

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PUBLIC SESSION

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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To confirm the Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting on 26 November 2018.
8. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

To receive any petitions from the public and any questions from the public and Councillors.
9. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES
10. LONG TERM EMPTY PREMIUM - COUNCIL TAX BOROUGH
WIDE 273 -
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Councillor Brock / Director of Resources

This report asks the Committee to consider the Council Tax premium to be charged on long-term empty properties, following The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 which allows Local Authorities to increase this Premium.
11. APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2019/20 BOROUGH
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Councillors Brock & Lovelock / Director of Resources

This report asks the Committee to recommend to full Council the approval of the council tax support scheme and the Council Tax base for 2019/20.
12. RESPONSE TO THE WILLOWS/DISCHARGE TO ASSESS CONSULTATION AND FUTURE PROPOSAL BOROUGH
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Councillor Jones / Director Of Adult Care & Health Services

This report provides a summary of consultation with stakeholders on a proposal to move the Discharge to Assess beds from The Willows site to Charles Clore Court (an Extra Care provision) and close The Willows as a residential care home for people with dementia, and makes recommendations for future service provision.
13. CIVIL ENFORCEMENT (PARKING) CONTRACT EXTENSION BOROUGH
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Councillor Page / Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

This report seeks approval to extend the Civil Enforcement Contract by one year.

14. BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN - APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS **BOROUGH WIDE** **321 - 322**

Councillors Lovelock, Terry, Pearce & Brock / Director of Resources

This report seeks approval from the Committee, in its capacity as sole member for Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFfC), for the appointment of UHY Hacker Young as external auditors for BFfC.

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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.

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Agenda Item 3

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

Apologies: Councillors

RESOLVED ITEMS

45. 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 item 45 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.

46. INVESTMENT PROPERTY UPDATE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking authority to acquire two commercial investment properties, in line with the Council's adopted investment strategy and the three-year medium term financial strategy.

An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out additional information on the financial implications of the proposed purchases.

Resolved -

- (1) That the freehold purchase of the two properties detailed in Section 4 of the report be endorsed;
- (2) That, subject to the satisfactory outcome of Due Diligence, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the purchase, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services;
- (3) That, in the event that the final negotiated purchase price for both properties was higher than that set out in the report but still met the tests of the financial model, the purchase proceed only with the joint agreement of the Director of Resources (S151 Officer), Monitoring Officer, Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, and in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

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47. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48. 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.	Richard Stainthorp	Provision for students with Special Educational Needs	Cllr Pearce
3.	Peter Burt	Palmer Park Development Framework	Cllr Page
4.	John Mullaney	Comments on East Reading MRT site	Cllr Page
5.	John Mullaney	Cycle safety on East Reading MRT route	Cllr Lovelock
6.	Richard Stainthorp	Apartment developments in Reading	Cllr Page
7.	Tamzin Morphy	East Reading MRT funding	Cllr Lovelock
8.	Tamzin Morphy	East Reading MRT scheme costs	Cllr Page

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr McGonigle	Cycling Provision on East Reading MRT	Cllr Page
2.	Cllr McGonigle	Consultation on East Reading MRT	Cllr Page
3.	Cllr White	Leisure provider bids for Arthur Hill Pool site	Cllr Lovelock

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

49. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - ALLOCATION OF 15% LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

Further to Minute 26 of the meeting held on 16 July 2018, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the outcome of a public consultation on the allocation of the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy, and seeking approval for the allocation of funds. The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Consultation outcomes
- Appendix B - Local Areas
- Appendix C - 15% local contribution by ward and zone
- Appendix D - Equalities Impact Assessment

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The report explained that a consultation had been held between 20 July and 14 September 2018 on how the 15% 'neighbourhood proportion' of CIL raised in each of the four zones in Reading could be spent. An online questionnaire on the Council's website had listed a number of potential schemes for each of the four zones, and asked respondents to rank them in order of preference, with an opportunity to also suggest additional schemes. In total, there had been 347 responses to the consultation and the results were summarised in Appendix A.

The report set out the top ranked schemes emerging from the consultation, with commentary from officers and a recommended allocation of funding to projects. Subject to Committee approval the funds would be allocated to the relevant services in order to deliver the projects. The costs of the schemes proposed were indicative and in some cases the projects would require more funds to complete, become funded by other means, or cost less than projected. The report therefore sought authority for officers to make changes to the final spend allocations.

The report stated that it was considered that the results of the consultation would remain relevant and could be used to inform decisions on the allocation of 15% Local CIL in 2019. A further and similar public consultation could then be undertaken for consideration of CIL allocations in 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the responses from the public consultation and top ranking projects be noted;
- (2) That the provisional allocations of projects receiving 15% Local Community Infrastructure Levy funding be agreed as below with a total allocation of £1.206m (from funds received up to 30 September 2018):

Central Zone:

£16.1k - 'loan' to the northern area to complete the Gosbrook Road zebra crossing
£50k - Boroughwide enhancement to conservation areas
£15k - refurbishment of the seating areas along Broad St
£10k - reinstatement of the Shopping Bags sculpture formerly at the Oxford Rd/Butts junction;
£10k - a contribution towards the reinstatement in the town centre area of the Libby & co statue currently in storage at Darwin Close
£30k Dog fountain in St Lawrence's Churchyard
£100k - Ivydene Play Area Improvements
£100k - Avon Place Play Area Improvements

North

£33k - Zebra Crossing on Gosbrook Road

South

£95k - Cintra Park play area improvements
£50k - Zebra crossing for access to the Ridgeway School
£40k - Extension of 20mph zone Reading Girls School
£155k - Improvements at Long Barn Lane Recreation Ground (this is a combination of Items K-7. & P-16)
£100k - Enforcement of 20mph areas
£50k - Signs for HGVs Elgar Road
£50k - Additional community facilities as part of, or near to, improved health care provision in Whitley Wood

West:

£700 - Southcote Community Centre improvements (new fridge freezer)
£1k - Southcote Community Centre improvements (new blinds)
£50k - 20mph zone and width restriction, Brunswick St and Western Rd
£30k - to reduce speeding on Southcote Road and Westcote Road
£65k - New outdoor gym, Coley Recreation Park
£15k - Improvements to double roundabout signing, Grovelands Road
£50k - Pedestrian Crossings, Oxford Road and Overdown Road
£88k - Improvements at Prospect Park

- (3) That the reallocation of funds (£16.1k) from the central zone to the northern zone be noted and approved, and that no further projects be approved in the north zone until this amount was recovered from further CIL local 15% funds arising in the north zone;
- (4) That the relevant Heads of Service be authorised to complete necessary procurement processes to deliver the programme of work;
- (5) That spend approval for the projects be given in accordance with the provisional funding allocations listed in (2) above, and that officers be authorised to vary the allocations in consultation with the Head of Finance and the Lead Councillors for Strategic Environment and Planning and Transport and Corporate and Consumer Services.

50. PROPOSED RENT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROPERTIES

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out a proposal to set rents for permanent homes built as part of the Council's Local Authority New Build programme at an 'Adjusted Target Rent'. An Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that all existing Council properties were re-let at social housing 'Target Rent', which was determined by a nationally set formula, but that Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance enabled local authorities to set

rent levels above Target Rent for new build homes developed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In winter 2018/19 it was expected to let the first of the 57 new build Council homes being developed at Conwy Close; these would be the Council's first general needs homes to be completed as part of the new build programme and also the first properties with flexibility to set a higher level of rent. An Adjusted Target Rent was proposed that would reflect the expected rent levels of the existing stock, had the mandatory annual 1% rent decrease for all social housing not been imposed by Government in 2015 for four years. The proposed rent levels were therefore consistent with what the rent levels would have been for all stock had they been increased in line with the Council's adopted rent policy and national rent policy prior to 2015.

The report stated that the proposal would increase income to the HRA by £3.7m over the life of the 30 year business plan for Phases 1 and 2 of the new build programme, increasing financial resilience and supporting the delivery of service improvements and further new homes. It noted that the proposed Adjusted Target Rent was still significantly lower than Local Housing Allowance levels and the 'Affordable Rents' often used by Registered Providers. The Adjusted Target Rent would be a default but not a blanket policy for all new build schemes, to enable future mixed tenure schemes where letting all properties at the proposed Adjusted Target Rent levels might not be viable. In addition schemes supported with grant from Homes England, where the grant was awarded on the basis of the properties being let at social rent, would be let on that basis.

Resolved -

That the proposal to charge an 'Adjusted Target Rent' as a default rent policy for new permanent social housing developed as part of the Council's local authority new build housing programme, subject to the exceptions described in the report, be agreed.

51. READING BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID): RENEWAL AND EXTENSION PLANS 2019-24

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking endorsement for proposals to renew the existing retail Business Improvement District (BID) and to set up a new Abbey Quarter BID for the period 2019 -2024. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Summary and budget for the Retail BID renewal Proposal 2019-2024
- Appendix 2 - Summary and budget for the Abbey Quarter Commercial BID 2019-2024
- Appendix 3 - RBC Properties in the Proposed BID Areas
- Appendix 4 Reading Retail BID 2019-24 Consultation 'Have Your Say'.
- Appendix 5 Abbey Quarter Commercial BID 2019-24 Consultation 'Have your say

The report noted that the retail BID in the town centre had started in 2006 and been managed since its inception by the Council's economic development company Reading UK CIC. The most recent renewal of the BID had been in 2014 and the next was due in February 2019. The BID was funded by a business levy in the designated area that

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amounted to nearly half a million pounds per year, and had delivered a range of services to help make the town centre safer, cleaner, more attractive, more vibrant and better connected, adding value to core public services. The BID also acted as an advocate for the retail businesses and a partner to statutory bodies in bringing about improvements and positive change. The report listed activities carried out by the BID between 2014 and 2018.

The report explained that consultation with the businesses in the BID had been carried out and identified priorities for inclusion in the renewal proposal, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1. The report summarised the proposals which included: increasing footfall through more experiential events and greater levels of marketing; a discount scheme for employees; prioritising the use of the security budget into CCTV operatives; night time care for people enjoying the town and maintaining our Purple Flag status; provision of a BID Ranger supporting retailers to cut down shoplifting and supporting the Council and Police in dealing with anti-social behaviour; adding to the flower displays more widely across town and throughout the year; increasing levels of recycling; greater levels of social media marketing and communication in the town; and supporting the development and delivery of the Reading 2050 Vision.

