.
- Internally reviewed the fire safety measures and systems in place in relation to the Council's own housing - with a focus on high rise flatted blocks.
- Despite the Council's 7 high rise housing blocks differing in design to Grenfell Tower, the Council has appointed an external qualified Fire Engineer (FireSkills) to carry out a review of our fire safety practices.
- The structure and fire safety practices of other corporate buildings and schools have been reviewed.
- Fire Risk Assessment re-inspections of other Council buildings have been commissioned for Priority 1 and 2 buildings and these are currently being undertaken; school re-

inspections will be actioned later this year following completion of the current programme of site works.

- An internal Council Officer group has been set up to manage subsequent phases of work given the medium to longer term implications of the Grenfell Tower fire incident.
- Across tenures, a total of 88 residential buildings over 18 meters in height have been identified in Reading and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) have visited all of these to review fire safety including an assessment of the external materials used on each block. Where there is a concern over the cladding used, the owner has been asked to send material for testing by the Building Research Establishment (BRE).
- Officers have been in close liaison with RBFRS since the Grenfell Tower incident and a County-wide Steering group has been convened by RBFRS with representatives of the 6 Unitary Authorities to agree a programme of joint work cross tenure to ensure that residential high rise (and other) buildings cross tenure are safe.
- Provided a full briefing session to Members on the actions taken to date and proposed further actions. The member briefing session was attended by the RBFRS.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the action taken and planned following the Grenfell Tower fire as detailed in this report.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

### The Grenfell Tower Fire

- 3.1 Grenfell Tower was a 24-storey, 67m high residential tower block in North Kensington built in 1970. The concrete structure's top 22 storeys consisted of 127 flats. The block was managed by Kensington and Chelsea Tenants' Management Organisation.
- 3.2 A major fire seriously damaged the building on 14 June 2017. The fire burned for about 60 hours until finally extinguished. More than 200 firefighters and 40 fire engines from stations all over London were involved in efforts to control the fire. At least 80 people were confirmed or presumed dead, according to the Metropolitan Police Service. Demolition of the tower is scheduled to start towards the end of 2018.
- 3.3 The fire is under investigation and is the subject of a Public Inquiry which opened on 14 September 2017. The early indications suggest that external fire loading may have been at least partly responsible for the rapid fire spread and the cladding of the building has become a focus of concern. The incident has raised a wide range of questions about fire safety and regulation in relation to high rise residential buildings.
- 3.4 The cladding system which was fitted as part of an £8.4 million refurbishment completed in 2016 consisted of an Aluminum Composite Material which was effectively a sandwich of two sheets of aluminum foil covering a 3mm polyethylene core acting as a rain screen. The insulation was Celotex RS5000, which is an insulant that has subsequently been withdrawn from the market. This was all fixed to the original concrete façade of the building.
- 3.5 The fire at Grenfell Tower follows other significant incidents in social housing in recent years which have been widely reported in the Housing and national press:

- fire in Lakanal House, Camberwell on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 (6 deaths)
- fire at Shepherds Bush House on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016 (no deaths)

There are marked similarities between the features of the Lakanal House fire and Grenfell Tower and nationally there are calls for change, including to Building Regulations.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

##### Housing

- 4.1 The Council has taken swift action to review its fire safety measures in relation to its own high rise housing blocks and to provide residents with a level of reassurance around fire safety measures in place.
- 4.2 Officers have published information on the Council’s website in respect of local authority owned housing stock and advice to residents more widely as per the links below. RBFRS have amended their ‘stay put’ advice to tenants in high rise blocks and this has been disseminated to all relevant RBC tenants.
- <http://www.reading.gov.uk/firesafetyfaq>  
<http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/about-us/statement-on-the-grenfell-tower-fire-in-london/>
- 4.3 As part of its housing stock, Reading Borough Council has three 14-storey blocks of flats in Coley and four 8-storey blocks in Granville Road, Southcote - none of these have panel or cladding systems similar to Grenfell Tower or to those which have been tested by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). Since the Grenfell Tower fire, new Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) have been completed for all high rise blocks and any actions arising are being implemented. These FRAs have covered communal areas and also a sample number of flats. The Fire Service have additionally visited and visually inspected all of the Council’s high rise blocks. These ‘audits’ are spot checks of communal areas by a highly qualified fire safety inspection officer. As part of the audit the Fire Service Officer will review the Fire Risk Assessment and ensure that actions are being appropriately prioritised and carried out in a timely manner.
- 4.4 Despite the Council’s blocks differing in design to Grenfell Tower, the Council has also appointed an external qualified Fire Engineer to carry out a review of our practice in the areas of management, fire safety measures and safety advice to tenants in high rise and some other flatted blocks. This will include conducting Type 4 ‘intrusive’ Fire Risk Assessments of sample blocks - to include communal areas and an appropriate number of flats in each block. Intrusive assessments involve destructive exposure or opening up parts of the construction to provide greater assurance about the degree of fire ‘compartmentation’. Recommendations from this review will inform the Council’s planned works programme for our housing stock and may have significant financial implications.
- 4.5 Reading Borough Council’s Housing Property Services uses trained assessors to undertake Fire Risk Assessments on over 350 Council blocks of flats of mixed constructions and storey heights. Prior to the publication of the Local Government Association Guide: Fire Safety in Purpose Built Flats, Fire Risk Assessments were carried out in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order of 2005 which stated that they must be carried out “regularly” and following refurbishment or alteration. The legislation does not set out the frequency at which FRAs are to be produced.
- 4.6 The introduction of the LGA guide interpreted the Order and set out 4 categories of risk assessment, Types 1 through 4 and also makes recommendations on the frequency of

FRAs and reviews. The Council's programme initially carried out Type 4 risk assessments (invasive within common parts and flats). The programme now carries out a hybrid assessment - covering common parts plus the interface between flats and common parts, with a sample of flats also surveyed. Intrusive survey work is commissioned where indicated as necessary.

- 4.7 Internally, both the Housing Service and Corporate Health and Safety have reviewed current arrangements and made recommendations which are being implemented - including strengthening compliance monitoring and quality assurance in respect of FRAs, fire safety checks and records of these - effectively ensuring that we are adequately 'checking the checkers'. Additional staff have been trained as Fire Risk Assessors and external capacity has been commissioned to ensure that all blocks, the majority of which are low rise and low risk, have had risk assessments completed in line with the LGA guideline timescales by December this year.
- 4.8 The Council has contacted Affinity Housing in respect of the Council's flatted stock managed under the North Whitley PFI contract. Affinity has confirmed that new FRAs have been completed for all flatted blocks which include sampling flats as well as inspecting the common parts. Blocks are considered low rise/low risk with Rockwool (inert) insulation. FRAs are carried out in accordance with LGA recommendations and external assessors used are fully trained. The Council will share and review FRAs with Affinity to ensure consistency of approach, cross-learning and quality assurance.
- 4.9 Discussions are taking place with tenants' representatives to scope a tenants' scrutiny exercise. In the light of issues raised by Grenfell Tower this is likely to focus on how tenants can communicate concerns to the Housing Service and how the Service feeds back.
- 4.10 Officers are not currently aware of any tenants with mobility difficulties above the ground floor in our high rise blocks. However, we have targeted people over the age of 65 who live in our high rise blocks for a Tenancy Audit visit to check for any mobility or other issues. In addition, the service had already commenced a 'tenant census' across the entire housing stock to find out more about the people currently residing in our properties. The census includes a question on disability and this will inform future targeted work. Housing and Sheltered Housing Officers already refer any vulnerable tenants identified to the RBFRS Community Fire Safety Officer for assessment, with their consent. Where vulnerable tenants are identified and their needs might have an impact on a Fire Risk Assessment this is to be flagged with the lead assessor.
- 4.11 Actions taken have also addressed the Council's responsibility to homeless households placed in B&Bs. Overall, the number of households placed in B&B is reducing and this is a clear and driving priority for the authority. However, the service will ensure that occupants in B&B are offered advice regarding safety/fire safety on placement and will encourage occupants to contact the team if they have any safety concerns. Information on living in B&B has been updated and re-sent to all current placements in B&Bs. Providers are being reminded of their responsibilities and encouraged to regularly check systems and ensure that residents are all aware of fire evacuation procedures with accessible information displayed on what to do in the event of a fire. A current system of B&B inspections is in place across Housing and Environmental Health.

### Corporate Buildings and Schools

#### Corporate Stock:

- 4.12 The Council has no Corporate buildings with ACM cladding installed to the structure. The Council has two buildings which are 4 storeys high and over - The Keep which is a

traditionally built brick building and 2-4 Darwin Close, which is a 5 storey concrete framed building. Care homes with sleeping accommodation are low rise and traditionally constructed. There are 12 low rise buildings with various external cladding systems (timber, steel profiled sheet, uPVC boarding and rendered panels) fixed to the external faces of the buildings.

- 4.13 All Fire Risk Assessments to the Council's corporate buildings have been carried out by an approved and qualified consultant on behalf of RBC. 95% of recommended remedial building works arising from the reports have been completed. Management actions arising from the reports have also been actioned with evidence provided to the Corporate H&S Team.
- 4.14 The new Civic Centre does have a small amount of a type of ACM cladding on the ground floor front entrance porch, but this has been confirmed to be acceptable and to be a different manufactured product to that installed at the Grenfell Tower. There is a designed fire evacuation strategy in place with alternative means of escape routes available to anyone in the ground floor reception if required.
- 4.15 Fire Risk Assessment re-inspections have been commissioned for Priority 1 and 2 buildings and these are currently being undertaken.

#### Schools and Educational Buildings:

- 4.16 The Council has only one school building with ACM cladding installed to the structure. The use of cladding material on buildings of less than 18m is considered to not be a significant risk provided that all other fire measures are in place and the building is not high risk. In the case of this School, the risk profile of the building is very different from the Grenfell Tower building, with no sleeping risk, dual staircases, a policy of immediate evacuation (and evacuation times of 3-4 minutes), automatic fire detection for early warning, and intermediate floors are designed as fire compartment floors.
- 4.17 At Prospect College there are two teaching blocks that are 4 storeys high. Both blocks are traditionally constructed brick buildings. There is a boarding block at Reading Boys School which contains sleeping accommodation, again this building is traditionally brick built.
- 4.18 All recently completed school expansion project and extensions at primary schools have external cladding installed. The cladding specified is not ACM and meets all necessary standards. The recently constructed Reading Girls School does have cladding installed but, again, this is not ACM. All Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out by an approved and qualified consultant on behalf of RBC. 75% of recommended remedial building works arising from the reports have been completed, with all work scheduled for completion in November 2017. Management actions arising from the reports have also been actioned with evidence provided to the Corporate H&S Team.
- 4.19 Fire Risk Assessment re-inspections will be actioned later this year following completion of the current programme of site works.

#### RBC Oversight of Fire Safety in Schools

- 4.20 Schools which have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council's Property Services have a fire risk assessment carried out under our contract with an external assessor. Within these reports there is an action plan relating to management and maintenance actions. Schools send RBC a copy of their completed management actions as evidence of compliance. The maintenance actions are completed by Property Services. The dates of completion are added to the Corporate Fire Risk Assessment spreadsheet which provides effective monitoring.

- 4.21 For Maintained schools, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies buying into our SLA - schools complete an annual Health and Safety audit, along with a Compliance audit which includes fire safety. The Council's H&S Team carry out proactive inspections at schools and look at how they manage fire safety including ensuring that routine equipment checks, servicing, fire drills and training take place and are recorded appropriately. If there is non-compliance the school has an action plan and deadlines to ensure the areas of concern are actioned. This is monitored by H&S. This information is added onto the Compliance spreadsheet and is shared at a corporate quarterly risk meeting.
- 4.22 There are four Academies who source their own H&S advice and property maintenance outside of RBC (John Madjeski, Church End, Meadow Park and Battle schools.) Whilst we have had no contact with these schools in respect of fire safety compliance the Department for Education is in direct contact with all Academies to identify any schools that may require improvements in fire risk control.

#### Cross Tenure Residential Buildings

- 4.23 Across tenures, a total of 88 residential buildings over 18 meters in height have been identified within the Reading Borough Council's administrative area including the 7 Local Authority blocks referred to above. The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) have visited each one of these premises in order to review fire safety including an assessment of the external materials used on each block. Where there is a concern over the cladding used, the owner has been asked to send material for testing by the Building Research Establishment (BRE).
- 4.24 At the time of writing a number of tests remain outstanding. However Council Officers and RBFRS are working closely with building owners to ensure that in the interim suitable additional measures are put in place. These measures are in line with DCLG advice as updated on 29 September 2017.

