

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 29 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Page (Vice-Chair), Brock, Ennis, Hoskin, James, Jones, O'Connell, Skeats, Stevens, Terry, Warman and White

Apologies: Councillors Hacker, Pearce and Vickers

RESOLVED ITEMS

38. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Roger Lightfoot	Sale of Arthur Hill pool site	Cllr Lovelock
2.	Peter Burt	Leisure Procurement Timetable	Cllr Hoskin
3.	Jim Vincent	Social Care Direct Payments	Cllr Jones

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr Eden	Companion Bus Passes	Cllr Page
2.	Cllr White	Exempting Care Leavers from Council Tax	Cllr Terry
3.	Cllr White	Cuts to swimming in Reading	Cllr Hoskin

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

40. THAMES VALLEY POLICE - CHIEF CONSTABLE AND POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), and Francis Habgood, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police (TVP), attended the meeting to give presentations and answer questions from members of the Committee. Superintendent Stan Gilmour also attended to answer questions on local issues.

The presentation by the Police & Crime Commissioner covered an overview of policing in the Thames Valley, Strategic Priorities for 2017-21, progress against those priorities in 2017-18 and so far in 2018-19, and a summary of crime performance in 2017-18 with comparisons to historic trends.

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The presentation by the Chief Constable covered call volumes to 101 and 999 and average time to answer calls, recent crime trends in Reading, local problem-solving initiatives, successful measures to reduce demand and the Hidden Harm campaign.

The Committee asked questions on subjects including stop and search, hate crime, communication with the public on action being taken in connection with local crime issues, staffing resources available for neighbourhood policing, and the future of Reading police station.

Councillor Rowland attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on the increasing problem of drug- related crime and ASB, and difficulties with reporting this on the 101 line.

Resolved -

That the Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable be thanked for their presentations.

41. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD HOUSING PHASE 3 - APPROVAL OF FUNDING BID

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking retrospective approval for bids for additional borrowing capacity within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and for supporting grant funding from the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme.

The report summarised the bids submitted for an additional £33,180,400 of borrowing capacity within the HRA and £7,920,000 of Affordable Homes Programme Grant Funding, to support a £47,916,000 development programme for up to 170 new additional affordable homes in the Borough. This would comprise Phase 3 of the Council's new build homes programme.

The report noted that retrospective approval was required, as the tight timescale from announcement to deadline had meant bids were still being developed and the financial implications assessed up to the submission deadline. The bids had been submitted on 30 September 2018. Acceptance of any funding offers was subject to Committee approval and the individual scheme proposals were subject to community consultation and planning approval.

The report noted that, further to the submission of the bids the Prime Minister had announced the intention to remove the HRA borrowing cap for local authorities. The Government's aim was to remove the cap as soon as possible which would mean that the Council would be able to develop the proposed schemes, regardless of the outcome of this bidding round, subject to affordability within the HRA and securing supporting grant funding from the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme or an alternative form of subsidy.

The report set out the currently projected annual financial impact on the HRA, including the impact on HRA reserves, were all bids to be approved and schemes delivered. Due to the significant scale of the proposed development and its potential impact on the Council's wider responsibilities to maintain existing housing services and stock, an external validation of the current HRA Business Plan had been commissioned to ensure that the appraisal of the impact of these proposals was robust. A further report would be submitted to the Committee with a recommendation on the final rental mix once this exercise had concluded.

Resolved -

- (1) That the submitted bids for additional HRA borrowing capacity totalling £33,180,400 and Affordable Homes Grant of £7,920,000 to finance the development of 170 new additional affordable homes in the Borough be retrospectively approved, and the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Director of Resources, be authorised to accept any subsequent offers of funding;**
- (2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee with a final recommendation on the rental mix (Social Rent and/or Affordable Rent), following the current independent review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.**

42. COMMUNITY HUBS SPEND APPROVAL: SUN STREET YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Further to Minute 114 of the meeting held on 10 April 2017, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out a proposal to extend the community hubs programme to include a scheme to improve Sun Street Youth and Community Centre, and enable the centre to operate as a Children's Centre hub as agreed through the recent Children's Centre public consultation.

The report explained that the plans were to undertake internal space alterations and reconfiguration to the centre to enable a full range of Children's Centre services to be provided and enhance the building for future community use. This included a training room and crèche room for adult education classes, accommodation for health visiting and maternity services and improvements to enhance the functionality of the centre. The scheme cost was currently estimated at up to £280k, and this would be funded from unused contingency and other savings achieved within the overall budget of £2m capital funding for the Community Hubs build programme.

Resolved -

- (1) That the improvement works to Sun Street Youth and Community Centre of £280k be approved for inclusion within the overall Community Hubs programme and budget of up to £2m;**

- (2) That the procurement proposals be noted and, subject to the proposed developments gaining the relevant permissions, the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillors for Neighbourhoods & Communities and Children, be authorised to enter into contracts with the winning bidder for this scheme.**

43. PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING BUDGET RE-PROFILING 2019-21

The Director Of Adult and Health Care Services submitted a report setting out the context for the required re-profiling of the Public Health budget from 2018-19, summarising proposed budget changes for 2018-19, and giving indication of options for further changes from 2019, subject to feedback from a proposed consultation.

The report explained that the total Public Health budget for 2018-19, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 9 April 2018 (Minute 90 refers), had not changed, and services would be delivered within the agreed overall financial envelope. A table in the report set out the proposed changes to the 2018/19 budget which included the use of public health reserve to support the smoking cessation service, after health partners had raised concerns related to the reduction in funding. Funding had also been allocated to enable the continuation of a reduced child and adult weight management service after October 2018. It was proposed that the total budget for Smoking Cessation and Healthy Weight Support be combined in future to form part of an Integrated Health and Wellness Service. The report also set out the current position relating to the Drug & Alcohol Service and the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service. A summary of Public Health Performance & prevalence data for services subject to budget change in 2018-19 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and an Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 2.

The report explained that it was proposed to carry out a full public consultation from November 2018 to January 2019 to inform future Public Health Grant profiling in Reading, and how reducing budgets could still support the achievement of Public Health outcomes. This would include gathering feedback on services currently offered, options for alternative delivery models and partnership arrangements, and other ideas on priorities for support to stay well. The draft consultation document was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

Resolved -

- (1) That the re-profiling of the 2018-19 Public Health Grant budget be noted;**
- (2) That a consultation be undertaken on the achievement of Public Health outcomes by the local authority from 2019, including use of the Public Health Budget from 2019-20, including inviting stakeholder feedback on the broad range of activities undertaken by the Council which contribute to the achievement of Public Health outcomes.**

44. APPOINTMENT OF REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBERS

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The Monitoring Officer submitted a report asking the Committee to appoint to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

The report explained that the independent Remuneration Panel carried out an annual review of the Council's scheme for Councillors' Allowances, and had been set up to include at least three and no more than five independent members appointed to represent the following: the local business community, the local trades union movement, the local voluntary sector, the local media and a person with past experience of local government. At the Council AGM on 23 May 2018 (Minute 9 refers) members with experience of the local business community and with past experience of local government had been appointed, but the other positions were currently vacant. Three potential representatives had been approached and had agreed to be appointed to the Panel: Linda Fort (experience of the local media), Mick Pollek (experience of the local trade union movement) and Lady Audrey Durant (experience of the local voluntary sector).

Resolved -

- (1) That Linda Fort, Mick Pollek and Lady Audrey Durant be appointed as members of the Remuneration Panel;**
- (2) That the appointments of Dick Taylor and Francis Connolly to the Remuneration Panel at the Council AGM be reconfirmed.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.37 pm)