In the last BID Plan (2014-19) it had been agreed that feasibility work be undertaken to consider extending the BID to cover the whole town centre and central business district. The Abbey Quarter adjacent to the town centre was an important part of the Reading economy and home to a number of global companies and large commercial grade 'A' offices, with employees in this area being significant users of the retail town centre. A proposal for new Commercial BID in the Abbey Quarter had been developed and was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

Consultation had been carried out on the proposed Abbey Quarter BID and the report set out proposed priorities: promotion and marketing of the Abbey Quarter as a business location; infrastructure investment to improve the environment and safety of the area; facilities to encourage boats to moor alongside the historic area; a BID Ranger as part of a team of two operating across both BID areas; an events calendar for visitors to the Abbey area and employees of the BID companies, and a programme of work / life balance activities to support the well-being and active engagement of, employees in the area.

The report explained that the proposals to extend the existing BID and to set up an Abbey Quarter BID would each be the subject of an independent and bespoke ballot, and the report sought authority for the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services to vote on behalf of the Council in favour of both proposals.

Resolved -

- (1) That the proposals for the renewal of the Retail BID be endorsed;**
- (2) That the proposals for the setting up of a new Commercial BID across the Abbey Quarter of the town centre be endorsed;**

- (3) That the Council vote in favour of both the Retail and Commercial BID proposals in the forthcoming ballot;
- (4) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services be authorised to vote for the proposed BIDs.

52. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES

Further to Minute 30 of Council on 21 October 2014, the Returning Officer submitted a report on a review of the Council's polling districts and polling places as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (the 2006 Act). A review was required every four years and the last review had been undertaken in 2014.

The report explained that the review would take place over the winter, with the results reported to the full Council meeting on 26 March 2019. A project plan and timetable for the review of polling districts and polling places was attached at Appendix A, and the schedule of the Council's current polling places and polling stations, with the Returning Officer's initial representations, was attached at Appendix B.

Resolved -

- (1) That the project plan and timetable for the 2018 review of polling districts and polling stations be agreed as set out in Appendix A;
- (2) That the Returning Officer's initial representations on the Council's current polling districts and polling stations, as set out in Appendix B, be received.

53. PURCHASE OF SOFTWARE LICENCES

The Director of Resources submitted a report proposing that the Council enter into software licensing agreements for the award of a contract for software licenses and maintenance for the Council's financial system, and to replace the current desktop operating system and core productivity applications.

The report explained that the Council had introduced the Oracle Fusion financial system in August 2014, and the contract had been renewed in 2016 through the Government's G-Cloud framework agreement, with the current contract due to end on 2 December 2018. The licenses had been amended to include the use of Oracle Fusion by the Council-owned companies Brighter Futures for Children and Homes for Reading. Oracle had withdrawn from the G-Cloud framework in 2018, and it was therefore proposed to contract directly with Oracle and award a contract for the provision of Fusion Financials Cloud licenses for up to three years.

The report explained that the Council currently used the Microsoft range of productivity tools, with data and applications stored locally. Advances in cloud computing technology meant that it was now more efficient for many of these workloads to be moved to the cloud, which would also bring benefits around resilience, flexible and mobile working,

communication and collaboration. The current estate of desktop and laptop computers were running Windows 7, for which extended support from Microsoft would end in January 2020, and Microsoft Office 2010, for which extended support would end in October 2020. After these dates the applications would no longer be supported and no further security fixes or updates released, and upgrades were therefore required to maintain a fully functional and secure operating environment.

The report noted that licenses for previous and current software had been procured on a perpetual basis involving large capital purchases when upgrades became due, along with significant project effort involved in rolling updates out. The technology sector was moving towards a greater focus on renewable subscriptions to cloud-based services rather than outright purchases. It was therefore proposed that the Council purchase annual licenses for all users for the cloud-based Microsoft 365 suite comprised of Office 365, Windows 10 and IT Security and Management tools.

Resolved -

- (1) That the award of a contract to Oracle Corporation ('Oracle') for the provision of Fusion Financial Cloud service and associated maintenance services be approved;
- (2) That the purchase of 2,000 licenses for the Microsoft 365 suite, renewable on an annual basis, be approved.

54. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING RESULTS

The Director of Resources submitted a report setting out the projected revenue and capital outturn positions for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018 (Quarter 2) and also performance for the first two quarters against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan. The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Financial Monitoring for Quarter 2
- Appendix 2 - Performance Monitoring for Quarter 2

The report explained that the forecast General Fund outturn as at the end of Quarter 2 (Period 6) was a projected overspend of £1.558m, a decrease of £0.796m since the end of Period 5. The decrease was due to a mitigation exercise within each directorate to find mitigations for all current Red Savings within the 2018-2019 savings programme and to cover other pressures previously identified.

The report stated that the General Fund Capital Programme was currently forecasting slippage of £7.185m to future years, mainly due to the East Reading Mass Rapid Transit scheme (£4.577m) and the Accommodation Review (£1.799m); it was anticipated that the rate of expenditure would increase towards the latter part of the financial year. The Housing Revenue Account was forecasting a £0.350m underspend as at the end of quarter two, due to rent collection rates being higher than budgeted, expenditure on reactive and planned maintenance being underspent and staff vacancies in the sheltered housing team. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme was also currently projected to

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have slippage of £6.341m to future years, predominantly due to New Builds and Acquisitions (£5.900m) and Major Repairs (£0.500m) with minor variances on other schemes.

The report also set out a summary of performance as at the end of Q2 against the success measures published in the Corporate Plan, to monitor progress against the Council's six priorities. Measures where there had been key shifts in performance and/or significant variation from the target were highlighted. Since the Quarter 1 report 10 measures had improved, two measures are static and 10 measures had declined. The full suite of twenty nine measures and progress against targets as at the end of September 2018 were set out in Appendix 2 attached to the report.

Resolved -

- (1) That the forecast General Fund outturn position as at the end of September 2018, an overspend of £1.558m excluding the use of contingency, be noted;**
- (2) That the forecast outturn position on the Housing Revenue Account as at the end of September 2018, a projected underspend of £0.350m, be noted;**
- (3) That the forecast outturn position on the Capital Programme as at the end of September 2018 is a projected underspend of £7.185m for the General Fund and £6.341m for the Housing Revenue Account be noted;**
- (4) That the performance achieved against the Corporate Plan success measures as set out in the report and Appendix 2 be noted.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.18 pm)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	LONG TERM EMPTY PREMIUM - COUNCIL TAX		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR BROCK	PORTFOLIO:	CORPORATE & CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	REVENUES & BENEFITS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MATT DAVIS	TEL:	01189 372954
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF FINANCE	E-MAIL:	matthew.davis@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Since 2013 Local Authorities have had discretion to vary the amount of Council Tax charged on long term empty properties, under the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (S11-13). The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 now allows Local Authorities to increase the Premium charged on long term empty properties. The purpose of this report is to consider the amount of premium the Committee wish to charge going forward on long term empty properties.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The Policy Committee is recommended to increase the premium on long term empty properties as follows:

- 100% premium from 1 April 2019 for those properties which are empty for 2 years and over;
- 200% premium from 1 April 2020 for those properties which are empty for 5 years and over;
- 300% premium from 1 April 2021 for those properties which are empty for 10 years and over.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1. Full Council approved the charging mechanism for empty homes from 1st April 2013. The Council currently charges long term empty dwellings at the previous maximum rate of an additional 50% after having been empty for 2 years. The Premium aims to assist Local Authorities in the implementation of local Empty Homes Strategies. It was designed to persuade owners of registered long term empty homes to take steps to bring those homes back into use. Only two Billing Authorities in England have declined to apply a Premium.

3.2. The new regulation allows local discretion to increase the Premium charge in stages as follows:

- From April 2019 the Premium charge can be increased to an extra 100% of the occupied Council Tax
- From 1st April 2020 for properties empty between 5 & 10 years the Premium can be increased to 200%.
- From April 2021 properties empty for more than 10 years the Premium can be increased to 300% of the occupied Council Tax.

There are however certain exemptions to this premium being applied. These include premises owned by members of the armed forces, annexes and properties that are genuinely on the market for sale or let

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1. We are proposing that we implement these changes to our empty long term premiums as the intention of the discretionary power is to help local authorities increase the volume of their local housing stock by incentivising property owners to bring long term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes. This will support local communities by increasing the supply of affordable housing available in the borough.

4.2. A certain level of empty homes is inevitable due to housing market churn; however, long term empty properties are more likely to deteriorate and may result in associated anti-social behaviour in an area.

4.3. We are conscious that there are a variety of reasons why properties remain empty, but it is important to try and encourage homeowners to bring empty properties back into use particularly with the current pressure on finding housing for residents.

4.4. There are currently 115 properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years within the borough and therefore are already subject to an Empty Homes Premium.

4.5. Since the Premium was introduced, the proportion of all homes registered as 'Long Term Empty' that are paying the Premium has increased because of Regulatory Services successes in bringing the less problematic non-Premium LTEs back into use. To give an indication of the circumstances surrounding the Premium-paying properties, the Empty Homes Officer reports these characteristics:- 11% are flats above shops or are tied to vacant commercial premises; 9% remain empty after the grant of Probate following the death of the occupier; 4% have live Planning Consent; 9% are allegedly on the market; 26% are undergoing renovation or conversion; 4% are dated residential mobile homes awaiting replacement; 8% are age-restricted occupation or retirement leaseholds.

4.6. Bringing a home that is subject to the Premium back into use reduces the liability and potential receipt of that property. However, the Council receives

a New Homes Bonus reward for bringing a Premium-rated empty home back into use. The future of the New Homes Bonus scheme is not yet known.

5. OPTIONS PROPOSED

5.1. It is recommended that the Council increases its empty premium in line with new legislation as follows:

- 100% premium from 1 April 2019 for those properties which are empty for 2 years and
- 200% premium from 1 April 2020 for those properties which are empty for 5 years and
- 300% premium from 1 April 2021 for those properties which are empty for 10 years and over

5.2. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- Stop the Premium charge
- Leave the Premium charge at the existing level (50%)

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

The proposal meets the Corporate Plan priority of ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs. In addition it has the potential to improve Community Safety and will facilitate delivery of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2014-2019.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1. There is no statutory requirement to consult. Those impacted by any changes to the charges of Empty and Unfurnished dwellings are not a fixed group of residents and those liable for any charges can vary. Once the decision is made, those council taxpayers affected will be informed.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1. This was carried out as part of the national legislative process and there are no key groups affected beyond those identified in that analysis

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. These are set out in the body of the report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are currently 115 properties in the borough that have been empty for over 2 years. The current premium generates an additional income for the authority above the standard Council Tax charge of £82,423.