#### Emergency Response/Mass Fatality Incident

- 4.25 An overview of the Council's arrangements for responding to a similar incident such as Grenfell is outlined below. The implications of a Grenfell type incident on the Council's Emergency Response are as follows:
- a) 24hr Emergency Response staff required
  - b) Receiving evacuees
  - c) Mass fatalities
  - d) Aftercare/memorials
- 4.26 Reading Borough Council has a 24/7/365 Emergency Response Team structured in such a way as to allow it to work alongside Emergency Service partners at GOLD/SILVER and BRONZE level (Strategic, Tactical and Operational) and a suite of emergency plans to cater for incidents such as Grenfell.
- 4.27 Training of our staff to respond to such emergencies is part of an annual cycle. The Council has robust numbers of trained staff at BRONZE and GOLD levels, and whilst sufficient numbers of SILVER staff are in post, training of these SILVER staff is a gap that is in the process of being filled. In September 2017, 27 of the Council's Heads of Service and direct reports attended SILVER training. A further 9 staff will be trained by the end of November to a higher level to manage the Council's Emergency Operations Centre at SILVER level. A small number of fully trained SILVER staff are in place during this interim period.

## Receiving Evacuees

- 4.28 The Council has a Rest Centre plan in place to allow it to receive evacuees. Officers would activate our Rest Centre plan when there is a requirement to “receive evacuees that have been made unintentionally homeless” in large numbers. For smaller numbers of evacuees hotel accommodation would be utilised to house the evacuees, and each member of the Council’s Emergency Response Team has been issued with a Corporate Purchasing Card to allow them to book hotel accommodation out of hours for such an evacuation.
- 4.29 Our largest single Rest Centre is Rivermead Sports Centre and this can cater for approximately 500 people (sleeping - seated capacity is nearer 1000). We have many other evacuations centres across the Borough. The Council has stocks of evacuation equipment (airbeds, sleeping bags, pillows, toiletry kits) available to us sufficient to cater for approximately 500 in Reading, over 600 when combined with Wokingham Borough Council’s stocks (which are available quickly and easily to us) and over 800 when combined with all Councils’ stocks across Berkshire. These stocks are stored North/South/East/West either side of the Reading rivers to ensure that some supplies are always close to each corner of the Borough and available in the event of severe weather/flood.
- 4.30 Further to receiving evacuees the Council would have an ongoing duty to provide accommodation to households who cannot return to their properties in line with Homelessness legislation. The Housing Act 1996 determines that a person is considered to be homeless if they have no accommodation to occupy, and that a person would be considered to be a priority need for housing if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster. Under these circumstances the Housing Needs Service would work with the evacuees (further to their initial placement in a hotel or rest centre) to provide longer term accommodation in Bed and Breakfast whilst Homeless applications are processed with a view to providing more secure accommodation as and when it becomes available for those who are unintentionally homeless. In the event of a major disaster it is highly unlikely that the Council would be able to provide accommodation for all those affected within the Borough boundaries.

## Mass fatalities

- 4.31 Mass fatalities incidents often overwhelm local mortuary capacity and HM Coroner for Berkshire is administered by Reading Borough Council. The six Councils in Berkshire have developed a Temporary Mortuary plan to cater for such mass fatalities incidents. This plan caters for increasing body storage capacity as well as providing a temporary structure and extra staff to run the temporary mortuary on behalf of the Coroner. This plan has been regularly tested in a hypothetical environment but never in a live exercise as costs for setting up a facility are prohibitive for testing purposes (millions).

## Aftercare/Memorials

- 4.32 Wider ongoing support and aftercare for those affected by such an incident is the responsibility of individual RBC services (e.g. Council Tax cancellations for those unable to occupy their damaged homes). A reminder of the importance of planning to proactively support victims of such incidents is being picked up by the Council’s Business Continuity Planning process.
- 4.33 Psychological impacts following a Grenfell type incident are a likely possibility and we have plans in place across Thames Valley to access support and aftercare from Council and Voluntary services.

- 4.34 Memorials, anniversaries and charity funds for such incidents are managed by the Council's Communications Team. The Mayor's Fund would likely be used for an incident of this scale.

#### Access for emergency vehicles

- 4.35 Access for emergency services vehicles was an issue in Kensington and is a known issue for parts of Reading due to parking. The Council will ensure that joint work with RBFRS in respect of high rise residential buildings in the Borough takes into account an assessment of access for emergency vehicles and implications for fire safety measures and evacuation policy where this is a risk area.

## 5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 An internal Officer group has been set up to manage subsequent phases of work given the medium to longer term implications of the Grenfell Tower fire incident.
- 5.2 Officers have been in close liaison with RBFRS since the Grenfell Tower incident and a fortnightly telephone call with RBFRS has been instigated to ensure that information is shared in a timely way and matters arising in respect of high rise blocks or other buildings are being addressed. Information from DCLG is shared between the Council and RBFRS to ensure that both parties remain up to speed. Depending on the facts of the case, either the Council or RBFRS will 'lead' discussions with the relevant building's responsible officer to ensure that the interim measures required by the Government are maintained and that appropriate action, including and where necessary the replacement of cladding, are taken forward.
- 5.3 A County-wide Steering group has been convened by RBFRS with representatives of the 6 Unitary Authorities to agree a programme of joint work and facilitate sharing of learning, information and resources. A multi-disciplinary operational team comprising RBFRS and RBC officers will be formed with the remit of holistically reviewing the safety of high rise residential blocks on a prioritised basis. RBFRS are building a risk profile for all high rise premises across Berkshire to inform prioritisation. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed to clearly describe respective roles and responsibilities.
- 5.4 RBC and RBFRS officers have discussed how the Steering Group might also, in future, prioritise checks on certain non-high rise residential properties such as care homes, sheltered accommodation and other specialist housing where the occupants may be more vulnerable and less mobile. Houses in Multiple Occupation are another accommodation type which, through the County-wide Steering group's joint work, could result in improved safety for residents. Scope of partnership work will depend on the nature of issues arising from high rise residential stock and RBC/RBFRS capacity.

## 6 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 This report supports the following objectives in the corporate plan:

- Safeguarding and protecting most vulnerable
- Providing homes for those in most need
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active



## 7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Not applicable to this report.

## 8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

### Overview

8.1 There are several important pieces of legislation which impact on fire safety within dwellings, principally:

- Building Regulations 2010 Part B.
- Housing Act 2004.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

In addition, as noted above, the LGA published guidance in 2012 'Fire safety in purpose builds blocks of flats'.

8.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) came into force in October 2006. It does not apply to individual flats but does apply to the common parts of flats such as stairwells, a plant room or caretaker room, shared facilities and lobbies. Guidance on the FSO and its requirements has been issued in a series of guides. Blocks of flats are included, among many other types of residential premises, in the HM Government guide 'Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation' published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The FSO imposes duties on the 'responsible person' who has control of the premises - usually a company or organisation and usually the freeholder or landlord. Responsibilities also apply in respect of anyone who has a contract or responsibility for maintenance, repairs or for the safety of premises. The FSO is normally enforced by the fire and rescue authority.

8.3 The FSO requires that suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments (FRAs) are carried out - this forms the foundation for the fire safety measures required in a block of flats. The fire and rescue authority will review the FRA at the time they audit a building. Further detail is provided above in this report. An FRA will result in an action plan detailing managerial and physical measures with prioritisation commensurate with the risk. LGA guidance suggests that a low risk, low rise block might need an FRA to be completed every 4 years and reviewed every two years. For blocks with higher risk and over four storeys in height a new FRA every 3 years and an annual review would be more appropriate.

8.4 Material alterations to existing blocks of flats, including alterations to individual flats, are controlled under the Building Regulations 2010, and need to be approved by a building control body otherwise an offence is committed. Even if the block satisfied earlier legislation, proposed alterations must be considered in the light of the current Building Regulations; it is not sufficient to carry out alterations on the basis of the earlier legislation. In practice, any proposals to carry out alterations including to fire alarm systems, means of escape, smoke control arrangements and structural alterations, should be submitted to ensure compliance with regulations.

8.5 The Housing Act 2004 makes requirements regarding the condition of a broad spectrum of housing including both individual flats within a block and the common parts of a block. Local authorities are the enforcing authority for this legislation. Assessment of conditions is carried out using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) - where 'category 1' (more serious) hazards are identified the local authority has a duty to take some form of enforcement action. Under the Housing Act 2004, the housing authority must inspect properties if they become aware of significant fire hazards.

Housing authorities have powers of entry for this purpose. The housing authority may make requirements for improvements in fire precautions. In the event of serious risk, the housing authority has the power to prohibit or take emergency remedial action.

8.6 There is overlap between the Housing Act and FSO. The Housing Act covers flats and common parts whilst the FSO covers common parts. The safety of common parts can sometimes rely on fire safety measures within flats which is an added complexity.

8.7 The DCLG has written out to all LA Chief Executives and stated:

*While it is a building owner's responsibility to ensure their buildings are safe ... it is also the statutory duty of local housing authorities to keep local housing conditions under review, with a view to identifying if action needs to be taken, in relation to housing health and safety. I am sure you therefore agree it is of the utmost importance you take active steps to ensure that building owners of residential tower blocks are taking measures to ensure that their residents are safe and feel safe, particularly where buildings have been found to have cladding systems which have failed the combustibility tests.*

The DCLG makes clear that they expect LAs to identify buildings with ACM cladding in their area; ensure that necessary remedial actions are taken by building owners; and where necessary to take enforcement action.

8.8 The letter does not make any mention of the Fire and Rescue Service role, responsibilities or enforcement powers nor sets out expectations in respect of joint work. As above, locally RBFRS have inspected all high rise blocks to identify those with potential ACM cladding; advising owners to submit samples for testing; ensuring that interim measures are taken as needed and that expert consultants are commissioned to assess fire safety. The Council is liaising with RBFRS and will support them as needed to ensure full cooperation of building owners and to advise and support residents.

## 9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are a number of potential financial liabilities arising which are being factored into financial planning:

a) Works which are advised as a result of external review or mandated through changing regulation to the Council's own housing/other residential stock. Capacity to fund additional safety works has been modelled within the Housing Revenue Account.

b) Resourcing joint work with RBFRS to review cross tenure residential high rise buildings and managing any regulatory actions arising. Provision will be made to fully participate in the next stages of work.

9.2 In addition to the above, there is uncertainty in relation to the financial implications of any Fire Service or any Council using relevant regulatory powers to secure the removal and replacement of cladding (or undertake other critical fire safety works) through direct action where necessary and where the owner fails to take responsibility. This matter was recently raised with the DCLG.

9.3 The company conducting Type 4 FRAs to the Council's Housing blocks will advise on any additional measures required on the basis of the construction, fire protection measures and circumstances of each block. The requirement for future works to improve fire safety will be informed by the commissioned external review but also by recommendations arising from the Grenfell Tower enquiry and emerging industry advice.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |                             |
|------------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE |              |                             |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017                            | AGENDA ITEM: | 10                          |
| TITLE:           | PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR CHARTER               |              |                             |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR JOHN ENNIS                       | PORTFOLIO:   | HOUSING                     |
| SERVICE:         | REGULATORY SERVICES                         | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE                 |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | YASMIN AHMAD                                | TEL:         | 0118 937 2466               |
| JOB TITLE:       | PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING TEAM MANAGER         | E-MAIL:      | yasmin.ahmad@reading.gov.uk |

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made in delivering the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Charter action points and is an update report from the one submitted last year.
- 1.2 The PRS Charter aims to build a common understanding of values, standards and requirements for the private rented sector. It further demonstrates the Council's and partners' commitment to improving the sector.

Appendix 1: Private Rented Sector Charter

Appendix 2: Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme (criteria)

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That members note the progress made against the action of the Private Rented Sector Charter and the next steps outlined in the report.

#### 3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Following Consultation on the Charter between September and October 2015 the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee off 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 approved the PRS Charter and this report provides an update on progress across services.
- 3.2 The Private Rented Sector Charter was developed around 'providing a home for those most in need' as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015-18. A copy of the Charter is attached in appendix 1.

3.3 The Charter sets out the key actions that the Council will lead on to help support tenants, landlords, managing and letting agents to deliver a safe, healthy and thriving private rented sector. It promotes tenants choice and rights, landlords taking responsibility for their properties and delivering robust and effective action where they fail to do so.

