



HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

12 NOVEMBER 2025

QUESTIONS & REPLIES PACK

This page is intentionally left blank

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2025

QUESTION NO. 1

Melvina Dimmott to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Housing Repairs

1. What is the process for a tenant who has been waiting for a repair to their flat, such as an intercom and the repair has been outstanding for an inappropriate length of time?
2. What is the temporary accommodation provision for a tenant, especially a severely disabled tenant, who is allocated an upgrade to their kitchen and bathroom, if the work is going to require the tenant to leave the property for the work to be carried out?

REPLY by Councillor Dennis:

I invite Councillor Yeo, the Lead Councillor for Housing, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Housing:

1. What is the process for a tenant who has been waiting for a repair to their flat, such as an intercom and the repair has been outstanding for an inappropriate length of time?

When a tenant reports a repair, it is logged through our repairs reporting system and assigned a priority based on the nature and urgency of the issue. For example, intercom repairs are typically classified as non-emergency but essential, particularly where they impact security or access.

If a repair remains outstanding beyond the expected timeframe, the following steps are taken:

Monitoring and Escalation: The repair is monitored through our housing management system. If it exceeds the target completion date, it is flagged for escalation.

Follow-Up with Contractors: Our back-office team contacts the contractor or in-house repairs team to determine the cause of the delay and to expedite completion.

Tenant Communication: The tenant is kept informed throughout the process, including updates on the reason for the delay and the revised timescale for completion.

Prioritisation Review: If the delay is causing significant inconvenience or poses a risk to the tenant's wellbeing or safety, the repair may be reclassified and prioritised accordingly.

Formal Complaint Route: Tenants also have the option to raise a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with the handling or delay of the repair. This triggers a separate investigation and response process in line with our complaints policy.

We are committed to improving our repair response times and ensuring tenants are kept informed and supported throughout the process.

2. What is the temporary accommodation provision for a tenant, especially a severely disabled tenant, who is allocated an upgrade to their kitchen and bathroom, if the work is going to require the tenant to leave the property for the work to be carried out?

Where major works require a tenant to temporarily vacate their home, the Council has a duty to ensure that appropriate alternative accommodation is arranged, particularly where the tenant is vulnerable or has specific needs, such as a severe disability.

The process is as follows:

Assessment of Needs: Prior to the works commencing, a full assessment is carried out in consultation with the tenant, Occupational Therapy (if applicable), and the contractor. This includes evaluating the impact of the works on the tenant's ability to remain in the property safely.

Temporary Accommodation Arrangements:

If it is determined that the tenant cannot remain in the property during the works, suitable temporary accommodation is sourced.

For severely disabled tenants, this accommodation must meet accessibility requirements and be as close as possible to their existing support networks.

The accommodation may be in the form of a decant to another council property, or in some cases, hotel or supported housing provision.

Support and Coordination:

A dedicated officer coordinates the move, ensuring that transport and any necessary equipment are transferred or replicated in the temporary setting.

The tenant is kept informed throughout the process and supported before, during, and after the move.

Minimising Disruption:

Works are scheduled to be completed as efficiently as possible to minimise the duration of the decant.

Once the works are completed and the property is safe and suitable for reoccupation, the tenant is supported to return home.

Costs:

The cost of the temporary accommodation and associated moving expenses are covered by the Council, not the tenant.

This approach ensures that tenants, particularly those with significant needs, are treated with dignity and that their health, safety, and wellbeing are prioritised during major improvement works.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - 12 NOVEMBER 2025

QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor Nikulina to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Possibility of Leasing a Second Narrow-Access Bin Lorry.

The Council currently has only one narrow bin lorry, which can reach roads where parked cars make access difficult. However, due to limited capacity, a standard-sized vehicle is being used for some of those roads and some bins are being missed as a result.

A resident recently raised concerns about repeated missed collections, including occasions where bins were not emptied on the correct day and crews did not return later in the week. This appears to be an issue affecting other streets with similar access challenges.

While we recognise that the new collection schedule introduced a few months ago may have affected timings, would the Council consider leasing a second narrow bin lorry to help improve reliability and reduce missed collections?

REPLY by Councillor Dennis:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety:

I would like to thank Councillor Nikulina for their question which provides me with an opportunity to provide some clarity regarding the efficiency of our narrow access collection vehicle and highlight the hard work of our Recycling & Waste Services Team.

Recycling & Waste Services currently have one narrow access Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) that is deployed to address challenges presented in a number of roads in Reading that experience regular access problems due to poorly parked vehicles.

The vehicle was brought into service in April 2023, to service a total of 13 narrow roads in Redlands, Katesgrove and Abbey ward that experienced access issues. These collections are completed on two days each week. To justify the spend at that time, we also had to ensure the vehicles use in other areas when not needed to service the narrow roads and as such, it is currently used to provide bagged waste collections in the Town Centre and for ad-hoc collections where a narrow access challenge has been experienced.