10.2. Increasing the premiums in line with the maximum amounts set out in the legislations could generate additional income of:

RBC share

2019/20	£82,423
2020/21	£128,420
2021/22	£141,058

10.3. The above forecasts are subject to the number of empty properties remaining the same and would reduce if the proposed implementation of the increased premium has the desired effect of reducing the number of long term empty properties. The figures exclude any allowance for non-collection (assumed to be 1% in the tax base calculation). The table overleaf summarises the annual additional income attributable to the Council (excluding preceptor elements):

	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 years plus
2018/19:	83 properties	22 properties	10 properties
Premium	50% premium	50% premium	50% premium
Total Income	£59,425	£16,678	£6,320
2019/20:	83 properties	22 properties	10 properties
Premium	100% premium	100% premium	100% premium
Total Additional Income	£59,425	£16,678	£6,320
2020/21:	83 properties	22 properties	10 properties
Premium	100% premium	200% premium	200% premium
Total Additional Income	£59,425	£50,033	£18,960
2021/22:	83 Properties	22 properties	10 properties
Premium	100% premium	200% premium	300% premium
Total additional Income	£59,425	£50,033	£31,560

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1. (The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018)

12. Risk Assessment

- 12.1. There is a risk that raising additional charges on empty properties could lead to an increase in tax avoidance tactics. This could include the creation of fictitious tenancies, increased claims for single person discount and claims for exemption from premium payments. Steps will be taken to mitigate the risks identified through increased property controls, monitoring and on-site inspections.
- 12.2. The Premium can be seen to increase potential receipt and since its inception has prompted some owners of very long-term empty homes to act. However, there are instances where the imposition of the Premium has made some reluctant charge-payers even more determined not to pay their arrears. The Premium can also trigger appeals by charge payers against the imposition of the additional charge. The administration of appeals and of debt recovery arising from the Premium places a demand on staff time
- 12.3. In addition we are aware that some long term empty properties have been empty for a number of years as the owners have mental health or capacity issues, we already have a well-established process in place for dealing with these individual cases through our empty homes officer. This would continue.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2019/20		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLORS BROCK AND LOVELOCK	PORTFOLIO:	CORPORATE & CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MATT DAVIS	TEL:	0118 937 2954
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF FINANCE	E-MAIL:	Matthew.Davis@Reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 requires the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate a Council Tax Base for its area by 31 January each year.
- 1.2 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Local Government Finance Act 2012 replaced the Council Tax Benefit scheme with a locally determined Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as a local Council Tax Support Scheme), which is effectively a type of Council Tax discount. This act requires the Council to approve the scheme by the end of January preceding the start of the financial year. The recommended scheme for 2019/20 is a continuation of the scheme that was agreed by Council for 2018/19.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION - that the Policy Committee recommend that Council:

- 2.1 Note a Council Tax collection rate of 99% for 2019-20;
- 2.2 Agree the existing Council Tax Local Reduction Scheme is retained for 2019/20;
- 2.3 Note that the 2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Scheme allowances will be updated in line with the scheme's regulations;
- 2.4 Subject to determining how it wishes to proceed with increasing the premium on Long Term Empty properties, the options for which are set out in another report on the Agenda, sets Reading Borough Council's Council Tax Base for the financial year 2019/20 at:

a) 55,884 if the Long Term Premium on empty properties recommendation is accepted (see paragraph 5.12, Table 4), or

b) 55,832 if the Long Term Premium on empty properties recommendation is not accepted (see paragraph 5.5, Table 2)

2.5 Note an estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund in 2018-19 of £200k of which the Council's share is £173k.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Under Government regulations it is necessary for the Council to review its Collection Fund and decide the following:

- It's Council Tax Collection Rate for 2019/20;
- It's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20;
- The Council Tax Base to be used for setting its 2019/20 Council Tax; and
- The estimated Council Tax surplus or deficit for 2018/19.

4. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

4.1. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 replaced the Council Tax Benefit scheme with a new locally determined Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as a local Council Tax Support scheme) from April 2013. This is effectively now a Council Tax discount.

4.2. Each local authority is required to annually set a local Council Tax Reduction scheme for working age claimants. The government continues to operate a statutory national scheme for pensioners, which provides them with broadly the same level of Council Tax Support as they received under the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, but has been adjusted by the Government since its introduction to incorporate a number of welfare reform initiatives.

4.3. The local Council Tax Reduction scheme was initially funded through a specific central government grant set at 90% of each local authority's Council Tax Benefit expenditure. The government funding since 2014/15 has been rolled into the government's overall Revenue Support Grant settlement.

4.4. In 2018/19 the Council's scheme was updated as follows:

- Minimum contribution to Council Tax is 35%;
- Capital limit is £3,000;
- Non-dependant deductions (based on income) is £10.00 per week for those not engaged in remunerative work (working less than 16 hours per week) and/or have gross earnings less than £196.95 per week;
- Non-dependant deductions for those engaged in remunerative work (16 hours or more) with gross weekly earnings of £196.95 per week and above is £15.00 per week.

- 4.5. These changes have been in place for the last year and it has not had significant impact to the working age customers it affects. There has not been a significant impact on in-year collection rate.
- 4.6. Pension age customers continue to be protected with the default scheme based on 100% support based on a financial means test.
- 4.7. The Reading minimum charge is at the higher end of charges implemented by councils for those in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction. An increase above the general increase would have a negative impact on vulnerable people in receipt of these benefits who are also impacted by other welfare reforms. It will also impact on the collection of Council Tax from these people.
- 4.8. It is therefore recommended that the Council retains the same Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2019/20 as applied in 2018/19.
- 4.9. There is no need for public consultation as there are no changes to the Scheme.

5. CALCULATION OF TAX BASE

- 5.1. The Council Tax Base is used in the Council's 2019/20 budget and by precepting authorities (the Police and Fire authorities) to determine how much Council Tax income will be received. .
- 5.2. The Tax Base relates to the estimated number of Band D equivalent properties in Reading. This is calculated by taking the number of registered properties in Reading which is then reduced for property or resident discounts and then converted to a Band D equivalent number of properties. Band D is used for comparison purposes with other Local Authorities and is assumed to be the average council tax banding. Reading's dwellings on average are between band C and band D. Registered properties at 30th November 2018 are set out in the Table 1 below, together with the Band D equivalent.

Table 1: Number of properties in each Council Tax Band

Band	Number of Properties in Band	Amount Payable as a Proportion of Band D	Band D Equivalent	%
A	6,907	6/9	4,605	9.6%
B	14,233	7/9	11,070	19.8%
C	29,123	8/9	25,887	40.4%
D	10,976	9/9	10,976	15.2%
E	5,535	11/9	6,765	7.7%
F	3,287	13/9	4,748	4.6%
G	1,844	15/9	3,073	2.6%
H	83	18/9	166	0.1%
Total	71,988		67,290	100.0%

- 5.3. The current number of Band D equivalent properties is then adjusted for anticipated growth between 30th November 2018 and 31st March 2020, the end

of the 2019/20 financial year. An allowance of 1% is then deducted for non-collection.

- 5.4. The estimated increase is based on past trends, properties that haven't yet appeared on the valuation list, and planning estimates of housing growth. For 19/20 the figures have been adjusted to factor in a potential slowing of housing sales due to Brexit uncertainty.
- 5.5. Elsewhere on the agenda there is a report recommending the increase in the Council's Long Term Empty Property premium in line with new legislation. Table 2 below sets out the calculation of the Council Tax Base for Reading for 2019/20 assuming the recommendation is not approved. It results in an increase of 1,104 Band D equivalent properties compared to the 2018/19 Tax Base, from 54,850 to 55,832.

Table 2: Calculation of Council Tax Base Excluding Increase in Long Term Empty Premium

	Properties	
	Adjustments	Totals
The total number of dwellings on the Valuation list at 30.11.18		71,988
Reduction for discounts, e.g. students, single person, empty properties after allowing for premiums	(8,967)	
Less Discounts in relation to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	(4,861)	
Net number of chargeable dwellings at 30.11.18		58,161
Band D Equivalent Properties at 30.11.18		55,399
Estimated growth of 1.8%	997	
Estimated Band D Properties 2019/20		56,396
Reduction for non-collection of 1%	(564)	
2019-20 Council Tax Base excluding option of additional premium on empty properties		55,832

- 5.6. The increase in the Tax Base is positive in terms of increased Council Tax income but this should be understood in the context of additional service pressures caused by housing growth in areas such as social care, refuse collection and school provision.
- 5.7. Estimated property growth is 1.8% above the 2018/19 Council Tax base.
- 5.8. The property growth for 2019/20 accords with planning estimates of the predicted housing trajectory over the next five years in the core strategy.
- 5.9. The growth in the tax base since 2015/16 is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Tax- Base change 2015/16 - 2019/20

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Tax Base	50,155	51,050	53,671	54,850	55,832
Change	n/a	895	2,621	1,179	982
Change %	n/a	1.8%	5.1%	2.2%	1.8%

- 5.10. The collection rate that is used to calculate the Council Tax base is 99%, i.e. a 1% non-collection. This is based on the Council collecting the majority of the amount outstanding at year-end in the following and subsequent years. This compares with an estimated in-year Council Tax collection rate for 2018/19 of 96.5% which is used for comparison purposes with other councils.
- 5.11. Assuming the recommendation to increase the Premium charged on long term empty properties is agreed (this is subject to another report elsewhere on the 14th January 2019 Policy Committee agenda). It is estimated the amount of Council Tax collectable for Reading will increase by £82,425 in 2019/20. Assuming non-collection of 1% this would increase the Council Tax Base to 55,884 (another 52 Band D equivalent properties) as set out in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Impact of increasing the premium on long term empty properties

	Properties	
	Adjustments	Totals
2019-20 Council Tax Base excluding option of additional premium on empty properties		55,832
Equivalent Band D properties increase if the additional premium is introduced	52	
2019-20 Council Tax Base including option of additional premium on empty properties		55,884

