

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 17 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Brock (Chair);

Councillors Page (Vice-Chair), Ennis, Barnett-Ward, Hoskin, McEwan, Mitchell, Pearce, Robinson, Rowland, Skeats, Terry, White and O'Connell

62. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Monitoring Officer reported that he had exercised his delegation, on the recommendation of the Liberal Democrat Group Leader, to replace Councillor Duveen with Councillor O'Connell on the Committee. He also noted that Councillor Stevens had stood down from the Committee.

63. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

64. THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Matthew Barber, Thames Valley Police (TVP) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), John Campbell, TVP Chief Constable and Superintendent Steve Raffield, Reading LPA Commander attended the meeting to give presentations and answer questions from members of the Committee.

The presentation by the PCC set out the priorities included in the Police & Criminal Justice Plan of strong Local Policing, fighting serious organised crime, fighting fraud and cyber-crime, improving the criminal justice system and tackling illegal encampments. He also outlined changes to the funding of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), current work on fly-tipping and speeding, police officer recruitment, support services for victims of crime, a new violence reduction unit and the Community Fund.

The presentation by the Chief Constable covered subjects including the response to and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing more offenders to justice, protecting the vulnerable, improving satisfaction among victims of crime and maximising the benefits of digital technology.

The Committee asked questions on subjects including prioritising Violence and Women and Girls, reductions in funding for Reading's CSP, decriminalisation of speeding offences so that they could be enforced by local authorities, Stop and Search policies, the impact of lockdowns on domestic abuse offending and the number of officers engaged in Neighbourhood Policing.

Resolved -

That the Thames Valley Police PCC, Chief Constable and LPA Commander be thanked for their presentations.

65. ADOPTION OF THE DESIGN GUIDE FOR SHOPFRONTS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Further to Minute 22 of the meeting held on 12 July 2021, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the proposed adoption of the Design Guide for Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for use in determining planning applications for development in Reading. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a Statement of Consultation on the Draft Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD and at Appendix 2 the Draft Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (with changes tracked following consultation).

The report noted that the Draft Design Guide for Shopfronts SPD gave further detail to supplement the policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan to ensure that shopfronts contributed positively to the streetscene throughout the Borough. A draft had been approved at the meeting on 12 July 2021 (Minute 22 refers) and consultation had taken place during July to September 2021, with a total of 15 responses received. A Statement of Consultation summarising the process and the responses was included as Appendix 1. Following the consultation, a revised version of the SPD had been prepared taking account of the responses received, which was attached to the report at Appendix 2 for approval.

Resolved -

- (1) That the results of the consultation on the Draft Design Guide to Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document, undertaken during July to September 2021, as set out in the Consultation Statement at Appendix 1, be noted;**
- (2) That the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (Appendix 2) be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.**

66. MAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (CEBJMWP), which was being prepared on behalf of Reading, Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham Councils to fulfil their responsibility for the planning of future production of minerals and the management of waste disposal within the Berkshire area. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was an Equality Impact Assessment and at Appendix 2 a Schedule of Main Modifications.

The report noted that the CEBJMWP had been through several stages of community involvement and had been submitted to the Secretary of State on 2 March 2021. This had marked the beginning of a public examination held by an independent Planning Inspector, including public hearings in September and October 2021. The Inspector had identified a number of main modifications that were needed to make sure that the plan was sound

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and legally compliant. These main modifications needed to be subject to consultation, and a consultation document was set out at Appendix 2. A six-week consultation was proposed to take place during February and March 2022. Representations received would be passed to the Inspector who would then produce a final report on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan, incorporating the main modifications. If the plan was found sound and legally compliant, it could proceed to adoption.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Main Modifications to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Appendix 2) be approved;**
- (2) That community involvement on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan be authorised.**

67. SOCIAL VALUE POLICY - ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

Further to Minute 68 of the meeting held on 14 December 2020, the Deputy Chief Executive submitted the first annual report on the adoption of the Social Value Policy within the Council and the progress on delivering measurable Social Value outcomes. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a summary of the social value obtained in six major contracts and at Appendix 2 a summary of the previously agreed Social Value Priority Focus for Reading.

The report noted that the Council wanted to ensure best value from all its procurement and contracts, including the attainment of social value which supported the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and added value to Reading residents. The Council had therefore adopted a Social Value Policy to provide a framework for commissioners and contract managers across the Council setting out how to derive social value from procurement and contract management activity, as well as provide clarity for suppliers on how it would be measured. The report outlined how it was intended to measure and monitor social value that was obtained to ensure that the desired outcomes were being delivered, and the level of achievement to date.

The report noted that it had previously been proposed to carry out an annual review of the Council's Social Value Priorities, in order to ensure that they remained relevant and appropriate to the Reading community. In the context of the current Corporate Plan priorities and the focus upon Covid recovery it was proposed that the existing priorities, as set out at Appendix 2, be retained for the coming year.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress made to date on the implementation of the Social Value Policy, including the amount and type of social value obtained to date through procurement and contracts, be noted;**
- (2) That the existing Social Value priorities as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be retained.**

68. APPROVAL OF LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2022/23

Further to Minute 37 of the meeting held on 23 September 2021, the Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the results of consultation on the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 and asking the Committee to recommend the Scheme to full Council. An equality impact assessment was set out in Appendix One, results of the consultation at Appendix Two and a table of neighbouring local authorities scheme characteristics at Appendix Three.

The report explained that the proposed changes to the Scheme benefitted residents by providing an increase in support from the current 65% maximum to 70% maximum, removing minimum Council Tax Support award of £5 per month, increasing the upper capital limit from £3,000 to £6,000, allowing a maximum of one month backdating provision and setting a standard rate of £10 Non-Dependant Deduction to apply for non-dependants irrespective of whether engaged and not engaged in remunerative work.

The report also noted that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) would complete an annual update of various allowances and those changes would be incorporated where appropriate.

Resolved -

- (1) That the proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, taking into account the results of the public consultation as set out in Appendix Two, be agreed and recommended to full Council;**
- (2) That it be noted that the 2022/23 Council Tax Reduction Scheme allowances would be updated in line with Regulations.**

69. 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 70 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.

70. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY - DELIVERY UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report summarising the work undertaken so far to implement the Connected Reading Digital Transformation Strategy and seeking endorsement of the next steps planned. The report focussed on four workstreams of Casework and Customer Management Platform, Mosaic Data, Independent Living and Digital Inclusion, and sought authority to award contract(s) for the Casework and Customer Platform requirements.

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Resolved -

- (1) That the progress made to date and what has been learned be noted;
- (2) That the proposed focus of work over the next five months, including the procurement of a solution or solutions for the Casework (Civica APP replacement) and Customer Platform requirements be endorsed;
- (3) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, the Chief Digital & Information Officer and the Assistant Director for Corporate Procurement, be authorised to award contract(s) for the Casework and Customer Platform requirements;
- (4) That it be noted that a progress report on the procurement and broader Strategy implementation would be submitted to the June 2022 meeting of the Committee.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3).

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.55 pm)