

**HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**3 JULY 2019**

**Present:** Councillor Davies (Chair);  
Councillors, Ennis, Gittings, Grashoff, James, Leng, Lovelock,  
McGonigle, O’Connell, Rowland, R Singh, and R Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillors Carnell, Hoskin and Manghnani.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of 13 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES**

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Community Safety Partnership - 15 November 2018.

**Resolved - That the Minutes be received.**

**3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Valerie Wyeth	Illegal Camping in Christchurch Meadow	Cllr James
Jo Ramsay	Wildflower Planting on Highway Verges	Cllr James

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

**4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Cllr McGonigle	Vacant Council Properties	Cllr Ennis

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

**5. TACKLING KNIFE CRIME**

Sarah Godsmark and Penny Jones, Thames Valley Police, gave a presentation updating the Committee on the progress that was being made to tackle knife crime in Reading.

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Sarah Godsmark explained that knife crime in the Thames Valley, and within Reading, had decreased over the last 12 months. This was due to a number of initiatives including week-long programmes, provision of knife surrender bins, knife sweeps and test purchases.

One of the main initiatives had been for the Schools Officers to work closely with schools and young people to educate them about knife crime. This included placing notices in and around the schools, and taking knife arches and drug sniffer dogs into the school environment. The Boxing Clever Scheme had also been successfully introduced. This scheme gave children and young people a chance to learn boxing from professional coaches after school, helped to boost their self-esteem, encouraged discipline and contributed to keeping them off the street and away from criminal activity.

**Resolved:** That the presentation be noted.

**6. SINGLE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING**

Verena Hutcheson, Deb Courtnage, Caroline Evans, Matt Farrow, Amelia Johnson and Joanna Slotwinska gave a presentation on the Council's work to support the single homeless and rough sleepers. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Introduction to the Team;
- Achievements over the past year;
- Summary of services and projects;
- Changes to Services since September 2018;
- Rough Sleeper Outreach service, including Severe Weather Emergency Provision, Intensive and Engaging Support Services, working towards independence and floating support;
- Partnership and panel working;
- Making Every Adult Matter,
- Rough Sleeping Initiative;
- Pilot projects from April 2019;
- Introduction of the Street Support App;
- Challenges;
- Actions going forward.

**Resolved:** That the presentation be noted.

**7. CONSULTATION FOR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019-2024 AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2024**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which sought a review of the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 and authorisation to start a consultation exercise on three new proposed themes/priorities to underpin and develop a new Homelessness Strategy for 2019-2024. The report also presented the Council's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 and sought authorisation to consult with partners on the co-production of an action/delivery plan.

The following documents were appended to the report:

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Appendix 1 - Snapshot review of Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021;  
Appendix 2 - Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 -2024;  
Appendix 3 - Consultation Questions for Reading's Homelessness Strategy;  
Appendix 4 - Consultation Planner for Reading's Homelessness Strategy;  
Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment for Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024.

The report explained that Reading's current Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 required a review due to significant reductions in the use of emergency accommodation for homeless households and significant legislative and operational changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and subsequent changes to the Homelessness Code of Guidance. An initial review of Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 had been undertaken (Appendix 1). A full review of the Borough's requirements would be undertaken alongside consultation on themes/priorities to inform the development of Reading's new Homelessness Strategy. Informal meetings had been held with internal and statutory partners including Housing Needs, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care (Brighter Futures for Children), Community Safety, Berkshire West CCG and Berkshire Health Foundation Trust to inform the initial review and proposed themes for Reading's new Homelessness Strategy.

The report also explained that officers had drafted and attained sign-off from senior management on a Rough Sleeping Strategy by March 2019 (Appendix 2) in order to secure Year 2 funding for Reading's Rough Sleeping Initiative to the amount of £335,000 from the MHCLG.

The report proposed that two separate strategies should be published, one for homelessness and one for rough sleeping to ensure that each had robust aims and a focused action/delivery plan for customers that had differing needs. Separate strategies would allow for a differentiation in action planning and action plan delivery, where different cohorts required different approaches from partners, sectors and services in meeting their needs. Further to informal meetings held in April 2019 with internal and statutory partners, the following themes/priorities had been identified for consultation:

- **Priority One** - Intervening early to prevent and reduce homelessness in Reading
- **Priority Two** - Increasing access to decent, suitable accommodation
- **Priority Three** - Supporting people who are vulnerable to recurring homelessness

The report further proposed that consultation on these themes/priorities would take place over an eight week period, with a range of stakeholders, including residents across Reading Borough, customers of Housing Needs and homelessness services, internal partners in Adult Social Care, Brighter Futures, and Community Safety, the public and other external partner organisations e.g. Police, community and voluntary sector services, local businesses, Clinical Commissioning Groups, and commissioned homelessness services. The consultation would take place throughout August and September 2019. Appendix 3 provided details of the Consultation Questions for Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 and Appendix 4 provided the Consultation Planner for Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024.