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1. There are two key risks in setting the Council Tax Base: property growth and collection rates. The impact of either would mean a shortfall on the Collection Fund in 2019/20 which would have to be recovered in 2020/21. A 1% shortfall in growth of the Tax Base would result in a shortfall of £882k in the Reading share of the Collection Fund. This needs to be balanced against the Council setting a rate too low meaning it needs to increase the level of savings.
- 6.2. Whilst housing sales could stall in the first part of the year due to Brexit uncertainty. This is likely to be mitigated to some extent by Reading being in a high growth area, which will increase with the advent of Cross Rail.
- 6.3. Collection rates may reduce, however, the Council have good overall performance in this area, collecting 99% of Council Tax raised and there is no risk from increasing the minimum charge for Council Tax Reduction.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 7.1. To secure the most effective use of the Council's resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public services.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 8.1. Not applicable

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1. An equality impact assessment is not required as no changes are proposed for discounts or exemptions to Council Tax.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The Council is required to determine the Council Tax Base for the next financial year by 31st January 2019.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1. The increase in the Council Tax Base of 982 average Band D properties equates to an increase in the amount of Council Tax income of £1,552k without any increase in the charge. This is based on the 2018/19 Council Tax charge of £1,579.99 for a band D property.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT CARE & HEALTH SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	RESPONSE TO THE WILLOWS/DISCHARGE TO ASSESS CONSULTATION AND FUTURE PROPOSAL		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR TONY JONES	PORTFOLIO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SERVICE:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MELISSA WISE	TEL:	01189 374945
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION - ADULT CARE & HEALTH	E-MAIL:	melissa.wise@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In September 2018 Reading's Adult Social Care commenced a 30 day consultation with stakeholders in relation to the ongoing use of The Willows (both the Residential Home element and the Discharge to Assess (D2A) service).
- 1.2 The consultation proposed moving the Discharge to Assess beds from The Willows site to Charles Clore Court (an Extra Care provision) and closing The Willows as a residential care home for people with dementia. In parallel a review of internal services is being completed by the Transformation Team in Adult Social Care which will include potential options for The Willows site in the future.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the main themes emerging from the consultation and Reading's Adult Social Care's associated management responses along with recommendations for the final model.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 2.1 That Policy Committee note the consultation themes and associated management response.
- 2.2 That Policy Committee agree to relocate the Discharge to Assess service to Charles Clore Court.
- 2.3 That Policy Committee agree to the temporary closure of the Willows site.
- 2.4 That Policy Committee note the potential staffing implications.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 At a national level, both the consultation and the recommendations have been driven by NHS Improvement guidance which states that bed-based services are a perverse incentive to the Home First ethos for a Discharge To Assess service, as they tend to be used by the hospital system as a quick and 'safe' discharge option particularly at times of higher pressure.

- 3.2 Additionally, the proposed relocation of the Discharge to Assess service from a residential setting to an extra care setting supports the national requirement (under the Better Care Fund) to implement the “High Impact Change Model” (HICM) for reducing delayed transfers of care from hospital settings. The provision of effective Discharge to Assess, and “home first” options, are a key theme within the HICM.
- 3.3 At a local level, the proposal would release ring fenced budget from the Discharge to Assess service, supporting the Council’s wider aim to deliver cost-effective services.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Consultation feedback and management response

- 4.1 Feedback from the consultation has been analysed and the main themes are presented below to provide an overview of the responses. The full consultation response is attached as Appendix 1.

- **Reduced staffing structure** - Staff questioned job security in the event that the proposed staffing structures be implemented.

Management response - The proposed staffing structure may result in redundancy for some staff however in line with our Organisational Change guidance and Employment Stability Agreement we aim to avoid job losses as much as possible. Redeployment opportunities will be explored where possible. The proposed implications for staffing are outlined in 4.3 below.

- **Capacity vs. demand at Charles Clore Court** - There was concern from friends and families that there are insufficient staff numbers at Charles Clore Court to support the additional duties associated with incorporating the D2A service.

Management response - The lead officer proposes to increase staffing levels at Charles Clore Court to support the increase in demand.

- **Changes to staff roles** - Staff expressed concern that it would be difficult to transition from delivering care in a residential environment to an extra care environment, due to differences in the two types of care. Additionally staff in Charles Clore Court are not trained to deliver the reablement that underpins the Discharge To Assess model.

Management response - The lead officer proposes to deliver reablement training to the staff at Charles Clore Court. In response to the concerns, the proposed transition has been amended to a phased integration of the teams across a three-month period to support a safe transition (see 4.8 below).

- **The closure of the Willows service** - a small number of respondents objected to the proposed closure of care homes. Another responder contested the proposed loss of the respite bed currently offered at The Willows.

Management response - Fewer placements are being made into residential services, in line with the national Better Care Fund targets to reduce placements into residential and nursing homes. The commissioning team have stated that the potential loss of the service would not impact their ability to make residential dementia placements, given the local availability of equivalent quality services. To note there are no longer any permanent residents at the Willows living within the Residential part of the service.

- **The potential loss of the site** - Concerns were raised about the Council potentially losing the Council-owned site from which the Discharge To Assess service is delivered.

Management response - No proposals or decisions have been made regarding the future of the site, as a review is taking place for all of the Adult Social Care internal services that the council operates. It is acknowledged that there are costs incurred with maintaining the property, such as: £30,000 for basic running costs, £20,000 for security management and fencing, and £20,000 for property maintenance and therefore a decision about the future of the site will be made promptly.

Recommended Option

4.2 Following consideration of the consultation responses, it is proposed that:

- The Discharge to Assess service is relocated to Charles Clore Court.
- The Willows Residential service is temporarily closed while its long-term future is decided under the review of internal services described in 1.2 and 4.1 (above).

Staffing Implications

4.3 A summary of the expected staffing implications are outlined in the tables below, subject to final confirmation of the staffing structure:

Table 1: Proposed final staffing structure for Discharge To Assess/Charles Clore Court & the volume of those posts that will be filled by existing staff at Charles Clore Court

Staff role	Total FTE required in new structure	Proposed contribution to the new structure made by existing staff at Charles Clore Court	Positions in new structure remaining available to existing Discharge To Assess staff (following CCC staff's contribution to filling the roles)
Manager	1	0	1
Deputy Manager	0	0	0
Lead ILA (Lead at Willows/D2A)	3	1	2
ILA (Carer at Willows/D2A)	12.86	6.69	6.17
Night ILA (Night Carer at Willows/D2A)	1.75	1.62	0.13
Domestic Cleaning Staff	0	0	0
Cook	0	0	0
Laundry Assistant	0	0	0

Gardener	0	0	0
TOTAL	18.61	9.31	9.3

Table 2: Number of displaced D2A staff roles following allocation of existing staff to positions remaining available in the proposed staffing structure

Staff role	Current FTE at the Willows/D2A	Positions in new structure remaining available to existing D2A staff (following CCC staff's contribution to filling the roles)	Number of displaced D2A staff roles (FTE)
Manager	1	1	0
Deputy Manager	1	0	1
Lead ILA (Lead at Willows/D2A)	3	2	1
ILA (Carer at Willows/D2A)	7.19	6.17	1.02
Night ILA (Night Carer at Willows/D2A)	2.29	0.13	2.16
Domestic Cleaning Staff	3.05	0	3.05
Cook	2.08	0	2.08
Laundry Assistant	0.54	0	0.54
Gardener	0.81	0	0.81
TOTAL	20.96	9.3	11.66

- 4.4 As the table above indicates the proposal would result in 11.66 number of FTE posts no longer being required as part of the new structure. No changes in grades for retained staff are envisaged.
- 4.5 It is highly likely that redeployment into other in-house vacancies will be available for the majority of the care staff and this is factored in when calculating potential redundancy costs indicated below. Redeployment is less likely for the ancillary staff. However we will work in line with our Organisational Change guidance and Employment Stability Agreement to support staff.
- 4.6 The redundancy costs have been estimated on the assumption that the 4.18 FTE displaced care staff are redeployed. The estimated redundancy cost for the remaining posts (7.48FTE) is approximately £136,000. However the costs could also increase should it not be possible to redeploy the 4.18 care staff.
- 4.7 To facilitate the close down of the service it is estimated that four domestic staff, a handyperson and the administration assistant (alongside the manager) would need to be retained for one month after the closure of the service to assist with closing and securing it.

- 4.8 As noted in 4.1 (above), it is proposed that there will be two separate teams to enable the skills transfer over a three month period. The Charles Clore Court staff and The Willows staff team transferring across will initially work independently, moving towards a single team by the end of a 3 month period.

Other Options Considered

- 4.9 The project group explored the option of maintaining the current services at The Willows Residential Care Home. However these would not offer the notable advantages to service delivery, alignment with best practice or financial efficiencies that the move to Extra Care delivers.
- 4.11 Other long-term options for The Willows site will be assessed as a part of a review currently being conducted by the DACHS Transformation Team.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

The report contributes to the following strategic aims and Corporate Plan priorities:

1. To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
2. Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The consultation invited comment from the following service user and family groups:
- People who currently reside in Charles Clore Court
 - People who were resident in The Willows Care Home
 - People who were regular users of the respite service at The Willows
 - People who have used the Discharge to Assess service
 - People who are friends and family of the people named above
- 6.2 Key stakeholders from the following organisations were also invited to comment:
- Berkshire Health Foundation Trust
 - Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Unions representing staff at both Charles Clore Court and The Willows
 - The Royal Berkshire Hospital
 - Staff teams from Charles Clore Court and The Willows
- 6.3 Service users were written to, called and met (where appropriate). Staff meetings were held to gather views.
- 6.3 Additionally, a press release invited the wider public to offer their views regarding the proposal.
- 6.5 Changes to the initial proposal as a result of the consultation feedback are listed in section 4.1 and 4.8 (above).

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. It concluded that in the short-term, there would be an impact upon older people who (at that time) were residing in The Willows' residential beds, whilst alternative provision is found. No impact was foreseen for people using the Discharge To Assess service.

