

POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 12 MARCH 2018

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair)

Councillors Duveen, Eden, Ennis, Gavin, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, Jones, Page, Skeats, Terry and White.

Apologies: Councillor Stevens.

76. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of items 77-78 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

77. YEOMANRY HOUSE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report advising the Committee of the outcome of a marketing exercise to dispose of the freehold of Yeomanry House. The offers received were attached to the report at Appendices 1 and 2 and a Site Plan was also attached.

Resolved -

- (1) That Yeomanry House be disposed of on the terms set out in section 5.1 of the report;
- (2) That, in the event that the offer price was subsequently reduced or the purchaser did not perform to an acceptable timescale, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to dispose of the Property for best consideration.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3).

78. CAVERSHAM CENTRE (NEW DIRECTIONS NORTH) & 53-55 CHURCH STREET

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report advising the Committee of the current position regarding the Caversham Centre (New Directions North) building and the land at 53-55 Church St, Caversham, and a proposal to sell both interests. The properties were shown on a site plan attached to the report.

An additional recommendation was tabled at the meeting seeking delegated authority for officers to amend the terms of the disposal in accordance with the

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District Valuer's report, which had not yet been received.

Resolved -

- (1) That the freehold interests in 53-55 Church Street and the Caversham Centre be disposed of on the terms set out in paragraphs 4.2.1 - 4.2.4 of this report;
- (2) That the Chief Valuer, in consultation with the Council's Chief Finance Officer and the Leader of the Council, be authorised to confirm the District Valuer's report on Best Consideration and if necessary amend terms of the disposal of the Caversham Centre and 53/55 Church Street with the purchaser in accordance with the detail of the District Valuer's report.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3).

79. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the agreement in closed session to sell Yeomanry House and explained that the purchaser proposed to use the building as a children's nursery (Minute 77 above refers).

80. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

81. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by members of the public:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Andrea Elliott (on behalf of UNISON)	Statutory Services	Cllr Lovelock

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Councillor White	Real Living Wage for School Cooks	Cllr Jones
2.	Councillor Robinson	Admissions to Highdown School	Cllr Jones

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

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82. ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

The Director of Finance submitted a report seeking approval for the Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Council's anti-fraud policy had been formally reviewed and updated to ensure that it remained up to date and fit for purpose. The purpose of the policy was to set the responsibilities of councillors, managers and employees in respect to anti-fraud and corruption activity, and to encourage prevention, promote detection and identify a clear pathway for investigation. The policy was accompanied by the fraud response plan, which was intended as a quick guide for all staff to understand the requirements for reporting suspicious activity, whilst summarising how investigations would be conducted and what action would be taken on proven cases of fraud.

Resolved -

That the revised Anti Fraud and Corruption policy be approved.

83. ANTI MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out for approval a draft Anti Money Laundering Policy, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report noted that, although local authorities were not obliged to comply with the requirements of the Money Laundering Regulations 2017, guidance from CIPFA recommended that they should embrace the underlying spirit of the legislation as it impacted on certain areas of their work. As a result, there were obligations on local authorities to have in place internal procedures to prevent the use of its services for money laundering. In particular, the legislation had placed a duty on individuals to report incidents of money laundering activity, for example cash payments that aroused suspicion, to the National Crime Agency.

The report proposed the adoption of a policy, together with supporting guidance notes that would support staff in identifying potential suspect transactions during the course of their work. The policy provided a mechanism for such transactions to be reported to an appropriate officer for evaluation and potentially to the relevant authorities.

Resolved -

That the Anti Money Laundering Policy be approved.

84. BUDGET MONITORING

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the projected Council revenue budget outturn position for 2017/18 based on actual, committed and projected expenditure for the Council as at the end of January 2018. It also contained

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information on the capital programme, capital receipts and the Housing Revenue Account.

The report explained that it was projected that the revenue budget would be underspent by £1.1m as at the year end, and that there were currently no projected commitments against the remaining contingency of £1.6m. However the budget remained under pressure; in particular the total of negative variances was £10.1m, which included some projection of further pressures on care places through to the year-end. In addition many of the positive variances and mitigations were not ongoing, so would not provide relief for any of the negative variances that were ongoing into 2018/19 and beyond. This produced a pressure in 2018/19 of £7.245m at this stage, and this pressure and a further projection had been built into the budget for 2018/19.

Resolved -

That it be noted that, based on the position at the end of January 2018, budget monitoring forecast that the budget would be underspent by £1.1m, without using the remaining contingency of £1.6m.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 6.53pm).