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**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to approve the commencement of a consultation on proposed themes/priorities for Reading's Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024;
- (2) That the Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to approve the commencement of a consultation on and co-production of an action/delivery plan for Reading's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024.

**8. CONSULTATION FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2019 - 2022**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which summarised the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading, 2019-2022 and sought authorisation to complete a consultation exercise with stakeholders on the proposed priorities for the strategy.

The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy;
- Appendix 2 - Consultation Plan;
- Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment.

The report stated that the existing Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading ended in 2018 and therefore a new refreshed strategy was required. It was proposed that a consultation exercise on the priorities set out in the attached draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22 (Appendix 1) take place from 19 August 2019 to 13 September 2019. It would then be submitted to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee with a draft action plan for formal adoption on 6 November 2019. Key stakeholders for consultation included residents, Adult Social care, Brighter Futures, Thames Valley Police, Health, commissioned services and voluntary sector services.

The report explained that the priorities within the draft strategy had been developed via a series of workshops with members of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (DASG), a sub-group of the CSP. They reflected the group's aspirations to move the practices and approach of partners in Reading forward in specific areas, and it was assumed that the progress made during the previous strategy would be embedded by agencies as part of their 'business as usual' and therefore continued. Data would continue to be monitored by the DASG and any changes in performance or outcomes would be challenged regularly.

The priorities within the draft strategy for 2019-22 were as follows:

**Priority 1 -Raising awareness about domestic abuse with a focus on:**

- **Workforce Development** - Continue to ensure a knowledgeable and well trained workforce;
- **Healthy Relationship Education** - increasing the resilience of Young People to negative relationships and behaviour;

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- **Engagement with marginalised communities** - Encouraging those experiencing abuse to seek help at an earlier stage.

**Priority 2: Developing a multi-agency approach to working with perpetrators:** Working with strategic partners to create a perpetrator approach to reduce and prevent repeat domestic abuse

**Priority 3 - Improving our partnership response to Coercive Control:** Training professionals to understand and identify coercive control, so as to increase and better manage disclosures.

**Resolved:** That the Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods be authorised to approve the commencement of a consultation exercise on the proposed priorities for Reading's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

**9. CONTRACT AWARD - MINOR WORKS BUILDING CONTRACT 2016 PVCU WINDOW AND REAR DORR REPLACEMENTS TO FLATS**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which sought approval for the award of JCT Minor Works Building Contract to replace windows and doors on up to 228 flats in 22 Council blocks starting in August 2019 and completing before the end of the 2019/2020 financial year as per the current year's programme. All the work would be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The work would go through a competitive tender exercise using an approved list of preferred window and door manufacturers to procure works for construction and maintenance of social housing and drive value for money.

The report explained that the manufacture and installation work was of a specialist nature and Reading Borough Council through its Building Maintenance Team did not have the capacity to deliver a project such as this in-house. Therefore this project would be delivered by an approved PVCu window contractor from one of the council's preferred PVCu window manufacturers. The method for selecting the contractor was through an approved list of the preferred window and door manufacturers.

**Resolved:** That the Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be given delegated authority to award a contract for replacement of PVCu windows and rear doors for up to 228 properties starting in August 2019 and completing before the end of the current financial year.

**10. UPDATE ON THE APPROVED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME FOR LEISURE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 2018 - 2020**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which provided an update on the status of the leisure, parks and open spaces schemes funded by Section 106 receipts and funded from the 15% local element of the Community Infrastructure Levy approved by Policy Committee on 26 November 2018. A brief description of each of the schemes and its current status, together with S106 schemes that had been added to the portfolio since March 2018 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

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**Resolved:** That progress in relation to the projects funded by developer contributions be noted.

**11. FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2019/20 AND AMENDMENTS TO THE DELEGATIONS REGISTER**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which provided the Committee with an annual opportunity to review the Council's Food Service plan. The plan set out how the Council undertook its statutory duties to deliver safe food for Reading's residents and was updated annually in line with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities. The Food Service Plan 2019 -2020 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report also stated that the delegations register required amendments to ensure that the legislation was up-to-date in order that officers were clearly authorised to exercise powers under Consumer Protection Act 1987, Animal Health Act 1981 and other legislation made under the European Communities Act 1972.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the content of the Food Service Plan for 2019/20 be noted;**
- (2) That Delegation Register be amended as follows:**
  - (a) Addition of the following delegations to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services:**

