

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 17 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

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

Apologies: Councillors Eden and Nikulina

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The delegated decisions were noted and it was requested that the expected timescales for the delegated decisions to be made be completed for all the decisions.

23. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

A petition was presented by Adrian Lawson on tackling rubbish and bins on the Oxford Road. Councillor Rowland, Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety, responded to the petition.

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr Thompson	External Enforcement Partnership Trial	Cllr Rowland
2.	Cllr White	Roadworks	Cllr Ennis
3.	Cllr White	Tackling Missed and Delayed Bin Collections	Cllr Rowland

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

24. CONSTITUTION - BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AMENDMENT

The Committee received a report seeking approval to recommend to Council the adoption of revised Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules and revised Financial Regulations.

The report explained that both documents had been reviewed and updated to ensure they were current and to simplify their content, making them easier for users to understand. The Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out the process for the adoption and implementation of the Council's budget and policy framework, while the Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs.

Recommended to Council –

- (1) That the revised Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted;**
- (2) That the revised Financial Regulations, attached as Appendix 2, be adopted.**

25. JOINT PROCUREMENT FOR PARKING ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The Committee received a report to commence a joint procurement exercise for parking enforcement, permit management, Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing, and postal services, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and potentially other neighbouring authorities.

The report explained that currently Trellint, which was part of the Modaxo Group, provided parking enforcement services for both Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as separate contracts. The Council's contract with Trellint had commenced in October 2023, and the initial term would expire in October 2027 with a total value of £2m.

The Council had an option to extend the existing contract, however, Trellint had indicated that it was exiting the parking enforcement market and would not be content for the contract to be extended beyond October 2027. As Oxfordshire's contract would expire in April 2027 at the latest, there was an opportunity for both Councils to benefit from economies of scale garnered through procuring collaboratively and to commence a joint procurement exercise. It was noted that other near neighbours might also wish to join a shared procurement exercise. The intention would be for each council to have its own contract, but with the procurement dealt with jointly. It was noted that the Council's contract extended beyond Oxfordshire's contract by six months and this would be a material consideration in relation to possible early termination of Reading Borough Council's contract with Trellint.

The report also noted that the Council's contract for Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing, permit management and postal services would also expire in October 2027. These were currently provided by a different supplier and the Council would seek to procure a new contract for these services at the same time. This could result in a staggered start to the contract arrangements, but the contract terms would seek to ensure all elements of these contracts ended at the same time in the future to allow easier bundling of these linked services. Aggregation of contracts in this manner might lead to improved pricing and positive impact on each Council's finances; however, steps would be taken to ensure that doing so would not hamper small/medium enterprises from bidding as required under the National Procurement Policy Statement (e.g. permitting consortium bids).

The report explained that in a marketplace that had few suppliers, procuring at the same time as with a neighbouring authority could lead to lost opportunities and unbalanced competitive tension in the market; whilst procuring together simplified the opportunity for bidders and put the combined authorities in a stronger position to require competitive bids. By joining with Oxfordshire the procurement value would be much higher and therefore

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attract wider interest for both service areas. A joint procurement would also reduce costs and demand on resources for both authorities.

Resolved –

(1) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, and Director of Finance be authorised to:

- a. Commence a procurement exercise independently or in partnership with other councils for parking enforcement, permits, Penalty Charge Notice processing and postal services;**
- b. Terminate, if appropriate, the existing contract for parking enforcement with Trellint (part of the Modaxo Group) by mutual agreement at a date that allowed an orderly handover to new contract arrangements;**
- c. Enter into a suitable agreement with another council or councils to undertake the necessary procurement exercises on behalf of Reading Borough Council;**
- d. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to provide on street and off-street parking enforcement services;**
- e. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to deliver Penalty Charge Notice processing, issue permits for residents and businesses and provide postal services for same;**
- f. Undertake any required contract modifications (to include extension / variation) as might be required from time to time to ensure effective operational management of the contract, subject to that impact not exceeding key decision thresholds.**

26. 2025/26 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING

The Committee considered a report setting out an overview of the Council's financial and performance position as at the end of Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year. The report included updates on the General Fund Revenue and Capital budgets, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), savings delivery, debt performance, and progress against the Corporate Plan performance measures and projects. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Summary of the General Fund Budget and Forecast 2025/26
- Appendix 2 - Savings Tracker Quarter 1
- Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme
- Appendix 4 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme
- Appendix 5 - Corporate Plan Performance Measures Quarter 1
- Appendix 6 - Corporate Plan Projects Quarter 1
- Appendix 7 - Debt Write-Offs (Exempt Information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended)

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The report stated that the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 1 was an adverse net variance of £4.180m. This was primarily due to pressures within Children's Services delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (£5.210m), Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services (£1.869m), and Resources (£0.267m), partially offset by a positive variance of £3.138m within Corporate Budgets. Recovery plans were in place or being developed to mitigate these pressures.

The report also provided an update on savings delivery, noting that £1.180m (10%) of savings had been delivered, £6.424m (56%) were on track, £1.888m (16%) were categorised as non-deliverable, and £2.024m (18%) were at risk.

The General Fund Capital Programme was forecasting a positive net variance of £0.168m against the proposed revised budget of £86.500m.

The report explained that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was projecting an adverse net variance of £0.176m, resulting in a forecast drawdown from reserves of £4.641m, compared to the approved budgeted drawdown of £4.465m. The HRA Capital Programme was forecasting to spend to budget against the proposed revised budget of £80.933m.