7.2 The 3 permanent residents who were living at The Willows Care Home have since transferred to different services due to: a requirement for dementia-based nursing care e.g. a change in need; a desire to be nearer to family; and a desire to move to a service that offered more opportunities for socialisation. Consequently there are no remaining permanent residents.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report and the consultation response have been reviewed by legal services to provide assurance that there were no oversights in the consultation approach. They have noted that:

- The correct HR advice has been sought to support the consultation with staff and proposed changes to numbers and places of work.
- Case law states that staff and others who could be affected by proposals should be consulted while proposals are still at a formative stage. This duty has been met by contacting all of the stakeholders and the general public.
- Local Authorities have the power to operate care homes, however it is a matter of their discretion whether to do so and on what basis.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications for the Residential Service (The Willows) budget

9.1 Financial implications are calculated on the basis that, should the proposals be approved in January 2019 they would be fully enacted by March 2019 with budget reductions taking effect for April 2019 (financial year 2019-2020).

9.2 The net operating budget in 2019/20 for the residential service at the Willows is £394,000. As noted in 7.1 above, no residents are currently living at the Willows, with the cost of their new external placements being met by the council's external care placement budgets.

9.3 As noted in 4.6 (above), one off redundancy costs of £136,000 are anticipated and it is assumed that they are funded corporately.

9.4 As noted in 4.1 (above), it is estimated that costs of £70,000 per annum will be incurred to ensure the site is compliant with health and safety requirements. These costs would continue until a decision is reached regarding the site's future.

9.5 Consequently under the proposed arrangement, the projected spend against the service budget in 2019/20 is:

Budget line	Cost (£)
Current Budget	394,000
Basic Running Costs	-30,000
Security Costs	-20,000
Property Maintenance	-20,000
Saving	324,000

- 9.6 Revenue savings of £324,000 are anticipated in 2019/20 on the Willows residential budget following the closure of the service. These would contribute towards the Review of In House Provider Services saving for 2019/20.
- 9.7 Should any adaptations or additional equipment be required for the flats within Charles Clore Court this will be funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant. Given that these flats have been utilised by people with varying physical needs it is not anticipated that there will be significant changes required.

Implications for the Discharge to Assess (D2A) budget

- 9.8 The budget for the Discharge to Assess service will move to Charles Clore Court following the closure of the Willows site. The current service budget is £1.123m and is funded from the Council's Better Care Fund agreement with the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 9.9 The Discharge To Assess service is expected to cost £316,000 in 2019/20. This would result in a residual from the ring-fenced Better Care Fund budget of £777k per annum; this is under the proposed staffing arrangements outlined in sections 4.3 - 4.4 (above), any redundancy costs have been factored into the residential budget saving above.
- 9.10 The use of any released moneys will be discussed and agreed with the Berkshire West CCG, in line with both parties' joint management of the Better Care Fund. Initial conversations around the potential use of released funds have focused on initiatives that could help to support the reduction of Non-Elective Admissions, which is a priority target for Health and Social Care under the Better Care Fund.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Willows/Discharge to Assess Consultation Report
- 10.2 Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment - Discharge To Assess/Charles Clore Court
- 10.3 Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment - Willows

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The Willows/Discharge to Assess
Consultation Response Document
November 2018

The aim of this document is to confirm the response to the feedback received in the consultation on the proposed closure of The Willows and the move of base for the Discharge to Assess (D2A) service and to confirm what the next steps will be.

This document presents:

- Feedback received from staff, service users and their representatives
- Confirmed team structure
- The next steps in the process
- The support available to staff

1.0 Background information

- 1.1 The consultation covered proposed changes for The Willows and Discharge to Assess services. This included the temporary closure of The Willows care home (options for potentially reopening the service in a different format are due to be scoped by the Transformation Team) and relocating the Discharge to Assess service to the Charles Clore Court extra care sheltered housing scheme in Southcote. It also covered the potential changes to the staff teams (at both the Willows and Charles Clore Court services).
- 1.2 The Council is committed to a comprehensive modernisation programme to transform the delivery and provision of Adult Social Care in Reading, so that the services run by Reading are cost effective, meet the national drivers for the delivery of Adult Social Care and most importantly improve outcomes for people in Reading.
- 1.3 The current staffing establishment for The Willows is designed to meet the needs of a residential care home and a Discharge to Assess service. This includes ancillary staff who support the running of this type of service. The current staffing establishment for Charles Clore Court is set to meet the needs of the approximately 40 people (dependent on occupancy levels- staffing level will vary to meet the level of occupancy).
- 1.4 The consultation ran from 24 September and 25 October 2018, and staff and stakeholders were invited to give their views and feedback on the proposals.

Feedback centred primarily on the following areas:

- Staff queries about the process, potential timelines and the mechanics of running the Discharge to Assess service
- Levels of Staffing in the service
- Concern about closing The Willows and losing the site
- Changes to staff roles

1.5 Feedback received and the management response is provided in more detail below.

2.0 Consultation Process

2.1 The consultation document was sent to staff on 24th September 2018. A meeting with Trade Union representatives was offered on 18th September followed by a launch meeting with both of the staff teams on 24th September, which marked the start of the formal 30 day consultation period. A high proportion of the team attended the consultation launch meetings. Two follow up meetings were held for both staff teams. Staff also gave their feedback via email and 1:1 meetings.

2.2 The consultation was also opened to the public. It was launched on the Reading Borough Council Website alongside a press release.

2.3 The 3 permanent residents at The Willows Care Home (at the time) and their families received written letters about the consultation, alongside telephone calls from and meetings with the service management team. One to one reviews with the residents were also conducted by social workers. Regular users of the respite service were contacted by the management team and also received letters regarding the consultation. People were offered the opportunity to get in touch over the phone, via the mail or email. A comment/query box regarding the consultation was on offer at the service also.

2.4 Residents at Charles Clore Court were contacted by letter regarding the consultation and were offered opportunities to meet with the manager. They too were offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns over the phone, via post and via email.

2.5 Partner organisations were also offered the opportunity to feedback their views. In particular meetings were scheduled between the Council, Berkshire Health Foundation Trust (BHFT), colleagues at the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

3.0 Consultation responses

3.1 A number of constructive questions and comments were offered during the consultation process. All of the feedback was collated following the consultation and is provided at the end of this document, along with the management response. 8 responses were received that did not agree with the principle of moving the discharge to assess service and closing the residential service. Of these:

- 2 responders are staff members at The Willows
- 2 responders were previously employed at The Willows
- 1 an informal carer for a former resident at The Willows
- 1 Health Care professional
- 2 were stakeholders (members of the public, health, voluntary organisation, etc).

Most of the reasons that they gave are linked to the themes below, others were linked to the responder's individual situations.

3.2 Feedback has been summarised here under the following themes:

3.2.1 Level of Staffing

People noted that the proposal would add duties to the staff team at Charles Clore Court, and that this could not be covered by the current staffing numbers.

Response & any changes

As a part of the proposal, there would be additional staffing allocated to the Charles Clore Court site, from the staff team that currently operates at The Willows.

3.2.2 Staff roles

Both of the staff teams offered feedback regarding the proposed change of roles. Some of the staff at Charles Clore Court had previously moved from a residential care environment to an extra care environment and were keen to point out that the work, whilst mostly similar, had some subtle but important differences.

The team at The Willows also stated that there would need to be a change in practise for the staff at Charles Clore Court, to work in an enabling fashion. This would also require training.

Response & any changes

Following the feedback from the staff teams, the management felt that it would be beneficial to phase the integration of the two teams, over a period of three months to allow for the additional training and allow staff to adapt to the new way of working. Staff would initially come across from the Willows as one team and operate separately to the existing Charles Clore Court team. Over the following three month period they would eventually align to one team once all staff were appropriately trained.

3.2.3 Closure of the residential service

There was feedback from a small number of respondents that the local area should not be closing residential care homes, as there is an aging population and there will likely be a need for more beds rather than fewer. There was also one piece of feedback that was linked to the loss of the respite bed that was offered as a part of the residential service. There was concern that the building would also be lost from the Council portfolio.

Response & any changes

In Reading, there are fewer placements being made into residential care services than in previous years. This follows the wishes of older people, who generally wish to live independently for as long as possible. Supporting people to be independent as long as it is safe is also seen as best practice. It also follows improvements in use of community reablement and assistive technology.

The commissioning team are currently able to make placements into residential dementia care homes which are of an appropriate and equivalent quality and in the local area (although this is very occasionally not possible due to need or demand). This is also the case for residential respite for older people.

The commissioning plan for the borough includes an increase in use of Extra Care Sheltered Housing locally. Following a consultation, older people were in favour of more independent living services.

There is currently a review taking place for all of the internal services that the council operates. This review will also look at the future use of The Willows site.

3.2.4 Reduction in the number of beds/flats

The proposal suggested that the Discharge to Assess service will reduce the number of beds. Stakeholders fed back that they were surprised that this was an appropriate course of action, as there is ongoing pressure at the hospital on delayed transfers of care.

Response & any change

Analysis was conducted to look at bed occupancy, uptake and usage for the Discharge to Assess service. The analysis concluded that 4 beds were required which included an allowance for some potential increase in use in the future and at times of pressure.

Based on a desktop analysis of admissions to the Discharge to Assess service in the six months between November 2017 and April 2018 evidence suggests there is a need for no more than 4 beds in total:

- Within the total number of clients admitted to the service, only 9 were deemed to be unable to return home due to the physical environment or risks associated with their level of need.
- There was an average length of stay of 60 days.

- Taken together, this represents 540 days across a 6 month period (9x 60 days)
- Assuming the trend would be consistent across a 12 month period; this would represent 1080 days (18 x 60 days).
- 1 bed offers 365 days availability per annum. Therefore to accommodate the estimated demand for the service (based on the results of the desktop analysis and assuming that those clients able to return home are supported to do so), there is a need for 3 beds (1080 divided by 365).
- As the number of people requiring the service varies over the year (for instance an increased demand during winter pressures), we believe it would be appropriate to secure 4 beds for future provision.

The Discharge to Assess service is supporting people to return to their own homes wherever possible rather than being discharged to alternative bed based reablement, and delayed transfers of care have reduced significantly at the same time. There is therefore a reduction in the need for an alternative bed based reablement service with no associated adverse impact on delayed transfers of care.

There remains a need for bed-based reablement in the exceptional circumstances that people are unable to return home.

In conclusion based on the consultation feedback it is proposed that:

- The Discharge to Assess service is relocated to Charles Clore Court.
- The Willows Residential service is temporarily closed while its long-term future is decided under the review of internal services described above.

