

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 JUNE 2026

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Dennis, Eden, Ennis, Griffith, Lanzoni, McEwan, Smith, Thompson, White, Williams and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors McGoldrick and Nikulina

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 and 27 May 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. PUBLIC PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

A petition was presented by Aravind Chandrashekar on the potential removal of the Pink 22 Bus service. Councillor Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, responded to the petition.

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

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	J F Wellum	Nolan Principles	Cllr Terry
2.	Withdrawn		
3.	Pete Evans	SEND Place-Planning Projects	Cllr Eden
4.	Juliet England	22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis
5.	Kin-Ling Ho	22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis
6.	Alexandria Prior	22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis
7.	Tracey Haralambous	Withdrawal of 22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis
8.	Roli Richa	Withdrawal of 22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis

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

4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr White	Council purchasing goods and services from administration councillors	Cllr Terry
2.	Cllr Thompson	Bus Gate Signage at Reading Green Park Station and lack of drop-off facilities for disabled travellers	Cllr Ennis
3.	Cllr Ballsdon	Proposed Withdrawal of the Number 22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis

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4.	Cllr White	Withdrawal of Pink 22 bus service to Caversham Heights	Cllr Ennis
5.	Cllr R Singh	Potential Closure of St Joseph's College	Cllr Eden
6.	Cllr Saadat	Withdrawal of 22 Bus Service	Cllr Ennis

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

5. DRAFT READING TOWN CENTRE VISION AND DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee considered a report on the draft Reading Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan. The draft Reading Town Centre Vision, attached at Appendix 1, set out a shared vision for Central Reading over the next 20 years and defined what success should look like for the town centre as a liveable, inclusive, economically resilient and climate-resilient place.

The report explained that the Vision would not replace statutory planning policy but brought together existing plans and strategies into a single, place-specific narrative that would be easier to use, communicate and apply in decision-making. The Vision was supported by a draft Town Centre Delivery Plan, attached at Appendix 2, which identified key strategic projects that had already been delivered, were currently underway, or were proposed for the future, and clarified the role of the Council and its partners in delivering them. It also established criteria to prioritise investment, coordinate activity across services and partners, and focus limited resources on projects that would deliver the greatest civic, social, environmental and economic benefit. The report added that the Vision and Delivery Plan provided both a clear direction of travel and a practical framework for delivery. Endorsement of the draft documents for consultation would allow the Council to align future decisions, investment and partnership working within an agreed spatial vision, and to progress priority feasibility work and funding bids from the financial year 2026/27 onwards.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Draft Reading Town Centre Vision attached at Appendix 1, for the purposes of undertaking wider public and stakeholder consultation as the overarching place-shaping framework for Central Reading be endorsed;
- (2) That the Draft Reading Town Centre Delivery Plan attached at Appendix 2, for the purposes of undertaking wider public and stakeholder consultation as the Council's approach to prioritising, coordinating and enabling town centre delivery be endorsed;
- (3) That it be agreed that, subject to consultation, the Draft Vision and Delivery Plan could be used on an interim basis alongside existing policy documents to inform decision-making, investment priorities, regeneration activity and partnership working within the town centre.

6. PROCUREMENT OF FIXED TERM ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP

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The Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the outcomes of the enhanced environmental enforcement trial and seeking approval to proceed with the procurement of a fixed-term enhanced environmental enforcement contract, in line with the Council Plan 2025–2028. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the Kingdom Local Authority Support (KLAS) partnership key performance indicators & monitoring and at Appendix 2 an Equality Impact Assessment. An Annex to Appendix 1 contained exempt information that had been redacted from the Appendix and was submitted separately from the main report.

The report noted that the Council Plan 2025–2028 committed the Council to maintaining high environmental standards, promoting fairness across communities and ensuring the organisation remained fit for the future within a constrained financial context. Environmental enforcement was a discretionary, but strategically important, function that contributed to these objectives by deterring environmental crime, encouraging responsible behaviour, and maintaining public confidence in the management of public spaces across the borough.

The Council's in-house Recycling & Environmental Enforcement Team delivered a range of statutory duties alongside discretionary enforcement functions, including resident engagement and the implementation of the Simpler Recycling reforms. These competing demands had historically limited capacity to deliver sustained, high-visibility environmental enforcement activity. In response, the Council had entered a 12-month trial enhanced environmental enforcement partnership in September 2025 with KLAS. The trial had delivered a significant increase in enforcement activity, improved visibility, and positive environmental outcomes, while maintaining appropriate governance and without introducing undue financial risk to the Council.

It was noted that as the trial concluded in September 2026, a decision was required on the future delivery model for environmental enforcement. Based on the evidence from the trial, it was recommended to proceed with the procurement of a fixed-term enhanced enforcement partnership, to sustain improved outcomes while protecting in-house capacity required to deliver statutory priorities, including Simpler Recycling.