The report also set out performance against the Council Plan success measures. Of the 17 KPIs monitored monthly or quarterly, 53% were at or above target, 6% were within 10% of target, 35% were more than 10% off target, and 6% were to be confirmed. Of the 51 Corporate Plan projects, 63% were on track, 35% were within 10% of target, and 2% were off track. A full list of Performance Measures was attached at Appendix 5 and the list of Projects attached at Appendix 6.

Resolved –

(1) That the following be noted:

- a) **The forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 1 of an adverse net variance of £4.180m (Appendix 1);**
- b) **That £1.180m (10%) of savings had been delivered (blue) and £6.424m (56%) of savings were on track to be delivered (green) by March 2026. £1.888m (16%) of savings were currently categorised as non-deliverable (red) and £2.024m (18%) categorised as at risk of delivery (amber) (Appendix 2);**
- c) **That the General Fund Capital Programme was forecasting a positive net variance of £0.168m against the proposed revised budget of £86.500m (Appendix 3);**
- d) **That there was a total £2.927m Delivery Fund available for 2025/26 (inclusive of 2024/25 approved carry forwards). At Quarter 1, £2.801m of this funding had been allocated out to approved schemes;**
- e) **That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was projecting an adverse net variance of £0.176m as at the end of Quarter 1, which resulted in a forecast drawdown from HRA Reserves of £4.641m rather than the approved budgeted drawdown of £4.465m;**
- f) **That the HRA Capital Programme was forecasting to spend to budget against the proposed revised budget of £80.933m (Appendix 4);**

- g) The performance achieved against the Council Plan success measures as set out in Section 12 of the report and Appendices 5 and 6;
- (2) That the amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 8 of the report and Appendix 3) resulting in a revised Capital Programme budget of £86.500m for 2025/26 be approved;
- (3) That the amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 11 of the report and Appendix 4) resulting in a revised HRA Capital Programme budget of £80.933m for 2025/26 be approved;
- (4) That the write-off of debts be approved, as set out in Section 6 of the report and Appendix 7, relating to:
- a) Non-Domestic Rates - £691,677.05;
- b) Sundry Debt - £47,291.46.

27. BROAD STREET MALL REDEVELOPMENT

The Committee received a report seeking approval for the surrender of the Council's lease of the Broad Street Mall (BSM) carpark to facilitate the redevelopment of the site as part of the wider Minster Quarter regeneration.

The report outlined the strategic importance of the BSM development, which formed part of the Council's longstanding ambition to regenerate the southwestern part of the town centre. The proposed redevelopment, led by AEW and their appointed developer McLaren Living Limited (McL BSM), would deliver approximately 643 Build to Rent units, public realm improvements, and retain part of the existing shopping centre.

To enable the development, AEW and McL BSM required access to and alterations of the BSM carpark and adjoining Council-owned land. The Council held a long leasehold interest in the carpark, comprising circa 784 spaces, and the proposed development would result in a permanent reduction of approximately 330 spaces.

Three options were considered for the carpark transaction:

- Option A – Full Surrender (recommended)
- Option B – Partial Surrender
- Option C – Do Nothing

Option A was recommended as it provided a capital receipt representing best consideration, subject to conditions ensuring the carpark remained operational until development certainty was achieved. The Council would retain a minimum number of public and operational spaces, including for the Hexagon Theatre.

The report also proposed entering into an overarching Construction and Management Agreement (CMA) to govern access, construction logistics, and land management during and after development. The CMA would safeguard the Council's interests, including the

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Hexagon Theatre and Minster Quarter Central development, and provide flexibility for the developer's construction programme.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Heads of Terms for the full surrender of the Council's lease of the Broad Street Mall carpark recommended under Option A be approved;**
- (2) That the principles proposed for an overarching Construction and Management Agreement be agreed;**
- (3) That the proposed route map and timeline up to exchange of the agreement for surrender of the carpark and related conditionality for completion of the surrender be noted;**
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance, and Assistant Director of Property and Asset Management, to:**
 - (a) Negotiate and conclude terms with relevant parties in respect of the Heads of Terms for the surrender and the Construction and Management Agreement;**
 - (b) Negotiate and conclude terms for disposals and acquisitions in accordance with sections 123 and 120 of the Local Government Act 1972;**
 - (c) Negotiate to enter into any required and/or ancillary documentation and agreements to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development, and;**
 - (d) Procure commercial, professional technical and legal advisors and consultants as necessary, to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development.**

28. 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 items 29 and 30 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

29. BROAD STREET MALL REDEVELOPMENT

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The Committee received a confidential report and appendices to consider options available for the Council in relation to providing the BSM carpark to AEW for McLaren BSM to carry out redevelopment proposals (Minute 27 above refers). The report and appendices contained exempt information and were therefore submitted separately from the main report which had been considered in the public session.

30. READING TRANSPORT LIMITED (RTL) SHAREHOLDER REPORT

The Committee, in its capacity as shareholder of Reading Transport Limited (RTL), considered a report setting out at Appendix 1, the Shareholder Update Report.

The cover report set out key points arising from the Shareholder Update including operational performance, social performance, financial performance, pension scheme commitments, capital investment programme and fleet replacement strategy, dividend policy and strategic planning and risk management.

The report also proposed the re-appointment of five Non-Executive Directors whose terms were due to end in December 2025.

Resolved –

- (1) That the content of the report and the Shareholder Update Report as attached as Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) That the Board-approved capital investment programme set out in Section 8 of Appendix 1 be noted;**
- (3) That a second term of office for five non-executive directors (Bob Pinkett until 2026; Peter Mihofer until 2029; Ian Feast until 2029; Pam Turton until 2029 and Gush Uppal to 2029) be approved;**
- (4) That a Gush Uppal may retire in December 2028 to assist with future Board rotation be noted;**
- (5) That the dividend proposal outlined in the report be approved.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.53 pm)