4. Governance structure

- 4.1 Reading Borough Council, Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust are committed to joint working to ensure communication is clear and transparent.

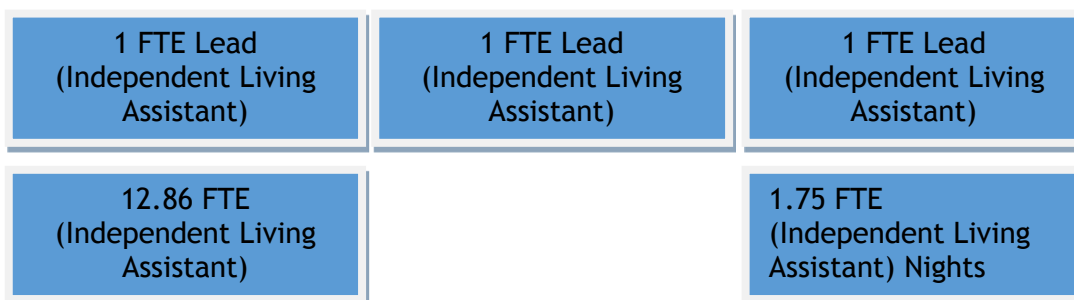
The Reading Integration Board currently oversees the performance of the Discharge to Assess service and this arrangement will continue. The membership of this group comprises senior managers from the Council, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group.

The implementation of the transition will be overseen by the Adult Social Care Transformation Board.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 The proposed structure is outlined below:

1 FTE Registered
Manager



5.2 A summary of the expected staffing implications are outlined in the tables below, subject to final confirmation of the staffing structure:

Table 1: Proposed final staffing structure for Discharge To Assess/Charles Clore Court & the volume of those posts that will be filled by existing staff at Charles Clore Court

Staff role	Total FTE required in new structure	Proposed contribution to the new structure made by existing staff at Charles Clore Court	Positions in new structure remaining available to existing Discharge To Assess staff (following CCC staff's contribution to filling the roles)
Manager	1	0	1
Deputy Manager	0	0	0
Lead ILA (Lead at Willows/D2A)	3	1	2
ILA (Carer at Willows/D2A)	12.86	6.69	6.17
Night ILA (Night Carer at Willows/D2A)	1.75	1.62	0.13
Domestic Cleaning Staff	0	0	0
Cook	0	0	0
Laundry Assistant	0	0	0
Gardener	0	0	0
TOTAL	18.61	9.31	9.3

Table 2: Number of displaced D2A staff roles following allocation of existing staff to positions remaining available in the proposed staffing structure

Staff role	Current FTE at the Willows/D2A	Positions in new structure remaining available to existing D2A staff (following CCC staff's contribution to filling the roles)	Number of displaced D2A staff roles (FTE)
Manager	1	1	0
Deputy Manager	1	0	1
Lead ILA (Lead at Willows/D2A)	3	2	1
ILA (Carer at Willows/D2A)	7.19	6.17	1.02
Night ILA (Night Carer at Willows/D2A)	2.29	0.13	2.16
Domestic Cleaning Staff	3.05	0	3.05
Cook	2.08	0	2.08
Laundry Assistant	0.54	0	0.54
Gardener	0.81	0	0.81
TOTAL	20.96	9.3	11.66

- 5.3 As the table above indicates the proposal would result in 11.66 number of FTE posts no longer being required as part of the new structure. No changes in grades for retained staff are envisaged.
- 5.4 It is highly likely that redeployment into other in-house vacancies will be available for the majority of the care staff and this is factored in when calculating potential redundancy costs indicated below. Redeployment is less likely for the ancillary staff.
- 5.5 The redundancy costs have been estimated on the assumption that the 4.18 FTE displaced care staff are redeployed. The estimated redundancy cost for the remaining posts (7.48FTE) is approximately £136,000. Please note that several staff members have recently left The Willows, and the potential redundancy costs could decrease should that trend continue amongst the affected staff members. However the costs could also increase should it not be possible to redeploy the 4.18 FTE care staff.

6. What happens next?

- This response, and its recommendations, will now be shared at various decision making meetings with the final decision being at Policy Committee on the 14th January 2019.
- Subject to the decision made at this Committee preference letters will be sent to staff which will then inform any potential competitive recruitment process. The outcomes of this will enable us to understand those staff that have been matched to the new structure or have successfully been redeployed.
- Staff that are not redeployed or matched to new roles will be formally at risk and be given notice of redundancy. Notice of redundancy will be given in accordance with terms and conditions, although the last day of service will be determined post Personnel Committee to agree the redundancy.
- The new structure will be in place no later than March 2019.
- Managers and HR will meet with individuals who are at risk.
- To facilitate the closing down of the service, it is estimated that four domestic staff, a handyperson and the administration assistant (alongside the manager) would need to be retained for one month after the closure of the service to assist with closing and securing it.
- We are very conscious that this process will lead to some staff anxiety. Whilst we will make every effort to adhere to the above timetable, it may be subject to variation for reasons beyond our control. If this occurs, we will endeavour to keep delays to a minimum and any changes will be communicated at the earliest opportunity.

7. Support to Staff

It is appreciated that times of change are difficult and the following support is available to employees on an individual basis in addition to the ongoing management support:

- The Employee Assistance Programme is available to provide confidential support and can be contacted free on 0800 282193.
- Trade Unions, if you are a member.
- Learning and Workforce Development offer a range of courses, resources and development options to support employees through change and the interview process. Information can be found on the [L&D Pod on IRIS](#), or you can contact the L&D team by email to training@reading.gov.uk, or by phone to 0118 937 2102 (ext 72102).
- National Careers Service provides free and confidential support with completing application forms and CVs and interview skills. Call 0333 006 2966.

Proposal: To move the Discharge to Assess service from the Willows to an alternative site

Directorate: Adult Care and Health Services

Service: Transformation Team

Name: Paula Johnston

Job Title: Acting Head of Adult Social Care

Date of assessment: November 2018

What is the aim of your policy or new service/ what changes are you proposing?

The 14-bed based Discharge to Assess (D2A) is provided through a partnership between Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) and Reading Borough Council (RBC). It is delivered from the Council's 27 bed residential service "The Willows".

The proposed changes for the Discharge to Assess service aim to re-provide the current provision in an alternative premise whilst expanding the ability to provide an increased service at home.

The Discharge to Assess service is delivered from RBC's residential service "The Willows Care Home". A recent assessment concluded that while the D2A service is exceeding many of its targets and supporting strong reductions in delayed transfers of care, several factors may be impacting its value for money:

- D2A utilisation has declined, with occupancy levels ranging from 32% to 90% and averaging at 67%.
- The staffing establishment consequently exceeds demand
- An Occupational Therapist has identified that the host environment does not meet the needs of service users
- Both residential and re-ablement services are provided by the same staff team and has presented a challenge as the emphasis is on long term care, rather than promoting independence.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Our view is that the most appropriate form of reablement is delivered in community-based services rather than a bed-based service. We believe that based on the level of demand we should reduce our best based offer and redirect any released resources to a home based option aligned to the current Community Reablement service.

We believe that it would be more appropriate to deliver the service from an environment closer matched to a service user's home environment, and from an environment better suited to their needs, with a staff team focused on reablement.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom

The change aims to deliver better outcomes for the people that use the D2A service. The new environment will be better suited to service delivery, for instance there would be more space for wheelchair users, fewer trip hazards and better accessibility for bariatric service users.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The staff currently employed by the Council to provide the in-house service would be affected if the current, provided, service were to move.

The consultation has taken place with the service users and their carer's, as well as staff, to gain their views on the proposal. Consulted groups include:

- **D2A/The Willows staff** – to understand the future of the service and as such, how the proposal will affect their jobs.
- **CCG** – regarding how the proposal will help to meet the Better Care Fund Targets and ensure best value for money from BCF funds.
- **BHFT** – regarding the impact of the proposal on their service offer; BHFT have put forward a plan as a part of the proposal, to offer a service across the community, as well as for D2A service users.
- **CCC staff** – to understand the future of the service and as such, how the proposal will affect their jobs.

Consultation responses are summarised in the Consultation Response document.

Assess whether an EqIA is relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes, short term, whilst the transition takes place.

Any changes to the provision offered by the Council would also affect the carers who have a right to be assessed under the Care Act 2014. This Act gives them the legal right to an assessment and support as they are the carer of someone who is registered as disabled and identified as having a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Many of the in-house service's users have a physical disability, often requiring use of a wheelchair or other assistive technology. Under the proposal, there would be scope for replacement services to feature a higher degree of accessibility and support to these clients.

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about our complaints, consultation and feedback.

No

If the answer is YES to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If NO you must complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

N/A

Signed (completing Officer)

Lewis Willing

Date:

23/11/2018

Signed (Lead Officer)

Melissa Wise

Date:

23/11/2018

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Consultation

Have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation forms do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

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Relevant Groups/ Experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
<p>All Reading Borough Council employed at The Willows and D2A</p> <p>BHFT and CCG</p>	<p>Staff were invited to respond to the consultation throughout its duration, via several means. A launch meeting with staff on the 25th September provided an initial opportunity for comments / views. The service manager was also available on request for 1-1 meetings with staff to hear and discuss views. They were also able to complete an on-line questionnaire (with a paper copy also available on request).</p> <p>Service Users and their carers also had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation, which lasted 30 days.</p>	<p>25th September 2018</p>
	<p>Consultation was advertised as part of Transformation Board sign-off processes.</p>	<p>25th September 2018</p>
<p>Frequently Asked Q & A sheet will be made available</p>	<p>A separate consultation was run for the residential and respite service users, alongside all of the staff.</p>	<p>Updated during the consultation, finalised 24th October 2018</p>

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial Groups

The changes will be equally applicable to all regardless of race.

The council has interpreter services available, which would support people with differing communication needs. Written information could also be made available in alternative languages to English.

The level of support would be tailored to the person, so all would have the same experience.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy, maternity, marriage)

The changes would be equally applicable to all regardless of Gender.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

The service user group affected by the potential changes to the Discharge to Assess service are mostly Older People. As such, many will have age related disabilities.

The proposal states that the new environment will be better suited to meeting their needs. There will be space in the bathrooms for OT equipment, and for alterations.