4.0 PROGRESS

4.1 The table below shows the progress against the action points in the Charter.

| ACTION  | PROGRESS   |
|---|--|
| <p>To bring to an end unfair practices which contribute to an negative image of the private rented sector</p> | <p>Over the past year revisits, in line with the Consumer Rights Act 2015, have and are being conducted to a total of 85+ Letting Agents within the borough to ensure they are compliant with the legislation.</p> <p>A monetary penalty of £5000 was served to an agent for non-compliance of these requirements.</p> <p>The secondment of the Trading Standards Officer into the Private Sector Housing Team has resulted in some effective working across the team and colleagues at Reading University and other enforcement agencies such as the Illegal Money Lending Team and the National Estate Agent Team.</p> <p>Over the past 12 months the Trading Standards Officer has received 68 service requests from either tenants making complaints or business seeking advice. These have culminated in Warnings being given out, business advice and ongoing prosecution cases.</p> <p>Working in partnership with the 3 Government Approved Redress schemes and Right Move to help with process of Letting Agents compliance with ‘The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014’</p> <p>100% compliance with membership of the Redress scheme has been achieved.</p> |
| <p>To tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in the private rented housing sector</p>              | <p>The Winter Watch Scheme has been actively involved in supporting tenants in the Private Rented Sector. Over the last year 80 tenants in the private rented sector have been visited and offered money saving advice and practical guidance about staying warm and preparing for the winter. Tenants are shown how to operate heating equipment such as gas</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>To increase the number of landlords supplying good quality private rented homes</p> | <p>boilers and night storage heaters. The scheme is also on hand during the winter to provide emergency heating and blankets. For private rented tenants in receipt of means tested benefits, advice is provided on warm home improvements such as loft insulation and upgraded boilers through ECO funding. The Scheme will advise both landlords and tenants on what is available.</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing Action Week took place during the week of 2<sup>nd</sup> October where 5 different locations across the Borough were visited and Officers were available to offer advice and support to Reading residents and visitors on the services that the Council offer in particular in relation to renting in the Private Sector. In addition to raising awareness about illegal money lending and other services such as the Berkshire Credit Union that may be of benefit to people in Reading. Officers spoke with approximately 300 people over the course of the week and off these we received 10 requests for follow up action by the Council.</p> <p>External street surveys were carried out of a total of 607 properties over 9 different streets. The location of the street surveys were based on areas where there are known private rented sector properties and where we have received complaints. The street survey's found that 406 properties were in good order.</p> <p>We spoke with 93 people who are private renting and who require no follow-up action by the Council.<br/> 76 owner/occupiers who also require no follow up action by the Council<br/> 10 Council tenants who require no follow up action.<br/> We had a total of 22 properties that require follow up action from the street surveys.</p> |
| <p>To act against criminal landlords to protect tenants</p>                            | <p>The Private Sector Housing Team runs the mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme which deals with 1,000 properties a year. In addition the team deals with in excess of 1,500 service requests per year relating to enforcement matters. Over the last year 9 prosecutions have been taken against criminal landlords with fines and costs totalling £53,000</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Tenants and Landlords both take responsibility for the homes they let and live in</p>       | <p>The Housing Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS) launched in September 2016 and now facilitates 269 tenancies within the Borough. The Deposit Guarantee Scheme continues to operate and across the two schemes 334 households are currently accommodated.</p> <p>The Home for Reading Ltd, a company wholly owned by the Council, was established in 2016 and commercial acquisitions and lettings in Summer 2017. The company offers responsibly managed private rented sector accommodation at market and sub-market rents. 'Homes for Reading' will increase access to safe and suitable housing including for those in acute housing need...</p> <p>On-going partnership work with voluntary and community organisations to increase identification of vulnerable groups at risk from rogue landlords.</p> <p>The Housing Advice Service will work with landlords to prevent homelessness where ever possible. The team will refer households to the floating support service commissioned by the Council in situations where they would benefit from support to pay rent and manage a tenancy. Officers will make referrals to money advice services to maximise tenant's incomes and prevent rent arrears as well as applications for Discretionary Housing Benefit to ensure that future rental payments are made in full.</p> |
| <p>To work with tenants, landlords and agents to avoid creating a crisis in tenants' lives</p> | <p>A training programme is being delivered for tenants and community groups to raise awareness of their legal rights and obligations when renting a property. 5 training sessions have been delivered of these 2 were to voluntary sector organisations and 3 were to tenant groups. A rolling programme of tenant training of one a month has been set up in partnership with colleagues in Housing Advice</p> <p>Landlords are encouraged to attend accredited courses run by the National Landlord Association (NLA)</p> <p>Officers from the Private Sector Housing Team were invited to speak at a recent conference in London as an example of good practice in identifying and tackling rogue landlords.</p>   |

- 4.2 The key piece of work highlighted for this year's work programme was the Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to differentiate landlord/letting sub sectors. The scheme was designed in consultation with the Council's Housing Advice Team, Citizens Advice, Reading

Welfare Rights, Reading University and students union and Reading College, Landlords Associations & Letting Agents within Reading and other key stakeholders. Input has also been provided by the Council legal services, finance and insurance teams

4.3 The Scheme has been designed to rate Landlords, Letting and Managing Agents based on the criteria they achieve. The criteria are divided into 3 tiers of (1) bronze, (2) silver and (3) gold each reflecting the different levels of private rented sector standards required with bronze being the basic standard required of all private rented properties and the other 2 standards build in this. (The detailed criteria is attached in appendix 2)

4.4 There is a charge associated with the scheme as follows which is paid by applicants when they submit their applications on line. The fees are as follows:

Up to 10 properties in the portfolio = £180  
11-50 properties in the portfolio = £260  
51-100 properties in the portfolio = 360  
Over 100 = £500

As an incentive the first 10 applications will be free of charge

4.5 On receipt of application a percentage of properties of the applicant will be inspected and if it is a letting or managing agent this will include a visit to their offices and check of their websites

4.6 Membership of the scheme is purely voluntary but early indications show interest from across the sector to be part of the scheme.

## 5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Over the next twelve months it is proposed to;

- Implement and promote a 'Reading Rent with Confidence Scheme'.
- Continue to deliver training to tenants in Reading on their rights and obligations in relation to renting a property including promoting best practice through the promotion of the Private Rented Sector code of practice (RICS) and the Tenants Code of Practice (DCLG).
- Develop and deliver training to Landlords on their obligations.
- Work with enforcement officers and other agencies to increase knowledge in the sector and advise on fraudulent activity such as fake gas and electricity certificates.
- Continue to increase the identification of sub-standard properties. Carry out further street surveys to proactively identify substandard properties.
- Continue with the zero tolerance approach and take prosecutions against landlords who fail to comply with Housing Legislation.
- Rolling programme of annual inspection of Letting Agents to ensure on going membership of Redress scheme, publishing fees and compliance with EPC certificates.

5.2 In addition to the above actions Officers will look again at the benefits of a discretionary HMO Licensing scheme for the Borough. The Government has proposed an extension of the Mandatory HMO Licensing scheme to be implemented in Autumn 2018. The Governments proposed scheme affects any property no matter how many storey's in which there are 5 or more people resident who comprise 2 or more households. If this proceeds it would impact approximately 5,000 HMO's. If this does not proceed it is proposed to explore a discretionary licensing Scheme in Reading in line with the mandatory one proposed by the Government

## 6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 In relation to the Council's Corporate Plan the following themes are appropriate:

Providing homes for those most in need - the PRS Charter points will result in improved housing conditions and contribute to the health, safety and welfare of residents by driving up physical and management standards in the Private Rented Sector.

Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active - the outcome of this project will reduce the impacts of enviro-crime, reported anti-social behaviour, and build community resilience.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 On-going community engagement to encourage support and further partnership working and to develop and advance actions to improve the PRS.

## 8.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Not required at this time.

## 9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Regulatory Compliance through The Housing Act 2004 along with other pieces of legislation allows for enforcement action to be taken against Landlords failing to provide properties to the required standards.

9.2 The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014 allows for enforcement against letting agents and property management companies who do not belong to one of the approved schemes.

9.3 The Consumer Rights Act 2015, Chapter 3, Part 3, It is a legal requirement for all letting agents in England and Wales to publicise details of their relevant fees; state whether or not they are a member of a client money protection scheme; and give details of which redress scheme they have joined.

## 10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The delivery of the action plan is funded through existing resources in the team.



# Private Rented Sector Housing Charter

## Narrowing the Gap Providing homes for those most in need



[www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Everyone is entitled to a good quality home</p> <p>To increase the number of landlords supplying good quality private rented homes</p> <p>To raise awareness of what a good quality home is and encourage landlords and agents to provide this</p> <p>To act against criminal landlords to protect tenants.</p> <p>That the private rented sector helps to meet the housing needs of Reading's residents.</p> <p>That tenants and landlords both take responsibility for the homes that they let and live in.</p> |  |
| 6  | <p>Increasing the identification and referral of sub-standard properties by working with partners and stakeholders to further develop our intelligence led approach.</p> <p>RBC, Citizens advice, Reading Welfare Rights, tenants, landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU</p>  |
| 7  | <p>Establishing mechanisms to identify and target vulnerable groups most at risk from rogue landlord activity, to ensure support is focused on those in most need.</p> <p>RBC, health partners, Community Care - Adults and Children's Teams, Citizens Advice, Reading Welfare Rights, tenants, landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU, RNIN</p> |
| 8  | <p>Launching a new campaign and materials to raise awareness about the advice available to landlords and tenants.</p> <p>RBC, Citizens Advice, Reading Welfare Rights, tenants, landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU</p>   |
| 9  | <p>Promote best practice through the promotion of the PRS code of practice (RICS) and the Tenants Code of Practice (DCLG).</p> <p>RBC, Landlords Associations, RUSU</p>  |
| 10   | <p>Develop and promote a 'rent with confidence' scheme which will be used to differentiate landlord sub sectors.</p> <p>RBC, Citizens advice, Reading Welfare Rights, tenants, landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU</p>  |
| 11   | <p>Collaborate in the delivery of further training, seeking to improve the skills and knowledge of all landlords, lettings and managing agents in Reading.</p> <p>RBC, Citizens advice, Reading Welfare Rights, tenants, landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU</p>  |

## ***This Charter sets out the Councils ambition to work in partnership to bring about effective changes in Reading's private rented housing.***

The Charter is about setting out key actions that the Council will lead on to help support tenants, landlords, letting and managing agents to deliver a safe, healthy and thriving private rented sector. It promotes tenants choice and rights, landlords taking responsibility for their properties standards and delivering effective and robust action where they fail to do so.

The private rented sector is a growing sector, both locally and nationally and is the tenure of choice for some, but of last resort of others. The sector has some of the poorest standards which can impact adversely on health and the quality of life for Reading's residents.

The Charter is in response to an extensive study of the private rented sector market which has resulted in the development of an action plan. It is clear that the Council cannot act alone in improving the private rented sector and although the action plan is matched with resource, it requires everyone involved in the sector to make a contribution to ensure its success.

### **Shared ambitions**

- Everyone is entitled to a good quality home.
- That the private rented sector helps to meet the housing needs of Reading's residents.
- That tenants and landlords both take responsibility for the homes that they let out and live in.
- To increase the number of landlords supplying good quality private rented homes.
- To raise awareness of what a good quality home is and encourage landlords and agents to provide this.
- To tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in private rented housing.
- To work with tenants, landlords and agents to increase understanding of what is a reasonable and proportionate response to a dispute.
- To act against criminal landlords to protect tenants.
- To work with tenants, landlords and agents to avoid creating a crisis in tenants' lives.
- To bring to an end unfair practices which contribute to a negative image of the private rented sector.

### **Shared actions**

To bring to an end unfair practices which contribute to a negative image of the private rented sector.

To work with tenants, landlords and agents to increase understanding of what is a reasonable and proportionate response to a dispute.