Resolved –

- (1) That the outcomes, benefits and lessons learned from the 12-month enhanced environmental enforcement partnership with Kingdom Local Authority Support (KLAS) which would conclude in September 2026 be noted;**
- (2) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to procure and enter into a contract for an environmental partnership for a period of three years, with an estimated value of £300k per annum.**

7. OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES 2026/27

The Committee considered a report that proposed a package of updates to the Council's off-street parking tariffs to modernise and simplify the structure, improve consistency, support town centre activity, and ensure charges remained aligned with wider transport, environmental and public health objectives. The revisions followed a detailed review of usage data, benchmarking activity, and site-specific considerations. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 Proposed changes to main Town Centre car parks
- Appendix 2 Proposed changes to other car parks
- Appendix 3 Proposed increase in parking tariffs
- Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment

The report explained that the proposals aimed to simplify the tariff structure, align pricing with demand and inflation, support town-centre vitality, encourage sustainable travel, and ensure consistency across the Council's car park portfolio.

Key elements included:

- Standardising tariffs across the Council's three main town centre multi-storey car parks (Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, Civic B), including applying the same tariff throughout the week.
- Increasing the minimum stay from 1 hour to 2 hours at the multi-storey sites to support longer dwell times and economic activity.
- Reducing charges at Green Park car park to address persistent under-utilisation and better align with comparable locations.
- Increasing off-street parking tariffs by 5%, rounded to the nearest 10p.

The report explained that the combined effect of these changes was projected to generate £244k in additional income for 2026/27. Any resulting surplus, in line with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, would be reinvested into transport and highway-related improvements.

Resolved –

- (1) That the alignment of weekend tariffs with weekday tariffs at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, and Civic B car parks as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be authorised;**
- (2) That an increase to the first-hour tariff at Queens Road, Broad Street Mall, and Civic B to match the second-hour charge, as set out in Appendix 1, be authorised;**
- (3) That a reduction in tariffs at Green Park to align with comparable car parks and address under-utilisation as set out in Appendix 2, be approved;**

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- (4) That increases to off-street parking fees as set out in Appendix 3, rounded to the nearest 10p be approved;**
- (5) That the Director of Environmental and Commercial Services be authorised to publish a Notice of Variation under Section 35c of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to bring the changes into effect.**

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the delivery of the Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme. Attached to the report was a Confidential Financial Annex setting out financial or commercial information that had been redacted from the report.

The report explained that Policy Committee on 20 January 2025 (Minute 55 refers) had approved progression to onsite construction of LANB schemes at Hexham Road, Dwyer Road and Amethyst Lane. This included budget and spend approvals, and permission to bid for grant funding for each scheme. It was reported that the schemes were on site and expected to complete in this financial year. Also, at that meeting approvals had been given to provide feasibility budgets to progress schemes for Battle Street, Southcote Lane and Dee Park Phase 3, including the new LEAP/LAP. The report provided a detailed update in relation to the work and requirements to progress the schemes to the next phases of development.

The report also provided an update on LANB delivery to date and the forward look including new sites in feasibility, the new Whitley Wood Community Centre, acquisitions and the fourth round of MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Fund programme. Consideration was requested to progress these schemes, including spend and budget approvals and permission to bid for Homes England grant funding. The anticipated total cost of each scheme from 2026/27 until 2029/30 and total spend approval required for each scheme was detailed in the Confidential Financial Annex.

It was noted that the success in delivering the LANB programme had been recognised at the Local Government Chronicle awards with a Silver award in the housing category.

Resolved –

- (1) That the updated budget forecasts and associated spend approvals to progress the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Local Authority New Build (LANB) schemes at Battle Street, Southcote Lane, LANB Acquisitions, Dee Park Phase 3 and Whitley Wood Community Centre be approved, with the anticipated total cost of each scheme from 2026/27 until 2029/30 and total spend approval required for each scheme as detailed in the Confidential Financial Annex;**
- (2) That permission to bid for Homes England grant funding for all appropriate schemes within the LANB programme be approved, and that the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the**

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Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised to approve the details of the bids;

- (3) That permission to progress with the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 4 and the Local Authority New Build acquisitions programme be approved;**
- (4) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised to enter into contract with relevant parties to enable delivery of the schemes set out in the report;**
- (5) That the latest position on Dee Park be noted and the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to approve the appointment of the multi-disciplinary teams required to progress Phase 3;**
- (6) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to enter into collateral warranties as required on all phases of the LANB programme;**
- (7) That the appropriation of land required for Dee Park Phase 3 and the use of Section 203 Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HPA) as required to enable Battle Street and Dee Park Phase 3 to come forward be approved.**

