

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 20 JANUARY 2025

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Emberson, Ennis, Gittings, Griffith, McEwan, Rowland, R Singh, Thompson, White and Yeo

49. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that the Monitoring Officer had used his delegation to appoint Councillor Stevens to the outside bodies vacancy as a Council-appointed Governor on the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

50. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to noting that the consultation on the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy had commenced in January 2025 and not November 2024 as stated in Minute 43.

51. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr Thompson	Revenue from Short-Term Parking in Tilehurst	Cllr Ennis

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

52. CHANGES TO PARKING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report setting out proposed changes to Parking Services including the modernisation of pay and display parking and the introduction of emissions-based charging for parking and residents permits across the Borough in support of wider policy objectives around air quality, health and climate. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Pay and display machines with under 1,000 transactions per annum
- Appendix 2 - Emissions based charging scale
- Appendix 3 - Tariff structure including emissions charges
- Appendix 4 - On street permits
- Appendix 5 - Climate Impact Assessment
- Appendix 6 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 7 - Green House Gas Emissions by Sector (UK 2021)

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The report noted that the current pay and display machines were located across the Borough with little historical data to support the decision on the specific locations or numbers of machines provided. The machines currently allowed customers to pay by cash only, with a standalone pay by phone option operated by the RingGo App. They were nearing end of life and critically, support for the machines' connectivity would be lost when the national 3G network was switched off by three of the four main operators. Operating the machines without this functionality would lead to additional cost, a likely reduction in revenue and a poor customer experience.

The report explained that the need to replace the machines had aligned with a wider review of the need for the assets, particularly given the sustained use of RingGo and a report commissioned by the Council which had recommended a rationalisation of the on-street tariff structure. The report therefore proposed a reduction in the number of machines and a change from seven to three tariff zones: Inner town centre, Outer town centre, and Outer Reading. The simplification of zones would mean a less confusing structure for those using the service and reduce time and costs for the Council. Replacement of the machines also offered an opportunity to upgrade functionality, such as providing card transactions which the current machines largely did not have.

The report also proposed the introduction of emissions-based charging for parking and residents permits across the Borough supported by modernisation of the parking permit system. Emissions-based pay and display charging could be introduced in line with the roll out of the new machines and the report set out a proposed charging scale at Appendix 3 as well as examples of the types of vehicles that would fall within each emissions category. A proposed Emissions Based charging regime for parking permits was set out at Appendix 4.

It was reported at the meeting that an amended version of the report would be circulated to the Committee and published on the Council's website, in order to correct a small number of errors and formatting issues.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Council's pay and display machines be replaced as part of an end-of-life upgrade and replacement programme;**
- (2) That the number of pay and display machines be reduced from 168 to circa 75 based on analyses of use data and future requirements;**
- (3) That the pay and display tariff structures be rationalised from seven to three to simplify customer experience and reduce costs associated with changes to tariffs;**
- (4) That on street charges be increased as part of the wider tariff review;**
- (5) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultation processes for the introduction of the proposed new tariff structures and emissions-based charging for on street pay and display, Residents and all other permits;**

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- (6) **That, subject to no objections being received, the schemes be considered as approved for implementation;**
- (7) **That, should any objections be received during the statutory consultation period, they be reported to a future meeting of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee for consideration and decision regarding scheme implementation.**

53. **RESCHEDULING AND OPTIMISATION OF DOMESTIC WASTE COLLECTIONS**

The Committee received a report setting out proposals to introduce new optimised waste collection schedules from 9th June 2025 following a detailed review of existing domestic recycling & waste collection schedules. Collection round grouping maps were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a draft Resident Communication Plan attached at Appendix 2.

The report provided an overview of the process of the review of waste collection schedules, its purpose, findings, and recommendations. It explained that the proposed optimised rounds would ensure that resources were deployed in the most efficient fashion, addressing the fact that 15% of current scheduling had been identified as causing predictable completion issues, and 30% was vulnerable to completion issues in the event of a service challenge being experienced of up to 45mins. Revised schedules would align recycling, residual and food collections as far as was practicable to the same weekday. Green waste collections would generally be scheduled for an alternate day of the week, to reduce the numbers of bins presented for collection on a single day in a geographic area, and to reduce the number of collection vehicles operating in an area and avoid congestion/traffic related issues.

The report noted that the rescheduling of rounds would additionally provide the service with a foundation on which it could plan for and meet the obligations of the Simpler Recycling legislation, which would require collection of glass and food from all domestic properties by 1 April 2026.

Resolved –

That the report, and the proposed changes to Recycling & Waste collection schedules required to deliver the improved operational efficiencies needed to meet current and future statutory obligations in respect of Simpler Recycling legislation, be noted.

54. **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 55 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.

55. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a report setting out progress on the Local Authority New Build Programme and seeking approval for revised budget forecasts and spend approvals relating to upcoming schemes.

Resolved –

- (1) That progression to onsite construction for the delivery of the LANB schemes at Hexham Road, Amethyst Lane and Dwyer Road be approved with the revised budget forecasts and associated spend approvals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme in respect of the main works contracts for the three schemes as set out in the report;**
- (2) That the revised budget forecasts and associated spend approvals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme schemes in relation to forthcoming LANB schemes at Battle Street (PCSA), Dee Park (Phase 3 to planning approval) and LANB post 2026 feasibility work be approved as set out in the report;**
- (3) That the proposed purchase of 16 units under the LANB Phase 4 acquisitions programme, as set out in the report, be approved;**
- (4) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to bid for Homes England grant funding for all appropriate schemes within the LANB programme and to approve details of the bids;**
- (5) That the proposed Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 purchases and the acquisitions programme be approved;**
- (6) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, the Assistant Director for Procurement and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to enter into contract with relevant parties to enable delivery of the schemes listed at paragraph 2.1 of the report;**
- (7) That the latest position on Dee Park be noted and that the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to procure an appropriate multi-disciplinary team as set out in the report;**
- (8) That it be noted that in order to deliver the remaining planned LANB schemes business cases would be brought forward for consideration as part of the 2026/27 Budget and 2026/27-2028/29 Medium Term Financial Strategy process;**

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- (9) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to enter into collateral warranties as required on all phases of the LANB programme.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)