To work with tenants, landlords and agents to avoid creating a crisis in tenants' lives.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1   | To review and provide support to Landlords, Lettings and Managing agents to ensure that tenants are protected from unfair practices.   | RBC, Landlords associations, lettings and managing agents, University of Reading, Reading College, RUSU, RWR, CAB |
| 2   | To work with enforcement staff to increase knowledge in the sector and advise on fraudulent activity such as the issuing of 'fake certificates'.   | RBC, Gas Safe, approved electrical contractors, landlords, letting agents   |
| 3   | To ensure that all Lettings and Managing Agents operating within the Borough are members of a redress scheme.  | RBC, approved redress schemes   |
| 4   | Reviewing and developing internal systems to deal with allegations of harassment and illegal eviction, including as necessary, prosecution of landlords or their agents.   | RBC   |
| <b>To tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in private rented housing</b> |  |   |
| 5   | To review the private rented sectors current position with Energy Performance Certificate compliance. The sector needs to move to a position where they meet minimum energy efficiency standards and this will impact on tenants health and work towards reducing the impacts of fuel poverty. | RBC, Landlords, lettings and managing agents.   |

## Scheme Criteria Overview

### KEY:

Letting Agent/Management Agent  
Specific



- Long-term tenancies (e.g 2 years)
- No successful legal action by any enforcement authority (in last 5 years)
- Attend training sessions and update meetings
- **Disclose any personal interest in properties**

- Charge maximum deposit equal to 6 weeks or 1 and a half month's rent
- Regular recorded property condition inspections
- Target response times for emergencies and other requests
- Inventory check-list for check-in and check-out
- If using Letting/Management Agent then use one registered on RRWC scheme
- **Member of a Client Money Protection Scheme**
- **Remove 'to-let' boards outside of properties within 14 day time-frame**



- Gas/electrical certificates provided to tenants and the Local Authority (on request)
- EPC minimum standard of 'E' in all properties
- Any HMO licensable properties need to be licensed
- All properties free of Category 1 hazards (HHSRS)
- Written tenancy agreements for all tenants
- All deposits must be protected
- Must carry out Right to Rent checks
- Provide How to Rent guide
- No rental increases within fixed term tenancies (12 months or less)
- Fire/Heat/Carbon Monoxide alarms to be fitted and checked annually
- Meet a fit and proper person test
- **Member of a Redress Scheme**
- **Detailed fees presented on website and in office**
- **Clear statement regarding membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme**



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |                                      |
|------------------|---|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE |              |                                      |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017                              | AGENDA ITEM: | 12                                   |
| TITLE:           | CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE                   |              |                                      |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | SARAH HACKER                                  | PORTFOLIO:   | CULTURE, SPORT AND CONSUMER SERVICES |
| SERVICE:         | ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT               | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE                          |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | GRANT THORNTON                                | TEL:         | 0118 937 2416                        |
| JOB TITLE:       | HEAD OF ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT       | E-MAIL:      | grant.thornton@reading.gov.uk        |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on two key developments relating to cultural services and activities. It is not intended to be comprehensive with regard to the activities or initiatives underway or planned by the many cultural organisations in the town but, rather, to focus on key recent developments the Council is involved in. It is preceded on the agenda by a presentation on the Abbey Quarter by the Museum Manager Matthew Williams and information on this exciting initiative is, therefore, not replicated in this report. The report focuses on progress in taking forward Reading's successful bid to the 'Great Places Scheme' (including a reconfiguration of the Cultural Partnership) and the delivery plans being developed by the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and Reading Museum consequent on being jointly awarded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status by Arts Council England (ACE).
- 1.2 Appendix 1 - Cultural Partnership: Revised membership and draft Terms of Reference.  
Appendix 2 - Great Place Scheme: Project Management Structure.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress being made with regard to taking forward Reading's Great Place Scheme as set out in section 4.1 of the report.
- 2.2 That Committee agrees to scrutinise the work of the Cultural Partnership and, as a minimum, receives an annual report on its work.
- 2.3 That Committee agrees to the Council entering into a Partnership with Reading University, as required by Arts Council England, in order to establish Reading Museum and the Museum of English Rural Life as a joint National Portfolio Organisation.

2.4 That the signing of the Partnership Agreement with Reading University is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Culture, Leisure and Consumer Services, Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services and the Director of Finance.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe, green and active;
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living;
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

3.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. The new Culture and Heritage Strategy clearly sets out an aspirational vision for culture and heritage to play a key role in the town's future, enhancing the quality of life for residents and increasing the attractiveness of the town for visitors and investors. The Strategy envisages Reading's profile and reputation as a cultural destination being transformed over the coming years, building from a strong base of arts and heritage organisations and assets and catalysed by the Year of Culture that was held in 2016.

3.3 A new 2050 Vision was launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> October this year following an extensive period of development and consultation by the three lead organisations: Reading UK, Reading University and Barton Willmore. The Council has endorsed this Vision and, in its role as community leader, to work alongside other agencies and organisations to realise the Vision's ambitions. A thriving and renowned cultural offer is a key component of this vision.

3.4 The new Economic Development Plan led by Reading UK CIC, "Growing Opportunity" has the three key objectives of: raising Reading's profile; growing opportunities to strengthen the local economy; and employment for local people. The further development of arts, culture and the digital economy to contribute to these objectives is at the heart of the plan.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

#### 4.1 Current Position:

##### Great Place Scheme

The Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee considered a report entitled 'Great Place Scheme: Reading-on-Thames' at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> July this year. This report set-out the parameters of this new funding initiative, a summary of the key areas of work that will be supported by the grant award of £558,400, including who will lead on delivery of these over the eligible expenditure period that runs until December 2020; and a summary of the next steps required to ensure that proposals are progressed in accordance with grant conditions and to obtain 'permission to start'. The Committee endorsed the work undertaken to secure the Great Place

Scheme grant and supported the proposals for the Council and its partners (Reading UK and Reading University) to take forward implementation.

Work has been undertaken to fulfil the requirements to get 'permission to start' from the funders with information provided as follows:

- Cost break down and cash flow;
- Confirmation of partnership funding;
- Timetable / activity programme (with more detail for year1);
- Project management and procurement arrangements;
- Job descriptions for any staff to be employed utilising grant funding;
- Draft formal Partnership Agreement with key delivery partners.

Permission to start will shortly be secured from the funding agencies following a review meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October.

In addition to meeting these formal 'signing-off' requirements there has been significant progress in preparatory work to underpin delivery going forwards. This includes:

### **Cultural Partnership**

We have progressed the reconfiguration of the composition and role of this established partnership to make it more fit for purpose and also to act as the Great Place Board (specifically incorporated into new Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1). This has involved two workshops led by an external facilitator, Cllr. Guy Nicholson, who was also the lead on the Peer Review of Cultural Services in Reading carried out earlier this year. The reconfiguration of governance structures for culture, arts and heritage was one of the Peer Review's key recommendations and the continuity provided by Cllr. Nicholson's facilitation greatly assisted the process and the positive engagement of all the stakeholders. A key objective of reconfiguring the Partnership was to ensure that it could take a strategic and developmental role, connecting up and adding value to existing activities whilst also looking to the future.

The Partnership (Great Place Board) has agreed its purpose as to:

- Provide vision and strategy for Culture and Arts in Reading;
- Act as the strategic 'Great Place Scheme Board' - overseeing its development and delivery;
- Raise the local, national and international profile of Culture;
- Plan ahead, provide strategic direction and steer the development of future initiatives and investment.

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the reconfigured Cultural Partnership is scheduled to take place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November chaired by the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services.

### **Recruitment**

The recruitment to the post of Culture Development Officer with RBC is in the process of being finalised. Interviews were carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> September and an outstanding candidate has accepted the post and will start in early December.

Recruitment of the Reading-on-Thames Festival Director for 2018 has also been completed, led by Reading UK who will be the employing organisation. Again the calibre of the person appointed is considered to be impressive. Now that the Director is in post the recruitment of a Producer for the festival is now underway.

### Reading-on-Thames Festival

The Festival was trialled this September (with support from ACE) and was very well received. Currently being evaluated with surveys of both businesses and audiences underway - this will help provide feedback to inform development of next year's Festival. Over £20k of private sector match funding (cash) was secured which bodes well for exceeding the Great Place Scheme £50k match funding target over the next 3 years as the Festival builds.

### University Research and Outreach

Over the summer, Dr. Sally Lloyd-Evans and colleagues at the University have carried out some initial scoping around mental health and have identified some potential community arts and health partners in South Reading. They have also recruited teams of 'young researchers' and teachers in local schools who will help to co-create the research methodology going forward.

A schematic illustrating the management and governance structure for the Great Place Scheme is attached at Appendix 2.

### National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)

Arts Council England's (ACE's) National Portfolio provides regular funding for organisations that have a long-term and sustained commitment to a programme of high quality work meeting ACE's strategic objectives. These objectives include:

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries;
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries;
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries.

A key benefit of NPO status, over and above the reputation and kudos it provides, is multi-annual core funding. This funding has been extended from 3 to 4 years duration in the current bidding round with funding available for the period April 2018 to March 2022.

Historically Reading has had no local NPOs. However, early discussions with ACE suggested there might be opportunities in the current round given a shared strategic ambition to establish Reading as a cultural hub. ACE announced the results of the bidding round on the 27<sup>th</sup> June and a joint bid by MERL and Reading Museum was successful. The Council also submitted a bid for NPO status for South Street Arts Centre but unfortunately this was not successful on this occasion. However, two other local organisations, CultureMix and Readipop, were also successful meaning that Reading now has 3 NPOs across 4 organisations. Given the competitiveness for NPO status and funding this is a major achievement for the town's cultural sector.

The joint Museum bid is led by MERL in an equal partnership with Reading Museum under the umbrella of the 'Reading Town and Country Museums Partnership' (RTCMP).

'The mission of RTCMP is to create opportunities to experience heritage that builds a sense of place and identity for Reading and its surrounding communities. Our ambition is to play a leading part in the transformation of Reading's reputation as a cultural centre. Building on the strength of our track record of partnership, as RTCMP we will:

- Exploit the quality and distinctiveness of our collections;
- Embrace and deliver fundamental change in the scope and impact of our engagement with audiences;



- Promote our commitment to engage our common audiences through innovative practice, shared workforce and programme development;
- Deliver excellence for all our audiences.’

A key focus of the project is community engagement and outreach (‘audience development’) and being an exemplar of good practice in this regard, including for work with schools and young people. In this regard both Museums are building from a strong base having both received significant HLF awards with associated engagement and activity programmes over the next few years. Proposals include some shared posts to work across both Museums, development of a shared ‘Youth Strategy’, which will include focusing on widening participation. Proposals also support increased resilience and financial sustainability into the future.

The successful bid is worth £1m in total over the 4 years shared across the two museums. Both Museums are currently working together on a shared Business Plan that will need to be submitted to ACE by 15<sup>th</sup> December and approved in advance of funding being available from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. The University will be the lead accountable body and the required formal partnership agreement with RBC as a consortium partner is currently in draft form.

#### 4.2 Options Proposed

The Committee has already endorsed the work undertaken to secure the Great Place Scheme grant and supported the proposals for the Council and its partners (Reading UK and Reading University) to take forward implementation. This report provides an update on progress since the July Committee meeting with considerable focus on the reconfiguration of the Cultural Partnership that has taken place and which was also a key recommendation from the Peer Review of cultural services earlier this year. The Cultural Partnership will keep its membership and activities under review and remain flexible to accommodate changes should these be needed. It is also proposed that the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee fulfils a scrutiny role with regard to the work of the Cultural Partnership and, as a minimum, receives an annual report and update on the Partnerships work.

Led by MERL, the Museums are currently developing a Business Plan linked to their NPO funding from ACE which will commence in April 2018 and continue through to March 2022. An annual delivery plan will need to be produced and agreed by ACE for each year of funding. This provides scope to flex or amend proposals and activities as joint working develops over the four year period. The University will be the Accountable Body and will be required to enter into a Partnership or Collaboration Agreement with the Council so that both organisations have a formal commitment both to delivery and to meeting the grant conditions specified by ACE. This agreement is currently in draft format and will need to be signed and submitted to ACE along with the Delivery Plan in February.

#### 4.2 Other Options Considered

The successful bids for both the Great Place Scheme and NPO status are bringing significant additional resources to develop and extend the impact of cultural activities in the town. Effort has been focused on meeting the requirements of the funders in order to be able to progress delivery and this work is essential if the funding on offer is to be secured.



## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

5.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. This strategy has an over-arching ambition that:

'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.'

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 There are specific requirements and guidelines for publicity for Great Place Scheme Projects and in particular the funders are keen that the public know how they have contributed towards putting arts, culture and heritage at the heart of 16 places across the country by playing National Lottery games.

6.2 Community engagement and information is at the heart of plans for delivering Reading's Great Place Scheme proposals. In particular the research and commissioning strands of the programme will require extensive community involvement and incorporate community led research models.

6.3 Increasing both the quantum and scope of community engagement is also central to the Museums' NPO Delivery Plans, including in particular a commitment to develop a 'Youth Strategy' for the engagement and involvement of young people with a focus on those currently not accessing the cultural offer.

6.4 More broadly information, marketing and engagement are central to audience development across much of the cultural sector, including the many community based culture and heritage delivery organisations. The Cultural Partnership will continue to seek to ensure that there is effective community engagement and easily accessible information as a key part of its overall remit.

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant with regard to the content of this report.