For D2A service users, this will allow people to stay in their own en-suite when bathing at Charles Clore Court, rather than having to travel to a communal bathroom, as is the case currently at The Willows. There will also be an able peer group and more community involvement in their surroundings.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual Orientation (cover civil partnership)

The service users for D2A would not be affected.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

This proposal will affect mostly older people, as they are more frequent users of D2A.

There is potentially a positive effect, as the service environment will be better suited thus providing a higher quality service. There would be wider peer groups for the people that use the service.

The proposal for the D2A service follows the example of other successful councils, with Extra Care being seen to have a positive effect on service users, and also supporting the councils to meet or exceed their Better Care Fund Targets (The D2A service is linked to discharge targets). In everyday terms, the proposal states that the service will continue to offer the same service.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Describe how this proposal could impact on Religion or Belief

No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified, but person-centred reviews would consider service users' religion or belief and how this may impact on providing the most appropriate (alternative) service for each person amongst providers.

The proposal states that D2A services will continue to be delivered by a Care Quality Commission registered service and that residential service users would potentially move to a Care Quality Commission registered service, there would be a requirement for the provider to respect your cultural background, sex (gender), age, sexuality (whether you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual person), religion or belief, and your disability, if you have one. As such there would be a continuation of having needs related to Religion and Belief met.

Is there a negative impact	No
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Make a decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

<p>✓</p> <p>1. Negative impact identified or uncertain</p> <p>We ensured that the consultation asked service users about how the Council could work with carers/families and service users to minimise anxieties associated with the decision.</p> <p>We ensured that carers/families and service users were given the opportunity to see and comment on the external services which were offered as an alternative to the in-house service.</p> <p>We have endeavoured to clarify and reassure carers that service users would not experience a break in service.</p>

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

Service users will receive an annual review, which will enable social workers to assess their needs and how well the service is continuing to meet their needs.

Signed (completing Officer)	Date:
Lewis Willing	23/11/2018
Signed (Lead Officer)	Date:
Melissa Wise	23/11/2018

Proposal: To close The Willows Residential and respite service

Directorate: Adult Care and Health Services
Service: Transformation Team
Name: Paula Johnston
Job Title: Acting Head of Adult Social Care
Date of assessment: November 2018

What is the aim of your policy or new service/ what changes are you proposing?

The Council delivers a 14-bed based Discharge to Assess (D2A) which is provided through a partnership between Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT). It is delivered from the Council's 27 bed residential service "The Willows".

The proposed changes for the Discharge to Assess service aim to re-provide the current provision in an alternative premise whilst expanding the ability to provide an increased service at home. This change has prompted a consideration of the continued use of the Willows residential home and respite provision. It is proposed that due to low usage and the availability of alternative provision in the community the Willows Residential Home is closed in its current format.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Residential service users will benefit by living in buildings that are more suitable for their need (i.e. buildings that meet Kings Fund guidance for people with dementia).

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom

The service aims to deliver better outcomes for residential and respite service users. Replacement environments will be better suited to meeting their needs; for instance, other residential services would present environments that allow space for wheelchair users, present fewer trip hazards and allow better accessibility for bariatric service users.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The staff currently employed by the Council to provide the in-house service would be affected if the current, provided, service were to close.

The consultation has taken place with the service users and their carers, as well as staff, to gain their views on the proposal. Consulted groups include:

- **D2A/The Willows staff** – to understand the future of the service and as such, how the proposal will affect their jobs.

- **CCG** – regarding how the proposal will help to meet the Better Care Fund Targets and ensure best value for money from BCF funds.
- **BHFT** – regarding the impact of the proposal on their service offer; BHFT have put forward a plan as a part of the proposal, to offer a service across the community, as well as for D2A service users.
- **CCC staff** – to understand the future of the service and as such, how the proposal will affect their jobs.

Consultation responses are summarised in the Consultation Response document.

Assess whether an EqIA is relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes - The proposal is that there will be a closure of the service at The Willows. The Willows has offered respite services to some older people at times of crisis or to support carer's breaks. The uptake of this service is low (3 regular users), with the majority of regular service users now in full time residential care elsewhere. Respite Care for older people is available from a host of providers locally.

There are currently no permanent residents at The Willows residential home, as they have moved to services that are better-able to meet their needs.

The residential and respite service is offered to older people. This cohort of service users receiving respite care are all registered as disabled therefore they will be recognised under the category of 'disability' within the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Any changes to the provision offered by the Council would also affect the carers who have a right to be assessed under the Care Act 2014. This Act gives them the legal right to an assessment and support as they are the carer of someone who is registered as disabled and identified as having a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Many of the in-house service's users have a physical disability, often requiring use of a wheelchair or other assistive technology. Under the proposal, there would be scope for replacement services to feature a higher degree of accessibility and support to these clients.

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about our complaints, consultation and feedback.

No

If the answer is YES to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If NO you must complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

N/A

Signed (completing Officer)	Date:
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Lewis Willing	23/11/2018
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Signed (Lead Officer)	Date:
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Melissa Wise	23/11/2018
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Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Consultation

Have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation forms do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

Relevant Groups/ Experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
<p>All Reading Borough Council employed at The Willows and D2A</p> <p>BHFT and CCG</p>	<p>Staff were invited to respond to the consultation throughout its duration, via several means. A launch meeting with staff on the 25th September provided an initial opportunity for comments / views. The service manager was also available on request for 1-1 meetings with staff to hear and discuss views. They were also able to complete an on-line questionnaire (with a paper copy also available on request).</p> <p>Service Users and their carers also had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation, which lasted 30 days.</p>	<p>25th September 2018</p>
	<p>Consultation was advertised as part of Transformation Board sign-off processes.</p>	<p>25th September 2018</p>
<p>Frequently Asked Q & A sheet will be made available</p>	<p>A separate consultation was run for the residential and respite service users, alongside all of the staff.</p>	<p>Updated during the consultation, finalised 24th October 2018</p>

Collect and Assess your Data

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial Groups	
<p>The changes will be equally applicable to all regardless of race.</p> <p>The council has interpreter services available, which would support people with differing communication needs. Written information could also be made available in alternative languages to English.</p> <p>The level of support would be tailored to the person, so all would have the same experience</p> <p>There are currently no permanent residents in the residential home. This would only affect the 3 regular service users that use the respite service. The change would align the 3 service users with the experience of the other Respite service users in Reading.</p>	
Is there a negative impact	No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy, maternity, marriage)	
<p>The changes would be equally applicable to all regardless of Gender.</p>	
Is there a negative impact	No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability	
<p>The Service user group affected by the potential changes to the residential service are mostly Older People. As such, many will have age related disabilities.</p> <p>For the people that use The Willows respite service, there will be an improvement in their environment, with a wider peer group. There will be support to access a service that meets the needs of the people, at a service of the equivalent standard.</p> <p>There are currently no service users in The Willows residential service, so this will not affect them.</p>	
Is there a negative impact	No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual Orientation (cover civil partnership)	
<p>No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified for respite service users, but person centred reviews would consider residential service users' sexual orientation and how this could impact on choosing the most appropriate new service for their need.</p> <p>There are currently no service users in The Willows residential service, so this will not affect them.</p>	
Is there a negative impact	No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age	
<p>This proposal will affect mostly older people, as they are the group that The Willows is</p>	

registered to support.

Respite service users will not be affected, as they will be offered the same service, at an alternative location. The council will support people to find alternative provision at an equivalent service, with equivalent quality.

There will be no effect for residential service users, as there are currently none in the residential service.

Is there a negative impact

No

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religion or Belief

No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified, but person centred reviews would consider residential service users' religion or belief and how this may impact on providing the most appropriate (alternative) service for each person amongst providers.

At The Willows site, currently, the local priest will attend to give Holy Communion on request and annual festivals take place at Easter and Harvest. The team at The Willows/D2A support people and their families to meet their religious and cultural needs on an individual basis.

Any other service purchased on behalf of respite service users would be from Care Quality Commission registered services. These services are requirement for the provider to respect your cultural background, sex (gender), age, sexuality (whether you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual person), religion or belief, and your disability, if you have one. As such there would be a continuation of having needs related to Religion and Belief met.

As the residential service is currently empty, there would be no effect for them.

Is there a negative impact

No

Make a decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)



1. Negative impact identified or uncertain

What actions will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

We ensured that the consultation asked service users about how the Council could work with carers/families and service users to minimise anxieties associated with the decision.

We ensured that carers/families and service users were given the opportunity to see

and comment on the external services which were offered as an alternative to the in-house service.

We have endeavoured to clarify and reassure carers that service users would not experience a break in service, as the local providers will be available to service users and will allow clients to transition between services in a planned, supportive and un-rushed fashion (as has been the case for residential service users who have transitioned from The Willows).

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

Service users will receive an annual review, which will enable social workers to assess their needs and how well the service is continuing to meet their needs.

Signed (completing Officer)	Date:
Lewis Willing	23/11/2018

Signed (Lead Officer)	Date:

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	CIVIL ENFORCEMENT (PARKING) CONTRACT EXTENSION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	ELIZABETH ROBERTSON SIMON BEASLEY	TEL:	
JOB TITLE:	CIVIL ENFORCEMENT MANAGER NETWORK AND PARKING SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Elizabeth.robertson@reading.gov.uk Simon.beasley@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Committee to extend the Civil Enforcement Contract awarded to NSL Ltd in 2014 by one year as per the terms of the original contract.
- 1.2 A single year extension is recommended to allow further consideration of our enforcement activities and, in particular, issuing fixed penalty notices for environmental offences.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Policy Committee agree a 1 year extension to the current contract with NSL until 31 October 2020.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Parking Enforcement contract was awarded to NSL Ltd in 2014 for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend the term of this contract by a period or periods of not less than one year but such extension periods or periods totalling in aggregate not more than 5 years dependent upon performance, for a total maximum contract period of 10 years, in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules.