9. READING LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY SEND REFORM PLAN

The Committee considered a report providing details of a partnership Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reform Plan to deliver a shared vision and response to Government SEND reforms. The plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that on 23 February the Government had published wide-ranging reforms for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability in its SEND reform consultation Putting Children and Young People First. Through the proposals set out in the SEND reforms, the Government aimed to: provide children with SEND with a broader curriculum, boost outcomes for the most disadvantaged, and transform support to create a more inclusive system for those with SEND. The reforms included a roadmap to access the financial support being made available to Local Authorities for both transformation and for the High Needs Block, including access to a Sustainability Grant equating to 90% of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit as of end of financial year 2025/26.

The report explained that the SEND Reform Plan must be a partnership plan and needed to be signed off by both the NHS ICB and Council and delivered to the Department for Education by 19 June 2026 for funds to be released to Local Authorities in the autumn term.

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It was noted that the SEND reform proposals aligned strongly with work already undertaken and would help fulfil ambition in Reading for an even more inclusive education system, where every child had a school place in their neighbourhood that met their needs, they achieved well at school and had better outcomes, and to achieve a balanced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block budget.

Officers had worked with health partners, parents and carers, children and young people and school leaders to deliver a shared vision and response to the proposals and a partnership SEND Reform Plan by the deadline of 19 June 2026. It was noted that close work had been undertaken with the Families Forum in Reading during development of the plan, and meetings and engagement would continue throughout the year. Officers would also be available on a regular basis in the family hubs to continue wider engagement with the community.

Resolved –

- (1) That the proposed Local Area SEND Reform Plan for Reading, subject to the proposed government funding allocations being made available, be approved;**
- (2) That specified officers in line with published guidance, namely the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Executive Director of Children's Services, be authorised to sign off the Plan.**

10. SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

The Committee considered a report that provided information on the introduction of the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) allocated by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) to deliver support to low-income households from 1 April 2026.

It was reported that the CRF allocation to Reading had been confirmed as £2,335,307 each year from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This funding replaced the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) schemes, but was a new scheme with different requirements. By comparison, the Council had received £367,440 for Discretionary Housing Payments and £1,992,735 for the Household Support Fund in 2025/26, totalling £2,360,175. HSF was allocated for 6–12-month periods, making longer term planning challenging. There was an expectation from Government that the current DHP arrangements would continue (as the Housing Payments element) for at least the first two years of the CRF.

It was reported that the aim of the CRF was to provide support for those on low incomes who encountered a financial shock, whilst also investing in local financial resilience to enable communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing dependence and repeat need. Within Reading, the Council wanted the CRF to bring positive and sustained change to the financial health of residents, many of whom faced ongoing financial challenges because of their specific circumstances. As well as providing the immediate crisis support residents needed, the Council would proactively provide access to ongoing

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support and consistently direct residents to take up these opportunities to avoid falling into crisis in the future.

It was noted that the Council would work continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and other statutory organisations, which provided a substantial amount of support to low-income residents, to achieve its CRF ambitions.

The report provided an overview of all elements of Crisis & Resilience Fund support being proposed to support low-income households within the borough. These included:

- Enabling residents facing a financial crisis to apply for support throughout the year.
- Increasing the flexibility of financial support available to each household to be able to offer more support to those with the highest need.
- Specifically supporting residents on means-tested benefits with their housing costs.
- Applications for support considered by trained staff who can identify and refer to wider support options available to residents.
- Funding an enhanced range of local services which support residents' long-term financial resilience.
- Pro-actively identifying residents who may be at risk of falling into financial crisis.
- Improving the co-ordination and collective joint working of organisations within the borough who provide cost-of-living support to low-income households.

It was noted that the Council's approach would emphasise a person-centred and preventative approach, ensuring that support was tailored to individual circumstances and would seek to address the root causes of financial difficulties. Support would need to adapt and respond to different demands, and it was therefore recommended that officers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to undertake any changes necessary.

Resolved –

- (1) That the utilisation of the DWP Crisis & Resilience Fund as detailed in Para 4.41 of the report for 2026/27 to support low-income households in Reading be agreed;**
- (2) That the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to confirm and make changes to the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme for Reading Borough whilst maintaining compliance with the funding allocation requirements from DWP, as detailed in para 4.45 of the report;**
- (3) That the decision taken under officer delegation by the Director of Policy, Change and Customer Services to utilise an element of the funding for staff resource and initial Crisis Payments and Housing Payments as detailed in para 3.5 of the report be noted.**

11. OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS

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The Committee considered a report on the appointments or nominations to outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2025/26, or longer where required. A schedule of outside body appointments showing the Group Leaders' recommendations was tabled at the meeting.