7.2 A particular focus of the proposals is to enable widespread access to cultural opportunities by developing initiatives to engage new or under-represented audiences and to address the health and well-being of more vulnerable groups through a programme of cultural commissioning.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has power to enter into the partnership funding agreement and to undertake and implement the NPO activities under s1. Localism Act 2011 (the general power of competence). The Council also has power under s.19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide inside or outside its area recreational facilities as it thinks fit.
- 8.2 The funding provided to NPOs by ACE is conditional on a funding agreement with the University as accountable body and these grant conditions will be reflected in the Partnership Agreement with the Council. The Council is experienced in meeting the requirements of ACE funding both as lead accountable body and as a partner.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The successful bid is worth £249,999 per annum over the 4 years, £999,996 in total, shared across the two museums. There is no requirement for any direct match funding but an expectation that existing resources will be deployed to ensure that the additional activities within the NPO proposals and business plans are delivered.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 'Great Place Scheme: Reading-on-Thames', Report to the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

'Peer Review of Cultural Services', Report to the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

'GREAT PLACE SCHEME: Reading-on-Thames' - HLF grant award letter 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

'The Cultural Education Partnership', Report to the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-30

'Great Art and Culture for Everyone' - 10 Year Strategic Framework 2010-2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Revised 2013, ACE.

'Rdg 2050 Vision: A vision for a smart and sustainable Reading 2050.'

Cultural Partnership (Great Place Board)  
DRAFT Role & Responsibilities - Terms of Reference  
September 17

## Purpose

### To

- Provide vision and strategy for Culture, Heritage and Arts in Reading
- Act as a strategic Great Place Board - overseeing its development and delivery
- Raise the local, national and international profile of Culture

## Proposed Board Structure

Proposed structure, based on functional numbers and feedback from development workshop

### Stakeholder/Representative Board - 14 reps

- RBC Arts & Heritage Forum / RBC rep
- University
- Reading College
- Reading UK CIC
- Business - digital business community
- Reading CAN
- Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality
- Networks:
  - Music
  - Dance
  - Drama - Theatre & Arts Reading
  - Museum & Heritage
  - Visual Arts
  - Health and wellbeing
- Chair / rep Cultural Education Partnership

### Delivery groups / sub groups

Membership will enable influential advocacy and leadership and direct linkages to, and accountability of, new and established delivery groups or sub-groups, including: Reading International, Reading Abbey Revealed, CEP, Ageing-well, Skills and Economy (including funding and sponsorship), Reading-on-Thames Festival, Junction Dance, CAN, Reading 2050, Arts & Heritage Forum

As mentioned above the new structure could be supplemented as follows:

- 'Task and Finish' or Sub Groups with at least 2 Board members and co-option where necessary (Possible sub groups: Economy & Skills, Funding & Sponsorship, Promoting Excellence)
- A reference group comprising anyone who has expressed an interest in an arts-related topic including artists, sponsors, funders, audiences and venue operators.

The Reference (Executive?) Group is inclusive, not exclusive and is self-selecting. The breadth of membership ensures that no specific interest group can dominate.

- To provide people to sit on sub groups or Task & Finish Groups
- To provide the Board with a wide range of knowledge to draw on;
- To informally hold the Board to account

## Terms of Reference

### Proposed Objectives

- To provide vision and strategy for Culture, Heritage and Arts in Reading
- Work in partnership to increase the profile, investment and support of the arts and culture in Reading
- To implement a shared Reading Culture & Heritage Strategy and delivery plan and monitor its delivery
- To encourage excellence in the arts in Reading
- To help influence and support opportunities for community engagement in the arts, particularly among children, young people and those who experience barriers to participation
- To raise Readings reputation and profile for Culture and heritage
- To provide an overview and add value to key Culture and Heritage initiatives and maximise benefits
- To ensure Accountability by producing an annual report to HNL Committee
- To develop Business involvement and establish links to Economic Forum
  - Develop economic forum - theme arts and culture and digital economy importance to place, retaining employees. Quality offer for business to benefit from
- To deliver an Annual Cultural Forum
- To ensure wider demographic representation in cultural activities and work with diverse local groups

### Culture and Heritage strategy

The partnership developed the existing strategy which was published at the end of 2015. The Strategy has headings which overlap and are fairly loose; there is a need to operationalise the strategy and add value. Proposed to revisit strategy - strengths and building blocks.

It is proposed that:

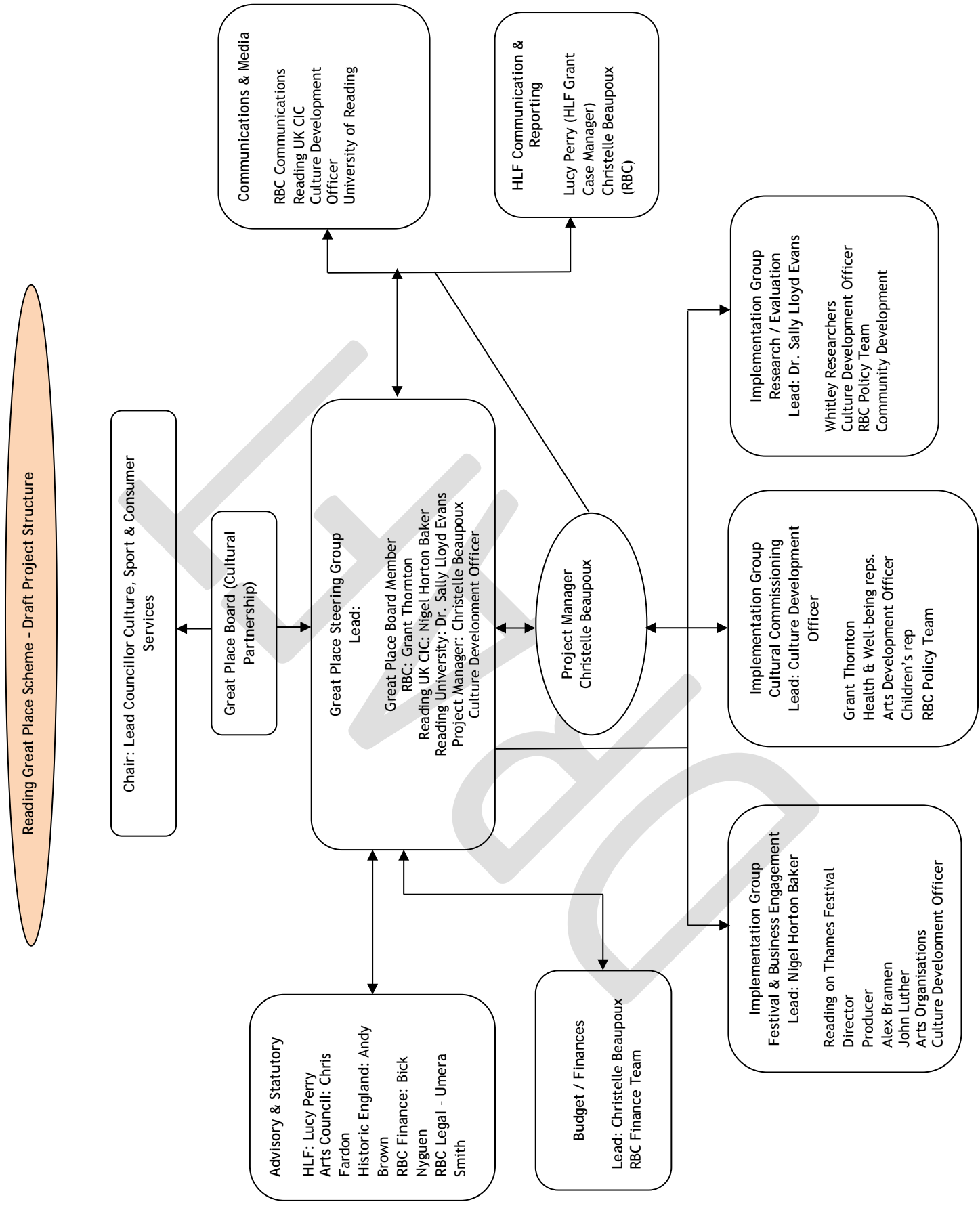
- The strategy is reviewed in 2017 by the revised board and stakeholders
- The draft action plan in place is revisited to ensure focused on themes that are making difference, the arts manifesto is referenced in the action plan
- The standing items (proposed overleaf) are informed by the strategy & action plan, but primarily by the Great Place Scheme

### Potential future agendas & work programme

Focused based around list of achievable objectives, focus on delivery of Great Place Action Plan

Proposed standing items:

- Image
- Communications
- Support to artists
- Funding
- Addressing skills of a strategic nature.
- Reading 2050 vision
- Culture of place - benefits
- Single point of entry information
- Mapping linkages with other fora etc.



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |   |              |  |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|
| TO:              | HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE                    |              |  |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017  | AGENDA ITEM: | 13   |
| TITLE:           | ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UPDATE AND PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | CLLR TERRY  | PORTFOLIO:   | NEIGHBOURHOODS   |
| SERVICE:         | HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES                              | WARDS:       | BORROUGH WIDE  |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | ANTHONY BRAIN   | TEL:         | 0118 937 3179  |
| JOB TITLE:       | COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENABLEMENT MANAGER                         | E-MAIL:      | <a href="mailto:Anthony.brain@reading.gov.uk">Anthony.brain@reading.gov.uk</a> |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides a short update on antisocial behaviour (ASB) in Reading.
- 1.2 The report identifies the need to convert the current Designated Public Place Order (DPPO (Street drinking restriction)), into a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and make recommendations on a number of restrictions to be included within a new order for consultation.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee note the update on Anti-Social Behaviour in Reading.
- 2.2 That Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee agree Option 3 as set out in Paragraph 5.3 to be taken forward.
- 2.3 That Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee agree to consult on the additional restrictions identified at paragraph 5.4.
- 2.4 That following the consultation a report is brought back to Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee detailing consultation feedback and with recommendations on implementing any new restrictions.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading's Community Safety Partnership's three year plan (2016-19) acknowledged that ASB remains a priority and concern for many residents of Reading.
- 3.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy (the strategy) was written at a time of rapid change in policy, legislation and public funding. Meeting the objectives has at times been challenging and only achieved through partners willingness to work together.
- 3.3 ASB continues to be a national priority in recognition of the devastating impact it can have on individuals and communities. The last Crime Survey for England and Wales reported that there were 1.79 million incidents of ASB reported to the police nationally. The number of reported incidents has been falling slowly over the last four years.
- 3.4 A reduction in resources across partner agencies has resulted in changes to the way that some services are delivered at a neighbourhood level. However, patch-based working between services is now embedded in most areas resulting in more effective and joined-up approaches to tackling local issues.
- 3.5 Multi-agency senior level problem-solving groups have also been introduced. These place a greater emphasis on those areas with the most difficult and persistent issues.
- 3.6 Thames Valley Police have restructured and services have adapted and adjusted working models to ensure that collectively we are able to continue to respond to the changing nature of Anti-social Behaviour.
- 3.7 There has been a shift over time in the demands for service in relation to ASB enquiries, with substantial increases in two key areas:
  - **Unauthorised Encampments:** There has been a 70% increase in the number of unauthorised encampments on local authority land since 2013.
  - **Begging and rough sleeping:** There has been an increase in the levels of begging within Reading Town Centre and an associated increase in ASB linked to begging, rough sleeping and drug taking.

### 4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The nature of Anti-Social Behaviour being dealt with by the local authority's Anti-Social Behaviour team has changed. Whilst in the main the number of calls for service is still primarily from victims of ASB directed at them (Personal ASB), we have seen some areas of Situational ASB increase disproportionately.
- 4.2 Situational ASB impacts greatly on neighbourhoods and therefore can indirectly affect more people. The two main areas where this has been most prevalent are that of ASB associated with begging, rough sleeping and drugs,

and unauthorised camping on local authority land. It is important to note that not all of those who are rough sleeping beg, and many of those who are begging are in fact adequately accommodated. The Council funds a wide range of services for single homeless people, rough sleepers and those with substance misuse problems including proactive outreach to enable them to access housing and specialist support. Critically, our partnership approach to tackling ASB associated with the street population has a strong emphasis on prevention and support.

- 4.2 **Personal ASB:** The number of cases of Personal ASB reported to the local authority anti-social behaviour team has reduced by nearly 13% since 2014/15. For the same period the number of cases resulting in some form of legal action or threat of possession has increased from 10 to 19.

| Period    | Cases | NOSP <sup>1</sup> | Possession Granted | Injunctions | Victim Satisfaction |
|-----------|-------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 2016 / 17 | 221   | 8                 | 5                  | 6           | 92%                 |
| 2015 / 16 | 261   | 4                 | 1                  | 10          | Not available       |
| 2014 / 15 | 251   | 1                 | 2                  | 7           | Not available       |

Table 1: Personal Anti-Social Behaviour data.