It is a regular part of daily waste collection operations to adjust dynamically to deal with challenges experienced. For expediency and efficiency, the service initially attempts collections in some of the narrow roads with our regular sized vehicles. However, if that

is not possible, later that same day, the narrow roads vehicle is deployed to attempt the collection. If that is tried and failed, as sometimes even the narrow road vehicle is too wide for the most inconsiderately parked cars, attempts are made later in the same collection week to provide the collection. Currently, within the new route optimisation structure, narrow road collections are undertaken on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but can be called upon at any time outside of this to address missed collections experienced due to blockages on a priority basis.

It should be noted that narrow collection vehicles are inherently inefficient as they have a maximum load capacity of 1.8 Tonne, compared to a standard RCV load capacity of 10 Tonne. The vehicle additionally operates with manual bin lifts, rather than automatic bin lifts, taking four times longer to load a bin. Consequently, the investment in a second vehicle (at a cost of £180k or £750 per week), rather than utilising the vehicle that we already have for this service, would likely not be the most cost-effective solution. We Will continue to utilise the capacity of the existing vehicle in a flexible and prioritised way to address narrow road access issues as they are experienced.

Where appropriate, the Waste Collection Service works collaboratively with other service areas to address the underlying issue that prevents narrow roads accessibility. Solutions can be found through utilising enhanced on-street parking enforcement and the application of access protection markings.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - 12 NOVEMBER 2025

QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor Keane to ask the Chair of the Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee:

Fly-Tipping on Non-Council Land

Many thanks to the council for all the efforts being made to reduce fly-tipping in the town. However, I have been contacted by residents who are reporting fly-tipping on the Love Clean Streets app but being told that this won't be dealt with by the council as it is on housing association land. Unfortunately housing associations don't appear to take responsibility for the condition of the areas for which they should. This isn't just fly-tipping but not managing the upkeep of the area, abandoned vehicles, looking after trees, managing damage caused by wildlife etc.

What, if anything, can the council do to ensure that external agencies like housing associations and property management companies are taking responsibility for what goes on on their land?

REPLY by Councillor Dennis:

I invite Councillor Rowland, the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety:

Thank you, Councillor Keane, for your question, which provides me with an opportunity to raise broader awareness on the Council's fly tipping interventions and the responsibilities of private landowners or housing associations.

Fly tipping and littering is a scourge on so many towns and cities. Like most anti-social behaviour we encounter, the irresponsible and selfish actions of a few impact on the many residents who do the right thing. The Council understands that most people take pride in the place where they live and love their local environment.

The Council employ a team of Officers who investigate waste deposit offences and can take enforcement action for unauthorised waste disposal, littering, untidy front gardens or failure to comply with commercial waste duty of care requirements. Whilst this team prioritise investigations to public land and open spaces, Officers may investigate fly tips on private land and where appropriate can still take enforcement action against those responsible.

Where land is privately owned the responsibility to maintain, keep tidy and to secure the area would be with the registered landowner or a management company instructed by the landowner. The Council understands that landowners, as well as residents, are often

a victim of fly-tipping and as such would first engage with them informally to encourage proactive action to maintain their property.

It is important to know that managing agents or housing associations often have their own contractors who attend to clear excess waste, fly-tipping and/or clear contaminated recycling and often act promptly to address an issue once they have been notified. This service may likely already be included in a property service charge paid to the managing company by residents. We would therefore recommend that as a first port of call, residents report these incidents directly to the managing agent or housing association. Residents may also already have direct contact details for a housing officer or site manager, that the Council may not have record of. The Council identifies landowners through HM Land Registry Service, which is a chargeable service.

If a landowner fails to take action to clear fly tipped waste from their private land after substantial warning, the Council may escalate the matter to formal enforcement against the landowner. We would not commence formal action lightly as the sanctions for non-compliance can include criminal proceedings, noting again that the landowner may also be a victim.

In relation to abandoned vehicles, the council has a duty to investigate and remove abandoned vehicles from anywhere in the borough, private and public, except in some exceptional circumstances relating to access and costs.

In terms of general maintenance and upkeep, this is a private matter between tenants and their landlords. There are exceptions around waste management where we have powers available to address issues and would ask for engagement from impacted residents in this situation to support as we are able.

Oftentimes, those boundary lines with housing association land or larger publicly accessible areas that are private are not obvious, and I can empathise with the frustration that some residents feel in the response that they receive. However, I hope this better explains the limitations we have and the frustration we all face when housing associations or managing agents fail to keep their sites clear and tidy.