3.2 The anniversary date of the contract is 1st November with a 9-month notice period to terminate or extend. As this is the final year of the initial 5 year period a decision is required on whether to terminate or extend. This report reflects on a recent review of the contract and makes a recommendation to extend for a period of 1 year to 31st October 2020.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The NSL contract is for the provision of services as set out below:

- On and off street civil enforcement
- Back office Administration and associated services together with Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) payment processing and reconciliation;
- In-Car camera services and associated back office administration;
- Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) and associated back office services;
- Maintenance including supply and install of Pay and Display (P&D) machines and secure cash collection;
- On-line permits including associated IT provision and management of permit database;
- Pay by phone parking and cashless parking systems with associated IT provisions.
- With an option to provide, during the term of the contract, vehicle clamping, vehicle removal, vehicle pound operation and all associated services.

4.2 An OJEU Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued and an open one stage procedure was followed where the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) and Invitation To Tender (ITT) are combined. There was not considered to be sufficient bidders to merit a separate 2 stage process.

4.3 The enforcement of contraventions in accordance with the Road Traffic Act and the Traffic Management Act 2004 is required as Reading Borough is designated as being a Civil Enforcement Authority (CEA).

4.4 The contract was awarded to NSL Ltd as a result of the procurement process as an initial 5-year service. The contract is extendable by a period or periods of not less than one year and totalling no more than 5 years dependent upon performance, for a total maximum contract period of 10 years. The contract commenced on 1st November 2014 with a 9-month termination or extension notice period. Therefore, any such notice shall be served to the contractor no later than 1st February 2019.

4.5 The Council has contracted out its civil enforcement operations for many years and as a part of this procurement exercise there was a cost saving to the Council on the previous contract. Within the contract period joint working initiatives with the in-house management team has been successful in establishing an effective civil enforcement arrangement whilst maintaining the cost savings.

5. CONTRACT REVIEW

- 5.1 As a part of a corporate review of contracts the NSL (parking) enforcement contract has been reviewed. This process commenced mid 2017 with external assistance initially from the Local Government Association (LGA) then V4 Services (V4S).
- 5.2 As part of this review, there has been an agreed extension of operating hours, resulting in net additional income to the Council from April 2018.
- 5.3 NSL is owned by Marston Holdings Ltd, who, as a part of the contract review, was keen to offer a longer term and more strategic relationship with the Council. Marston Holdings tabled a proposal setting out how NSL could work closer with the Council on a range of services. Some of the services offered are outside of the scope of the existing contract and consequently cannot be achieved without a separate procurement exercise.
- 5.4 NSL taking on more of the Council's civil enforcement responsibilities has also been explored. To carry out civil enforcement (parking and bus lanes) the authority is required to deal with the process of appeals itself rather than under contract. Therefore, we have a relatively modest in-house parking team that administers parking and bus lane appeals. This team also looks after the residents' parking permit scheme. As a part of the NSL contract review it was concluded that the Council's statutory responsibilities cannot be passed to a contractor to deal with civil enforcement appeals. Furthermore, there was no additional value to the Council in passing the residents' permit parking scheme to NSL to administer.
- 5.5 Other services offered could be achieved within the contract although at an extra cost to the Council. One specific service was an extension to the enforcement hours. With additional revenue created from resident permit charges this extension to enforcement hours was taken up. Since 1st April 2018 NSL have increased their enforcement hours enabling more Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) time in resident permit parking areas. These extra hours are now showing a positive impact through better detection of contraventions within permitted areas.
- 5.6 Further services offered include specific operational aspects to improve the efficiency of the CEOs such as signing and lining maintenance and asset management. These are aspects that we either carry out in-house or are working towards improving through other initiatives.
- 5.7 The contract review work has now concluded and whilst there are still aspects that will continue to be considered the conclusion reached is that the NSL services offer good value.

5.8 Civil enforcement activities of any kind rarely generate positive stories. The in-house managers are contacted regularly about either too much or too little enforcement. CEO activities in particular are under constant critical scrutiny. Under the terms of the contract NSL provide monthly reports which are discussed at monthly meetings. These reports are designed to ensure all aspects of the contract are conducted properly including the performance of the CEOs. These reports ultimately inform the annual civil enforcement report which typically is published at the end of the calendar year. The current annual report is just about to be published and is expected at Traffic Management Sub-committee in January 2019.

6. ADDITIONAL ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1 During the initial contract review additional enforcement activities to be carried out by the NSL CEOs was considered. Parking enforcement is quite different from other Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) type enforcement activities. The legal processes behind parking enforcement are clearly defined and particularly so in dealing with appeals. An independent tribunal service, the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT), exists in resolving disputes over the issue of PCNs. There is also the Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC) provided by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This offers further legal support that may allow more time to challenge a court order ('order of recovery') as the result of receiving a PCN. Other enforcement activities particularly environmental enforcement may result in action through differing legislative frameworks. Unlikely parking enforcement the process of dealing with appeals is through the court process. This requires the Council to provide legal support and services that it may not currently have in-house.

6.2 Wider consideration of environmental enforcement in particular is already underway. A pilot scheme has been running since April 2017 to enforce mooring within the Borough. This has led to further consideration of a wider pilot to enforce environmental offences. This remains a consideration and any such pilot will inform a future decision on all enforcement activities whether outsourced or in-house.

7. NSL CONTRACT EXTENSION

7.1 NSL provide a wide range of services through the current contract including purchasing car parking equipment such as Pay & Display machines and additional support through cash collection. NSL have extended their cash collection service within our off-street car parks which returned to an in-house service in October 2018. Without these wider services provided by NSL achieving other savings targets such as increased on-street P&D would require additional procurement and legal support from elsewhere. This is likely to result in increased costs and scheme delivery times.

- 7.2 The NSL contract continues to perform well which is measured through monthly performance reports and contact management meetings. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) cover a vast range of operational activities such as actual deployed hours, street visits and response to enforcement requests. Other KPIs include equipment availability, back office processing issues and a number related to residents permit parking requests including time taken to dispatch permits. NSL have consistently performed well in all aspects of their KPIs.
- 7.2 In light of the NSL contract review work, their consistently good performance and the consideration of a wider environmental enforcement pilot as outlined in 6.0 above, it is recommended to extend the current NSL contact by one year. This will allow the Council to then be able to review the best option(s) available for all of its enforcement activities.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 'Shaping Reading's Future' 2018 -21 sets out the Council's key priorities including:
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The contractor will be required to work with Reading Borough Council on the coordination of information to be provided to residents and businesses.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It will be necessary to write to the Contractor by the 1st February 2019 confirming the one year extension. They have 14 days to either confirm or refuse the offer.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The current value of the contract is £1.7m per annum and the total income was £6.1m.
- 11.2 The table below shows the financial information for Reading Borough Council for 2017/2018. A comparison can be made with last year's financial information.

	Total Expenditure 2017/2018	Total Income 2017/2018	Net Surplus (Cost) 2017/2018	Total Expenditure 2016/2017	Total Income 2016/2017	Net Surplus (Cost) 2016/2017
Parking Penalty Charge Notices	£1,260,172	£1,193,948	(£66,224)	£1,273,954	£1,223,176	(£50,778)
Bus Lane Penalty Charge Notices	£952,691	£2,851,054	£1,898,363	£1,037,531	£2,480,157	£1,442,626
Resident Parking Permit	£185,346	£611,261	£425,915	£139,082	£365,519	£226,437
Pay and Display	£121,002	£1,449,951	£1,328,949	£67,035	£704,706	£637,671

This table is taken from the Council's Parking Services Annual report, the latest report is published through January 2019 Traffic Management Sub-Committee.

11.3 The NSL contract continues to perform well and is expected to achieve slightly better results financially than the budget set for 2018/19. This is achieved where operational aspects are reviewed throughout the year as a part of the performance monitoring monthly reports and monthly contract management meetings.

11.4 There are additional savings to be delivered through parking schemes with the help of NSL totalling £94K within 2019/20.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Policy Committee report 23rd June 2014.

12.2 Traffic Management Sub-Committee Parking Services annual report 10th January 2019

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE (ACTING AS SOLE MEMBER FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN)		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN - APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS		
LEAD COUNCILLORS:	CLLRS LOVELOCK, TERRY, PEARCE, & BROCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADERSHIP, CHILDREN, EDUCATION, CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	CORPORATE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	KATE GRAEFE	TEL:	0118 937 4132/ 74132
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS	E-MAIL:	kate.graefe@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Policy Committee in its capacity as sole member for Brighter Futures for Children Limited (BFfC) for the appointment of UHY Hacker Young as external auditors for Brighter Futures for Children Limited.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Policy Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the appointment of UHY Hacker Young as BFfC's external auditors for a three year term, commencing as soon as possible and covering the 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 financial statements.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At Full Council on the 16th October 2018, the transfer of the delivery of the Council's children's services to a newly established, wholly owned subsidiary Company of the Council, Brighter Futures for Children Limited ('BFfC' / the 'Company'), was approved.
- 3.2 The establishment of the new Company means there is a requirement for BFfC to appoint their own independent external auditors to approve their accounts. Under the provisions of the Articles of Association agreed between the Council and the Company, the appointment of external auditors is a 'reserved matter' that requires the prior consent of Reading Borough Council as the sole member.
- 3.3 In consultation with the Director of Resources and acting upon advice and support from the Council's procurement team, BFfC have conducted a

procurement process to determine which audit firm offered the most economically advantageous service. This process was fully compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

- 3.4 Following careful evaluation of the written bids and presentations, the selection panel were unanimous in their selection of UHY Hacker Young as the preferred bidder and made a formal recommendation to the BfFC Board that they be appointed as BfFC's external auditors for an initial three year term. This decision was made on the basis of clearly defined criteria and a scorecard that had been communicated to all firms involved. The Council's Chief Auditor was a member of the selection panel and confirmed that the selection process had been completed correctly and in a compliant manner.
- 3.5 The BfFC Board approved the recommended appointment of UHY Hacker Young at their meeting on the 18th December 2018.
- 3.6 As the appointment of external auditors is a "Reserved Matter" within the Articles of Association agreed between the Company and Council, this report is the formal recommendation to the Council of the appointment of UHY Hacker Young as the Company's external auditors.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 The award of the contract for independent external auditors is required as part of the set-up of the Company, which in turn has been created to support achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan aim to deliver long-term and sustainable improvements for children and young people in Reading.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 It is not considered that an EIA is required for the awarding of this contract: The Council has reviewed the scope of the service as outlined within this report and considers that the proposals have an equal impact on all members of the general public.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The contracts have been procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and relevant EU and UK legislation.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The full costs of the external auditor contract will be covered by BfFC as part of the funding provided to the Company under the services contract.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None