- 4.3 **Unauthorised Encampments:** Figure 1 demonstrates how demand has increased on the Local Authority in dealing with Unauthorised Encampments (UE) on its land and within the borough as a whole. The number of Unauthorised Encampments has risen substantially and virtually year on year since 2010<sup>2</sup>. Since 2010 UE within Reading has risen by 76% - the vast majority of this increase has been driven by encampments that are recorded as being on Local Authority land (73%). This is at a time when resources to deal with the encampments and associated issues have been reducing.

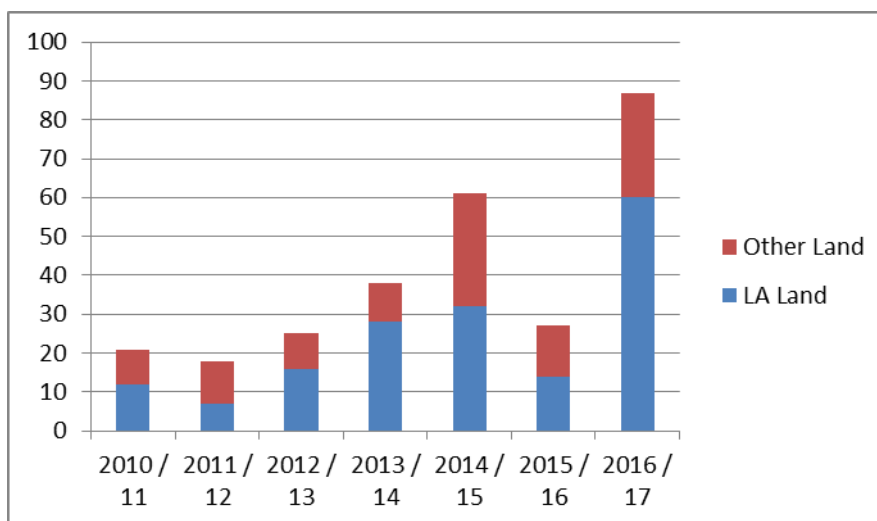


Figure 1: Unauthorised Encampments 2010 - 2016

<sup>1</sup> Notice of Seeking Possession

<sup>2</sup> The exception to the year on year increase was 2015 / 16 it is unclear why the numbers were so low for this period.



- 4.4 The nature of these encampments has also changed over time. More recently encampments on Local Authority land have been in areas that substantially impact on local communities. An example of this was the repeated encampments on Prospect Park and around Granville Road over the last year.
- 4.5 Figure 2 below shows one of the impacts on resources brought about by the increase in demand. There has been a substantial increase in the percentage of encampments requiring a legal response by the local authority - increasing from around 5 percent in 2014/15 to nearly 14 percent in 2016/17, with a similar increase in the number of times the Police used their section 61 powers to evict over the two year period.

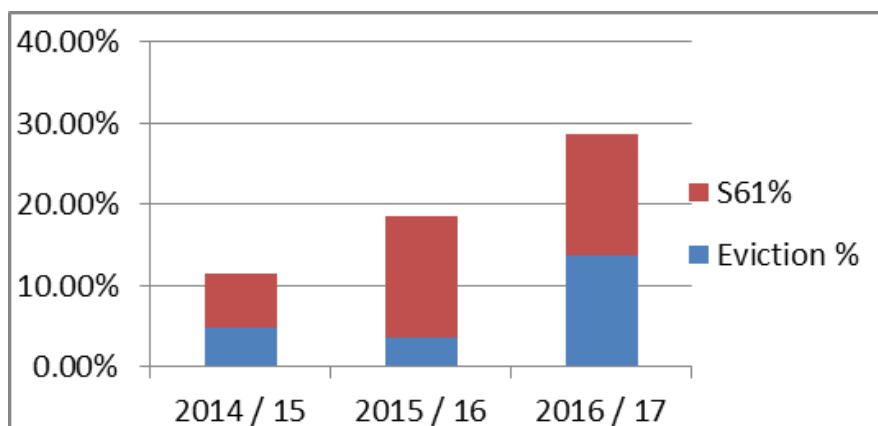


Figure 2: Legal Action as a percentage of UE by method

## 5 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPO):

- 5.1 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a specific area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life.
- 5.2 PSPOs have replaced powers to make Gating Orders, Designated Public Place Orders (street drinking restriction powers) and Dog Control Orders. In Reading, there are currently the following Orders in place:
- 1 x Gating Order
  - 1 x Dog Control Order (Borough Wide)
  - 3 x Designated Public Place Orders (annex A)
- 5.3 These current orders automatically convert into PSPOs in October 2017. However, in the context of the changing nature of anti-social behaviour in the public realm outlined above, it is appropriate to both review the necessity of the current provisions and assess the need to introduce new PSPOs to include conditions to tackle a wider variety of anti-social behaviour in Reading. There are four options available:
1. Allow current converted orders to remain.
  2. Allow current converted orders to remain and bring in additional new PSPOs to address other issues.

3. Discharge current orders and bring in new PSPOs to incorporate the dog control measures, street drinking and other ASB issues causing problems in Reading.
4. Discharge current orders and have no measures in place.

5.4 It is recommended that option 3 be taken forward and the following additional restrictions are consulted on.

#### Begging Restrictions:

1. No person shall aggressively beg. Aggressively begging includes begging near a cash machine or begging in a manner reasonably perceived to be intimidating or aggressive.
2. No person shall make any verbal, non-verbal or written request from a standing, sitting or lying-down position for money, donations or goods - including the placing of hats or containers.
3. No person shall sell any magazine which is already a free publication in Reading Town Centre. This restriction would not apply to anyone selling the Big Issue and who is officially “badged” to do so.

#### Busking Restrictions:

4. No person shall perform any type of street entertainment (also known as busking, which includes amplified or unamplified music & singing) that may cause a nuisance to nearby premises or members of the public within Reading Town Centre. This includes obstructing the highway or shop entrances, using street furniture including public seats, lamp posts, statues and railings, unless registered to do so by Reading UK CIC.

#### Dog Control Restrictions:

Any person in charge of a dog within the restricted area shall be in breach of the order if they:

5. Allow a dog to foul in a public place and then fail to remove the waste and dispose of it in an appropriate receptacle.
6. Do not comply with a direction given to him/her by an authorised officer of the authority to put and keep the dog on a fixed lead unless a) he/she has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or b) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his/her failing to do so; c) an authorised officer of the Authority may only give a direction under this order to put and keep a dog on a fixed lead if such a restraint is reasonably necessary to prevent a nuisance or behaviour by the dog likely to cause annoyance or disturbance to any person (on any land to which this order applies) or the worrying or disturbance of any animal or bird.

7. A person must not take more than four (4) dogs at the same time onto the land detailed, unless - (a) s/he has a reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or (b) the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

**Drug Activity Restriction:**

8. No person shall ingest, inhale, inject, smoke, possess or otherwise use intoxicating substances in a public place.

Intoxicating Substances is given the following definition: any Psychoactive Substances i.e. substances with the capacity to stimulate or depress the central nervous system, excluding alcohol. Alcohol would be covered separately in the Street Drinking Restriction (see below).

**Public Urination and Defecation Restriction:**

9. No person shall urinate or defecate in a public place.

**Street Drinking:**

10. No person shall refuse to stop drinking alcohol or hand over any containers (sealed or unsealed) which are believed to contain alcohol when required to do so by an authorised officer in order to prevent public nuisance or disorder.

Exemptions shall apply in cases where for the avoidance of doubt the consumption of alcohol is on premises or public space licensed under the Licensing Act 2003.

**Litter Restriction:**

11. No person shall, for any duration of time, leave unattended in a public area any personal effects or belongings or any other material or paraphernalia including anything that may be considered discarded or waste material.

**Motorbike Nuisance Restriction:**

12. The effect of the Order is to prohibit the use of a mechanically propelled vehicle, intended or adapted for use on roads, in a way that has caused or may be capable of causing a nuisance and annoyance anywhere on public land within the Restricted Area.

**Mooring Restriction:**

13. No person shall moor any boat or amphibious craft to any land without the consent of the land owner, or managing authority, or breach any conditions imposed by the land owner or managing authority.

Note: There is currently a pilot scheme to manage mooring on local authority land. The PSPO restriction will be reviewed if the pilot is successful.

- 5.5 Recommendations on the geographical extent of each restriction will be brought forward following the consultation.

## 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are implications for services in introducing the orders. Whilst having an order in place will deter some ASB, there would be a need to identify the most appropriate service to enforce the restrictions. Following discussion with service areas and based on current delegated authorities and powers it is anticipated that the main responsibilities for enforcing the restrictions would be as follows:

- Begging Restriction - Thames Valley Police
- Busking Restriction - Environmental Protection/Streetcare
- Dog Control Restriction - Environmental Protection
- Drug Activity Restriction - Thames Valley Police
- Street Drinking - Thames Valley Police
- Motorbike Nuisance Restriction - Thames Valley Police
- Mooring Restriction - Parks
- Litter Restriction - Streetcare

- 6.2 These new restrictions would be introduced at a time when both the Local Authority and the Police have reducing numbers of officers in a position to enforce them. One particular area of concern is around the implementation of the Dog Control Restriction. It may not be possible to enforce all of the restrictions all of the time. It may be necessary to prioritise enforcement based on severity and need. Failing to enforce the orders may result in complaints from the public.

- 6.3 There will also be a requirement for the Local Authority's legal service to take action against non-payment of fines or persistent breaching of the restriction.

## 7 LEGAL

- 7.1 The Council may make a Public Spaces Protection Order where it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that activities carried on in a public place have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or that it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place and that they will have a detrimental effect. In addition, the Council must be satisfied that the effect of the activities is persistent or continuing, that the activities are unreasonable, and that the effect justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice. The order may prohibit specified things being done, and/or require specified things to be done by persons carrying on specified activities.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Other than the cost identified under section 6 above, the main cost involved in the introduction would be associated with the production and fitting of the signage for the orders within the restricted areas. All orders may not be borough wide and therefore this may vary depending on the number of orders introduced. Cost could be met from within the current Safer Communities capital budget.

## 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The consultation period required for any new orders would be for a minimum of four weeks and would be carried out online. It is proposed that the Council would look to also specifically engage with Liberty, the National Bargee Travellers Association, commissioned services working with the street population, other relevant Voluntary and faith sector agencies, the Business Improvement District and the Neighbourhood Action Groups.

## 10. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the consultation. This will include the impact of any mooring restriction in addition to those already in place may impact on Bargee travelling community.