Resolved –

(1) That the Committee appoint to outside bodies as follows:

Organisation	Nomination	Role	Terms of Office	End of term (June 2027 unless stated)
Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE)	Councillor Finn McGoldrick		1 year	
Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE)	Councillor Paul Gittings		1 year	
AWE Aldermaston – Local Liaison Committee	Councillor Matt Yeo		1 year	
AWE Aldermaston – Local Liaison Committee	Councillor Mark Keeping		1 year	
Berkshire Local Transport Body	Councillor John Ennis		1 year	
Berkshire Music Trust	Councillor Richard Davies		1 year	
Berkshire Pension Fund Committee	Councillor Glenn Dennis		1 year	
Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership	Councillor Micky Leng		1 year	
Caversham Park Village Association	Councillor Stephen Goss		1 year	
Citizens' Advice Reading Trustee Board	Councillor Micky Leng		1 year	
Conservation Area Advisory Committee	Councillor David Stevens		1 year	
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Ama Asare		3 years (annual confirmation)	
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Jan Gavin		3 years (annual confirmation)	
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Graeme Hoskin		3 years (annual confirmation)	
Homes for Reading Limited	Councillor Raj Singh		3 years (annual confirmation)	
Homes for Reading Limited	Emma Gee		3 years (annual confirmation)	
Kenavon Drive Management Company	Councillor Richard Davies		1 year	
Local Government Information Unit Members	Councillor Alice Mpofu-Coles	Deputy	1 year	

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Assembly				
Local Government Information Unit Members Assembly	Councillor Rachel Eden		1 year	
Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum	Councillor Paul Gittings		1 year	
Queen Victoria Institute	Karen Rowland		until current Charity dissolved	
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Andrew Hornsby-Smith		1 year	
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Jacopo Lanzoni		1 year	
Readibus Board of Directors	Councillor Mohammed Ayub		1 year	
Reading Climate Change Partnership	Ben Burfoot		1 year	
Reading Climate Change Partnership	Chris Maddocks		1 year	
Reading Climate Change Partnership	Councillor John Ennis		1 year	
Reading Community Energy Society	Councillor Liz Terry		1 year	
Reading Community Energy Society	Councillor Rachel Eden		1 year	
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Meri O'Connell		1 year	
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Mohammed Ayub		1 year	
Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit Management Committee	Councillor Ruth McEwan		1 year	
Reading Sports Aid Fund	Councillor Jacopo Lanzoni		3 years	30/06/29
Reading Sports Aid Fund	Councillor Paul Gittings		3 years	30/06/29
Reading Voluntary Action	Councillor Graeme Hoskin		1 year	
REDA - Reading's Economy and Destination Agency	Councillor Liz Terry		1 year	
REDA - Reading's Economy and Destination Agency	Jackie Yates		1 year	
Royal Berkshire Archives Standing Committee	Councillor Liz Terry		1 year	
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Governor	Councillor David Stevens		1 year	
South East Employers	Councillor Ruth McEwan		1 year	
South East Employers	Councillor Liz Terry		1 year	
South East England Councils	Councillor Liz Terry		1 year	
South East England Councils	Councillor Micky Leng	Substitute	1 year	
South East Reserve Forces and Cadets'	Councillor Graeme Hoskin		3 years	

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Association - Berkshire Committee				
South East Strategic Leaders	Councillor Liz Terry			
South East Strategic Leaders	Councillor Micky Leng	Substitute		
Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel	Councillor Finn McGoldrick		1 year	
Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel	Councillor Paul Gittings	Substitute	1 year	
Trading Standards South-East Ltd	Ian Savill		1 year	
Trading Standards South-East Ltd	Rob Abell		1 year	
Transport for the South East	Chris Maddocks		1 year	
University of Reading Court	Mayor		1 year	
Weller Centre Advisory Board	Councillor Jan Gavin		4 years	30/06/30

- (2) That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and (if applicable) the relevant Group Leader, be authorised to appoint to any vacancies not appointed to at this meeting or arising mid-year.

12. 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 13 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

13. FLEXIBLE RESPONSE SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPING

The Committee considered a report seeking authority to award a new Flexible Response Service to Rough Sleeping contract.

The report explained that the Flexible Response Service to Rough Sleeping was the Council's core rough sleeping outreach service, providing assertive engagement, safeguarding and pathways into accommodation for some of Reading's most vulnerable residents.

The exempt report set out the procurement approach and proposed options.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be authorised to award a

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new, time-limited contract for the Flexible Response Service for Rough Sleeping to St Mungo's for a period of up to 15 months from 21 June 2026, with a maximum annual contract value of £659,540, to ensure continuity of critical outreach provision.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.53 pm)