**Power to institute legal proceedings under the following legislative provisions:**

- **Animals & Animal Products (Examination for residues and maximum residue Limits) (England & Scotland) Regulations 2015;**
- **Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008;**
- **Country of Origin of Certain Meats (England) Regulations 2015;**
- **Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014;**
- **Food for Specific Groups (Information & Compositional Requirements) England) Regulations 2016;**
- **Genetically Modified Organisms (Traceability & Labelling) (England) Regulations 2004;**
- **Olive Oil (Marketing Standards) Regulations 2014;**
- **Poultry Meat (England) Regulations 2011;**
- **Quick-Frozen Foodstuffs (England) Regulations 2007;**
- **Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009;**
- **Specified Products from China (Restrictions on Placing on the Market)(England) Regulations 2008;**

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- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008;
- Animal Health Act 1981;
- Consumer Protection Act 1987.

**(b) Addition of the following delegations to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services:**

**Power to exercise functions and to authorise officers to exercise functions under the:**

- Animals & Animal Products (Examination for residues and maximum residue Limits) (England & Scotland) Regulations 2015;
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008;
- Country of Origin of Certain Meats (England) Regulations 2015;
- Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014;
- Food for Specific Groups (Information & Compositional Requirements) England) Regulations 2016;
- Genetically Modified Organisms (Traceability & Labelling) (England) Regulations 2004;
- Olive Oil (Marketing Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Poultry Meat (England) Regulations 2011;
- Quick-Frozen Foodstuffs (England) Regulations 2007;
- Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009;
- Specified Products from China (Restrictions on Placing on the Market)(England) Regulations 2008;
- Animal Health Act 1981;
- Consumer Protection Act 1987.

## **12. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which outlined the Council's progress to date in tackling climate change, work in progress and set out the proposed approach to responding to the climate emergency declaration made by the Council on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). The matters raised in the report and recommendations would form the basis of a report to Policy Committee on 15 July 2019.

The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1: Modelling a Zero Carbon Pathway;
- Appendix 2: Existing Projects;
- Appendix 3: Item 11 Full Council, 26 February 2019, Council Climate Emergency Declaration;
- Appendix 4: Reading Climate Change Strategy 2013-20 Action Plans;
- Appendix 5: Draft Clean Air Safer Transport Forum Terms of Reference.

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The report stated that the Terms of Reference of the Committee had been amended to include: 'Climate Change Strategy - To contribute to and adopt the relevant parts of the Climate Change action plan.' A new Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum had also been set up. The draft terms of reference were shown in Appendix 5.

The report stated that the Housing and Neighbourhoods and Leisure (HNL) Committee would oversee all projects involved in the retrofitting of the Borough's housing stock and household level renewable energy. The housing strategy would set out a range of projects which aimed to improve the Council's own stock energy efficiency and inform the work with private landlords and homeowners to reduce energy consumption in private stock. In addition the Committee would oversee the leisure contracts and operations of the Council and their use and generation of energy and corresponding carbon emissions.

The report added that the Committee would need to consider a wide range of factors relating to these, including, but not limited to:

- The carbon footprint of operational facilities;
- The opportunity for renewable energy infrastructure;
- Travel and transport plans including cycling electric vehicle charging facilities etc;
- The sustainable design and construction of new facilities/buildings;
- The supply chains and procurement arrangements for services commissioned;
- Communication of environmentally positive behaviours to staff and users;
- The maintaining and enhancing of natural environments;
- The consideration of risks to vulnerable groups (for example fuel poverty);
- The use of natural resources;
- Encouragement and support for educational campaigns;
- Involvement of service users in the Reading Climate Action Network;
- Educational programmes relating to the national curriculum;
- The development of key skills relating to a low carbon, clean growth future.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the progress made to date by the Council's proactive approach to addressing climate change issues and impacts in Reading be welcomed, while the scale of the on-going challenge be noted;**
- (2) That the climate emergency declaration be embedded across all Council services, activities, plans and other relevant work to ensure a fully integrated and systematic approach to the Council's own response to this challenge and the change to the Terms of Reference to include "Climate Change Strategy - To contribute to and adopt the relevant parts of the Climate Change action plan." be noted;**



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- (3) That the Council work with and through the long-established Reading Climate Change Partnership and Reading UK to align respective strategies to ensure the active participation of residents, business and other organisations across Reading;**
- (4) That the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Government and local MPs setting out the urgent need to equip Local Authorities with the policy framework, powers and funding necessary to deliver this critical agenda;**
- (5) That all future Committee reports include a section on environmental implications and necessary mitigations, plus the impact of the decisions they are taking on the Council's ability to respond to the Climate Emergency and achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.**

(The meeting closed at 9.10pm).