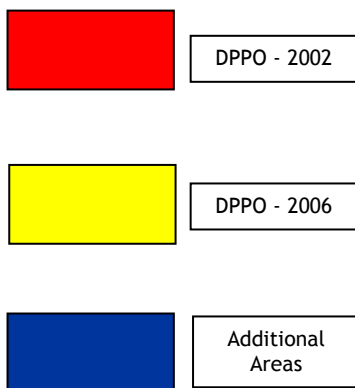
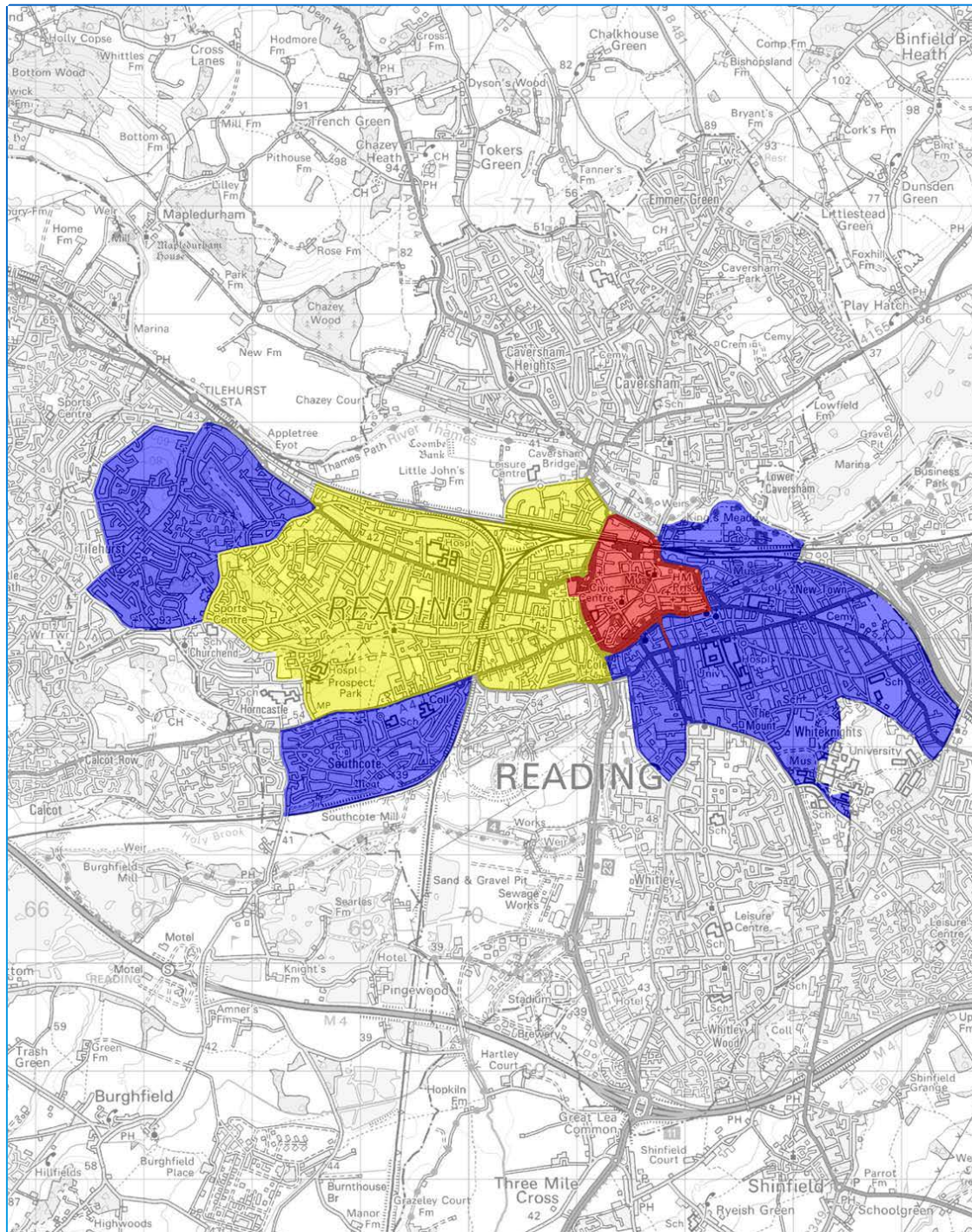
## 11. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 11.1 The introduction of any PSPO will contribute towards the following strategic aims:
1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
  2. Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active;

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Nil.

# Annex A - DPPO Map





## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

|                  |  |              |  |
|------------------|--|--------------|--|
| TO:              | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE                      |              |  |
| DATE:            | 15 NOVEMBER 2017   | AGENDA ITEM: | 14   |
| TITLE:           | WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY 2015-2020 - YEAR 3 HALF YEARLY UPDATE. |              |  |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR LIZ TERRY   | PORTFOLIO:   | NEIGHBOURHOODS   |
| SERVICE:         | TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE                                      | WARDS:       | BOROUGHWIDE  |
| LEAD OFFICER:    | DAVID MOORE  | TEL:         | (0118) 937 2676  |
| JOB TITLE:       | NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER                                     | E-MAIL:      | <a href="mailto:David.moore2@reading.gov.uk">David.moore2@reading.gov.uk</a> |

#### 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress achieved in the first 2 quarters of year 3 of the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 - 2020 Action Plan and is an interim report ahead of the main annual update report which will be presented in March 2018.
- 1.2 The Council adopted the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 - 2020 in March 2015 demonstrating its commitment to promoting waste minimisation through reuse, recycling and composting, to minimise disposal and to achieving the EU Directive target recycling rate of 50% by 2020. Reading currently sends 19% of its municipal waste to landfill with 81% being recycled, composted or sent for Energy from Waste. The current recycling rate for Reading is 32.6% compared to the national rate of 43.9%.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Members note the progress to date of the Waste Minimisation Strategy Action Plan.
- 2.2 That the third annual progress report is brought to the Committee in March 2018.
- 2.3 That Members delegate authority to the Head of Transport & Streetcare in consultation with the lead member to make amendments to the action plan as required.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 One of the service priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 is 'Keeping the town, clean, safe, green and active', to ensure we retain and attract residents and businesses and remain an attractive place to live, work and visit'. One means of delivering this priority is to reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill and improve recycling rates through implementation of the Waste Minimisation Strategy.
- 3.2 The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008 sets a new recycling and re-use target of 50% for certain waste materials from households and other origins similar to households to be achieved by 2020. This target has been transcribed into UK law and will remain after Brexit.
- 3.3 On 15th March 2015 HNL Committee adopted the Waste Minimisation Strategy 2015 -2020, which set out an approach for working with residents, stakeholders and partners to improve the way waste is managed with a growing population and limited resources. The strategy was subject to a four week web based consultation.
- 3.4 The re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board adopted a new strategy for 2016/17 in response to changes in government funding as a result of the central government austerity programme and the requirement to reach the EU 50% recycling target by 2020. The Reading Borough Council and re3 strategies were aligned in March 2017. The re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board adopted its strategy in May 2016.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

The RBC and re3 strategies have been aligned to focus on the 2 fundamental goals of reducing costs in a time of austerity and improving re-use and recycling rates. Collaborative work with our re3 partners, Bracknell and Wokingham Borough Councils is continuing through the three Officer working groups which examine specific waste minimisation themes and share good practice with reducing resource.

The re3 Councils' Shared Marketing and Communications Strategy 2017-2018 will be the basis of communications over the coming year, supplemented by RBC social media campaigns.

The RBC Strategy and Appendices can be found at

[http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4418/Waste-Minimisation-Strategy-2015---2020/pdf/HNL\\_15th\\_March\\_WMStrategy\\_Revision\\_Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4418/Waste-Minimisation-Strategy-2015---2020/pdf/HNL_15th_March_WMStrategy_Revision_Appendix_B.pdf)

#### 4.1 Strategy Progress in Year 3.

Reductions in staff numbers and work programmes which are now focussed on delivering savings and service efficiencies have had an adverse impact on some aspects of the work to deliver the strategy over the past 12 months. As a result, many of the elements of the strategy have not been progressed and will not be in the short term. The main pressures on the service are summarised below:



- The introduction of the chargeable green waste service
- Introduction of the waste collection service standard
- Dealing with an increase in fly-tipping
- Work with our Housing colleagues to address waste collection from RBC housing blocks
- Increasing numbers of new properties, in particular flats in the town centre
- Loss of experienced staff.

#### 4.2 Strategy Progress Quarters 1 and 2, Year 3 (2017/18).

A full year summary of the progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the Action Plan will be presented to the Committee in March 2018. However, the results for the key indicators in Aim F of the strategy for Quarters 1 and 2 of Year 3 (2017/18) are shown below.

#### 4.3 Increasing recycling and reducing contamination - Targets.

Section F of the revised RBC strategy set targets for the specific service areas in order to achieve 50% reuse and recycling by 2020. Table 1 sets out the annual targets that represent a pathway towards meeting the 2020 recycling target for Reading and progress against these targets will be reported going forward.

|                      | 2016/17                     | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/2020 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Reading              | Target % Recycled by source |         |         |           |
| HWRC                 | 10%                         | 11%     | 11%     | 12%       |
| Council Collected    | 24%                         | 28%     | 28%     | 32%       |
| Bring Bank           | 5%                          | 5%      | 5%      | 5%        |
| Total Recycling Rate | 39%                         | 44%     | 48%     | 50%       |

Table 1. Annual Recycling targets to 2020.

#### 4.4 Recyclate Contamination Reduction - Targets.

Waste sampling data suggests that there is recyclable material in the waste stream which can be diverted. Every tonne of recyclable material which remains in the residual waste stream represents a higher processing cost and lost income. Table 2 below shows the targets for Reading to reduce this contamination by 2020:

| Reading | 2015/16 | 2016/17                   | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---------|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|         | Current | Target contamination rate |         |         |         |
|         | 27%     | 20%                       | 15%     | 10%     | 10%     |

Table 2. Contamination reduction targets to 2020

4.5 Results for Quarters 1 and 2, Year 3(2017/18).

Table 3 below shows progress against these targets in Q1 and Q2 of 2017/18 compared to the baseline figure and the target figure.

| Monitoring 2017/18 |                               |               |                |              |        |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| Period             | Review of Activity            | Target status | KPI (Baseline) | KPI (Actual) | Target |
| Q1                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 19%          | 28%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 20%          | 15%    |
| Q2                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 19%          | 28%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 20%          | 15%    |
| Q3                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       |                |              |        |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       |                |              |        |
| Q4                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       |                |              |        |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       |                |              |        |

Table 3.

4.6 NI 192 Percentage of Household Waste for Reuse, Recycling and Composting. Strategy Objective F

Table 4 below shows the Quarter 1 and 2 recycling figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 for NI192. These figures are derived from all sources of recycling, kerbside, bring banks, sweepings and at HWRC's. These figures are for two quarters and must be seen in context and Table 5 below shows the results for NI192 for the Q1-4 for 2016/17 showing the degree of fluctuation in rates.

| % Reuse, Recycling & Composting | Quarter 1 2016/17 | Quarter 1 2017/18 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Quarter 1                       | 35%               | 32%               |
| Quarter 2                       | 35%               | 33%               |

Table 4

|                                      | QTR 1    | QTR 2    | QTR 3    | QTR 4    | Annual Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Reuse, Recycling & Composting Tonnes | 6531.41  | 5954.03  | 4621.73  | 3968.60  | 21075.77     |
| Total Household Tonnes               | 18500.29 | 17146.60 | 15023.91 | 14683.81 | 65354.61     |
| % Reuse, Recycling & Composting      | 35.30%   | 34.72%   | 30.76%   | 27.03%   | 32.25%       |

Table 5

#### 4.7 Revised Service Standards. (Strategy Objective A)

The revised waste collection service standards were introduced on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at the same time as a revised collection round structure. The effects of the changes on collection tonnages, recycling rates and contamination are shown below.

##### 4.7.1 Residual Waste

Tonnages of residual waste collected at the kerbside in Quarters 1 and 2 2017/18 are compared to Quarters 1 and 2 2016/17 in Table 6 below. The figures show a reduction of 1254 tonnes in residual waste collected at the kerbside compared to the previous year. As a result of this reduction in tonnages the national indicator NI191: Residual Household Waste per Household (in kg) reduced as shown in Table 7 below.

|           | Quarter 1 and 2 2016/17 | Quarter 1 and 2 2017/18 |
|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| April     | 3522                    | 2980                    |
| May       | 3336                    | 3394                    |
| June      | 3825                    | 3581                    |
| July      | 3217                    | 2914                    |
| August    | 3204                    | 3478                    |
| September | 3511                    | 3008                    |
| Total     | 20,615                  | 19,361                  |

Table 6

| Residual Waste per Household | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Quarter 1                    | 174kg   | 162kg   |
| Quarter 2                    | 162kg   | 154kg   |

Table 7

##### 4.7.2 Recycling: (NI 192: Percentage of Household Waste for Reuse, Recycling and Composting)

###### A. Kerbside Collections

Tonnages of recycling collected at the kerbside in Quarters 1 and 2 2017/18 are compared to Quarters 1 and 2 2016/17 in Table 8. The figures show a reduction of 425 tonnes of recycling collected at the kerbside compared to the previous year.

|                | Quarter 1 and 2 2016/17 | Quarter 1 and 2 2017/18 |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| April          | 853                     | 670                     |
| May            | 792                     | 671                     |
| June           | 827                     | 731                     |
| July           | 742                     | 693                     |
| August         | 772                     | 703                     |
| September      | 818                     | 711                     |
| QTR Reductions | -1073                   | -873                    |
| Total          | 3730                    | 3305                    |

Table 8

#### 4.7.3 Number of recycling bins not collected due to contamination

Since the new round structure and service standard were introduced the number of contaminated recycling bins reported by crews has gradually reduced as shown in Table 9. This reflects the bedding in of the service and the remaining numbers represent the baseline on which future work can be targeted.

| Week              | No. of Properties | No. bins un-collected | % of bins un-collected |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1                 | 32,569            | 1,808                 | 5.5                    |
| 2                 | 37,929            | 3,492                 | 9.2%                   |
| 3                 | 32,569            | 1,430                 | 4.3%                   |
| 4                 | 37,929            | 2,213                 | 5.8%                   |
| 5                 | 32,569            | 1,123                 | 3.4%                   |
| 6                 | 37,929            | 1,943                 | 5.1%                   |
| 15                | 32,569            | 390                   | 1.2%                   |
| 27 (w/c 14/8/17)  | 32,569            | 484                   | 1.2%                   |
| 28 (w/c 21/8/17)  | 37,929            | 938                   | 2.5%                   |
| 37 (w/c 23/10/17) | 33,384            | 434                   | 1.3%                   |

Table 9

4.7.4 The current recycling rate is not acceptable. The reduction in the tonnages of both materials collected at the kerbside corresponds with the introduction of a stricter collection regime and the application of the collection service standard in February 2017. However, monthly, quarterly and annual tonnage figures over previous years fluctuate and it is not possible to attribute the Quarter 1 and 2 reductions to the changes directly or with any certainty. More quarters of data will be required to establish a trend and to indicate that a permanent reduction in tonnages has been achieved.

The number of additional recycling bins requested since February has reached 1151 implying that more people are aware that they are free and are perhaps willing to use them to recycle.

4.7.5 The reduction in the percentage of contaminated recycling bins not being collected has dropped but there is a significant amount of MDR in these bins which we need to collect. Resources are an issue for waste minimisation work and the delivery of the Waste Minimisation Strategy. Campaigns, door knocking and domestic waste audits are now beyond the capacity of the team and work streams are focussing on the 'day to day' business of running the waste service.

#### 4.7.6 Fly-tipping

|                    | Reports             | Cost of Clearance |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 2014 - 2015        | 2521                | £125,174          |
| 2015 - 2016        | 2214                | £117,253          |
| 2016 - 2017        | 2213 (to Dec)       | £99,423           |
|                    | Total for year 3066 | £136,621          |
| 2017 (April -June) | 778                 | £32,028           |

Table 10

The figures in Table 10 show that there has been an increase in reports of fly-tipping in the last financial year and that this trend has continued in the first Quarter of 2017/18. The numbers increased in March 2017, following the introduction of the waste changes to 345 compared to an average of 250 per month but then dropped to 226 in April, indicating that any effect of the waste changes was temporary. The chargeable green waste collection service was introduced in April and clearly had no adverse effect on the number of fly-tips reported for that month.

The increase in fly-tipping reports is a worrying national trend which all Councils are struggling to address with reduced budgets. Councils, such as the Re3 partners and West Berkshire are being forced to introduce access restrictions and charges to deposit waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres and this may reflect in an increase in fly-tipping reports.

By way of comparison Southampton have 8,100 and Milton Keynes 4,282 fly-tips in 2015/16 respectively. However, neighbouring councils are also seeing an increase in the number of fly-tips. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council had 3025 fly-tips in 2015/16 and 4499 in 2016/17, an increase of 32% and the first quarter figures for 2017/18 confirm that this trend is continuing with 1271 reports of fly-tipping.

The Council has demonstrated its commitment to addressing this environmental blight by introducing 2 dedicated Environmental Enforcement Officers. Since their introduction in April they have issued 191 Fixed Penalty Notices for waste related offences including fly-tipping.

However the reduction in the number of Neighbourhood Officers from 9 to 4 and the loss of a supervisor in response to reductions in funding from Central Government has reduced the capacity to carry out the enforcement action. The Council will continue to devote the available resource to investigating and

prosecuting fly-tippers and to investigate alternative ways of addressing this problem.

#### 4.7.7 Service Standard - Next phases of work.

The report to the Committee in July 2016 set out the works elements associated with the introduction of the waste service standard. The current progress and works programme is outlined below:

#### 4.7.8 One Bin Policy. (Strategy Objective D)

The council's policy agreed by council in July 2016 states: The council will collect one standard grey bin (domestic) and at least one red (recycling) bin/box from households that present their bins on a fortnightly frequency. Households with 5 or more adults permanently residing in the property or with 2 children in nappies may be eligible for a larger 360l bin.

In January 2017, we wrote to all residents explaining the waste changes which included that all properties with larger or multiple grey would be contacted in the future to assess their need for the additional capacity. We have now identified that 4957 properties that have large, or multiple grey bins (these include HMO's).

In order to manage the large number of properties identified, we aim to contact households in a phased approach, round by round. We will write to residents asking them to complete an online form with standard questions such as:

- Numbers of large and standard size bins
- Whether they still need the additional capacity or would they like us to either remove the extra bins, or swap the large bin for a smaller bin.
- If they need the additional capacity how many adults and children permanently reside at the property, and ages of children under 16.

An assessment will then be made as to whether they meet the criteria for a larger bin. If they do meet the criteria, they will receive a letter advising them that they can keep the large bin, or that we will change the multiple bins for a large bin. Once the bin arrangement is finalised we will place an authorised sticker on the bin for the crew to identify. If the criteria is not met, we will advise them that we will only collect one standard sized bin from their property, and that we will arrange to swap larger bins for standard sized bins. We will offer the services of the Waste Minimisation Officers to households that may be concerned with their waste provision.

We will work with the communications team on the content of the letters, and the design of the 'authorised' bin sticker. Residents that advise us they have additional or large bins for non-hazardous clinical waste, will be able to keep them.

#### 4.7.9 Continually Contaminated Recycling Bins

There are a large number of recycling bins that are continually left by crews due to contamination. The wrong items aren't removed and the overflowing bins look unsightly and in some cases smell as they contain food waste. We

have also had bins abandoned in roads other than where they originated from. Waste Minimisation have previously visited these properties on a number of occasions, speaking to residents who are in at the time, or leaving cards explaining the issue. Unfortunately this does not seem to have solved the problem. The most persistent issues, are in properties where there are tenants living in individual rooms.

In order to address this issue we intend to introduce a trial scheme in the roads listed below. We will remove recycling bins that have been left unemptied for 3 consecutive collections. In order to provide an opportunity for residents who do recycle we will provide recycling boxes with lids or clear sacks, as these can be kept in their rooms and ultimately they have responsibility for their own waste.

Proposed trial roads:

- Audley Street, Curzon Street, Catherine Street,
- Southampton Street, Elgar Road, Pell Street
- Waylen Street, Russell Street (bottom half)
- Pitcroft Avenue, Grange Avenue, Norris Road

Proposed process:

- Crews report contaminated bins on round schedule returns. Waste Minimisation Officer will undertake initial visit and provide information either verbally or by card.
- Second report of contamination - Letter will be sent to all residents registered at the property to advise them of the issue, and that if it isn't rectified by the next collection, we will look to remove their recycling bin which will affect their waste capacity.
- Third report - We will advise residents we will be removing their recycling bin.
- We will arrange for the bins to be emptied and collected on the same day. On that day, WMO's will visit and advise residents on what we are doing, providing individual boxes or clear bags to those residents that want to recycle individually.
- The presentation of waste will be monitored via crew reports and future visits made if resource allows.

The contact centre will be advised of the addresses where we have removed the recycling bins to ensure they don't re-order new bins. Waste Minimisation and enforcement officers will monitor these properties after the removal, to check for any additional waste left in gardens and take appropriate action where necessary.

#### 4.7.10 Houses of Multiple Occupation

Regulations 8 and 10 of the Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 impose obligations on the manager of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in relation to the storage and disposal of waste regardless of whether they are a large HMO and licensed, or a standard unlicensed HMO. In short, this means that the property is subject to the same service level offered by the council to individual properties. The manager or landlords are responsible for the provision of adequate facilities above this for the property. For licensed HMO's, the regulations form part of their licence conditions.

Current service level offered to individual properties:

- Collection of one 240 litre residual waste wheeled bin and a maximum of one 360l bin for house with a large number of residents permanently residing there.
- Collection of as many recycling 240ltr bins as required as long as they contain the correct recycling materials requested.
- Up to 2 green waste bins/bags collected

We will be writing to the landlords/managers of licensed HMO's, reminding them of their responsibilities and advising them of the date when we will stop collecting the additional bins from these properties. We will work with them to offer advice on the correct provision of residual waste bins for the properties. We are liaising with the HMO team to agree the contents of the letter, and the form of any enforcement action that may be taken for non-compliance.

#### 4.7.11 Bagged Waste Collection Trial

There are a number of properties that have a weekly sack collection service because:

- They have no frontage
- There are access issues for collection vehicles
- They are offices converted into flats within the town centre
- They are flats above shops with no storage facilities for individual or communal bins.

There has been an increase in the accumulations of waste presented for collection, particularly from flats above shops. We believe the additional waste is from non-residents and traders and is effectively being fly-tipped. In order to solve this issue, we will be conducting a 6 month trial in the areas listed below, where we will issue all flats above shops with, 80ltr white bags with the RBC logo In order to differentiate between legitimate waste generated by flats and fly-tipped waste which is usually in black sacks. If the trial is successful properties which cannot accommodate recycling ( such as flats above shops) will be given 100 80ltr sacks per year and properties which can accommodate some recycling will be given 80 sacks. This is an equivalent waste capacity to properties with a 240l bin.



- Wokingham Rd - flats above shops, Grange Avenue to St Peters Road.
- London Rd - 213 to 251 flats above shops.
- Lower Brook West.

We will be writing to all residents and landlords of the properties in the proposed trial area, informing them of the changes, issuing a map of the collection points and informing them when we will be delivering the bags. They will be asked to present up to 3 bags per property at a collection point on a certain day. Any waste left at the kerbside other than in the white bags, will be investigated for fly tipping. Once the allocated bags have been used, residents or landlords may be asked to purchase more sacks, but the details of this will be determined after the trial.

The Neighbourhood Officers will also be undertaking Duty of Care checks on all businesses to ensure they have waste disposal methods in place. We will collect and weigh all the bags presented for collection in the trial areas prior to implementation, and then repeat this a number of weeks into the trial to measure the impact on the tonnages of white bags collected. We will report back the results of the trial, breaking down weight of waste collected, fly tipping incidents and number of enforcement actions taken both before and during the trial. If successful, we will look to implement this system to properties that currently have sack collections. There is a degree of urgency in bringing these work strands and trial forward as the future provision of waste minimisation officers is uncertain beyond March 2018.

#### 4.7.12 Work with the Housing Department.

We have been working with our Housing colleagues to try and reduce the contamination in recycling bins in Housing properties. At present, bins that contain black bags are being collected as general waste in certain blocks. On inspection, there was a lot of good recycling in the bins, and our aim is to try to collect as much of this as possible. We intend to remove the recycling bins entirely from 2 blocks (193 Wensley Road & 34 Granville Road) for a 3 month trial period and to install an enclosed bin storage area with a lock. Residents who want to recycle will be given clear pedal bin size bags, and the code to the recycling bag enclosure. We will assess the effectiveness of this approach after the trial, and assess whether it should be rolled out to other blocks which have this problem.

#### 4.8 Green Waste. (Strategy Objective B).

The chargeable green waste collection service currently has 14,900 subscribers compared to 16,700 prior to the introduction of the charge on the 1st April 2017. The revenue for the first year to date is £710,000.

#### 4.9 Food Waste.( Strategy Objective B).

The Council, along with its RE3 and PFI partners continues to explore the feasibility of introducing a kerbside food waste collection service. Further updates will be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Waste Minimisation Strategy will contribute to the council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 objective of 'Keeping the Town Clean, Safe, Green and Active'.

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The Waste Minimisation Strategy was subject to a public consultation via the website and any further significant changes to the waste service will be subject to further web based consultation as required.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has duties under various UK and EU legislation to deliver waste collection and disposal services, principally the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the revised EU waste framework directive 2008.

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.2 An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage. However, as individual elements of the action plan are developed individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The development of the Waste Minimisation Strategy is funded from existing budgets. One of the main aims of the RBC and re3 strategies is to reduce the cost of the collection and disposal of waste and to deliver savings. Every aspect of the revised strategy is focussed on reducing landfill and increasing recycling both of which reduce costs.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 RBC Corporate Plan.  
10.2 HNL Committee July 2017  
10.3 HNL Committee March 2017  
10.4 HNL Committee November 2016  
10.5 HNL Committee July 2016  
10.6 HNL Committee March 2015  
10.7 HNL Committee November 2013

HNL Committee 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017

WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY 2015-2020 - YEAR 3 HALF YEARLY UPDATE.  
APPENDIX A

Results for the key indicators in Aim F of the strategy 2016/17 are shown below.

| Monitoring 2016/17 |                               |               |                |              |        |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| Period             | Review of Activity            | Target status | KPI (Baseline) | KPI (Actual) | Target |
| Q1                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 21%          | 24%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 24%          | 20%    |
| Q2                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 21%          | 24%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 22%          | 20%    |
| Q3                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 21%          | 24%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 23%          | 20%    |
| Q4                 | Increased kerbside collection | Not met       | 20%            | 21%          | 24%    |
|                    | Reduce kerbside contamination | Not Met       | 25%            | 23%          | 20%    |