

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 16 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

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

62. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr White	Training children to cycle	Cllr Ennis
2.	Cllr Thompson	Fly-tipping	Cllr Rowland
3.	Cllr Lanzoni	Last Crumb Junction	Cllr Ennis

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

64. THAMES VALLEY POLICE - ANNUAL PRESENTATION

Matthew Barber, Thames Valley Police (TVP) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Jason Hogg, TVP Chief Constable and Berkshire West LCU Commander Chief Superintendent Felicity Parker attended the meeting to give presentations and answer questions from members of the Committee.

The presentation covered Thames Valley-wide issues including recruitment, Neighbourhood Policing and Retail Crime, as well as local information on Crime Type analysis, tackling Retail Crime and supporting businesses across Reading, targeted action on Western Elms Avenue, and focused Policing and Partnership activity in Southcote and Coronation Square.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions on subjects which included the decreasing number of PCSOs, ongoing work to tackle drug dealing in local areas, violence against women and girls, ASB and crime from boats, the new white paper on policing, a public health approach to drug-related crime and Mental health police officers.

Resolved –

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

65. COUNCIL PLAN UPDATE 2026/27

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The Committee considered a report on a review of the 2025-28 Council Plan. A proposed Council Plan Update was attached to the report at Appendix One and a change log of proposed changes at Appendix Two.

The report explained that the review of the Council Plan had focused on factual updates to sections on key achievements in 2025, resident services, and the Council's budget, updating Council Plan projects to reflect any completed projects, those that are or will become business as usual, or new projects in 26/27, and updating KPIs to ensure these were still the correct measures going forward and add results for 2024/25. Several KPIs had been updated to align with the newly published Local Outcomes Framework. The report asked the Committee to recommend the update to the full Council meeting on 24 March 2026.

Resolved –

- (1) That Council be recommended to adopt the Council Plan Update 2026-27, as attached to the report at Appendix 1;**
- (2) That, if adopted, the Council Plan Update 2026-27 be published on the Council's website.**

66. CONSULTATION ON PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING UNDER 15% LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Committee received a report on a consultation on priorities for spending of the 15% of collected Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be allocated to the local area in which development took place. An Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a report on the consultation outcomes was attached at Appendix 2.

The report noted that under the CIL Spend Protocol, the Council was expected to undertake a consultation every 3-4 years on priorities for use of 15% local CIL. A consultation had most recently been carried out early in 2021 and a new consultation had therefore been undertaken between 7 January and 18 February 2026. There had been 334 responses to the consultation and respondents had ranked the priorities in the following order:

1. Highways, transport and travel measures
2. Healthcare provision
3. Community centres and hubs
4. Education provision
5. Natural environment, e.g. trees and biodiversity
6. Climate change and renewable energy projects
7. Play areas and public open spaces
8. General environmental enhancements
9. Heritage and cultural provision

This differed significantly from the previous consultation carried out in 2021, where the top priorities had been play areas and public open spaces (1), climate change and renewable energy (2) and natural environment (3). The results of the consultation would be used to

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inform decisions on how 15% local CIL was used in balance with the other criteria which included compliance with CIL Regulations, deliverability and financial considerations.

The report explained that there was currently no confirmed timetable for making new allocations of funds, as the £752k local CIL available to allocate as of 31 December 2025 was substantially lower than the total of allocations that had previously been made by Policy Committee. Most recently an allocation of £1.498m had been made towards 31 projects by the Committee at its meeting on 8 July 2024 (Minute 14 refers).

Resolved –

That the results of consultation on priorities for funding under 15% local Community Infrastructure Levy be noted.

67. 2025/26 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE & MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report setting out an overview of the Council's financial and performance position as at the end of Quarter 3 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 – Spend Control Tracking
- Appendix 3 - Savings Tracker Quarter 3
- Appendix 4 - General Fund Capital Programme
- Appendix 5 - HRA Capital Programme
- Appendix 6 - Council Plan Performance Measures Quarter 3
- Appendix 7 - Council Plan Projects Quarter 3
- Appendix 8 – Debt Write-offs (Exempt Information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended)

The report stated that the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 3 was an adverse net variance of £4.633m, a net increase of £0.665m from the Quarter 2 position. The major cost pressures were summarised. The report also provided an update on the use of an Expenditure Control Process for General Fund revenue expenditure and on savings delivery, noting that £5.514m (48%) of savings had been delivered, £3.016m (26%) were on track, £2.589m (23%) were categorised as non-deliverable, and £0.397m (3%) were at risk.

The report recommended further adjustments to the General Fund Capital Programme, which was set out in Appendix 4, that would result in a revised approved budget of £53.806m for 2025/26. Against this proposed revised budget, the current forecast was a positive net variance of £0.247m. The changes to the Capital Programme included the new Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading scheme for which scheme approval was requested, and a new Pavement Channels scheme following the award of grant funding, for which scheme and spend approval was requested.

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The report noted that the approved HRA budget assumed a drawdown from HRA reserves of £5.424m. At Quarter 3, the forecast revenue outturn position on the HRA was an adverse net variance to budget of £0.126m, a net decrease of £0.071m from Quarter 2. Therefore, a drawdown from the HRA Reserve was forecast of £5.550m. The report proposed adjustments to the HRA Capital Programme, set out in Appendix 5, that would result in a revised approved budget of £62.154m for 2025/26. At Quarter 3, the HRA Capital Programme was forecasting to spend to budget against this proposed revised budget.

The report also set out performance against the Council Plan success measures. Of the 17 Council Plan Performance Measures monitored monthly or quarterly, 47% were currently at or above target (green), 18% were within 10% of the target (amber), 29% were 10% or more off target (red) and 6% (1 measure) were outstanding. Of the 51 Council Plan Projects, 2% were currently delivered (blue), 63% were on track (green), 35% were at risk (amber) and none off track (red). The full list of Performance Measures was attached to the report at Appendix 6 and Projects at Appendix 7.

The report set out details in Appendix 8 of Non-Domestic Rates debt of £145,433.70 and Sundry Debt of £25,750.00 for which, having complied with the requirements of the Council's Debt Management Strategy, all recovery activity had been exhausted and the Director of Finance recommended that the Committee be requested to approve write-offs.

Resolved:

- (1) That it be noted that:**
 - a) the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 3 was an adverse net variance of £4.633m (Appendix 1);**
 - b) Spend control tracking reporting to the end of December 2025 was as set out in Appendix 2;**
 - c) £5.514m (48%) of savings had been delivered (blue) and £3.016m (26%) of savings were on track to be delivered (green) by March 2026. £2.589m (23%) of savings were currently categorised as non-deliverable (red) and £0.397m (3%) categorised as at risk of delivery (amber) (Appendix 3);**
 - d) The General Fund Capital Programme was forecasting a positive net variance of £0.247m against the proposed revised budget of £53.806m (Appendix 4);**
 - e) There was a total £2.927m Delivery Fund available for 2025/26 (inclusive of 2024/25 approved carry forwards). At Quarter 3, £2.820m of this funding had been allocated out to approved schemes;**
 - f) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was projecting an adverse net variance of £0.126m as at the end of Quarter 3, which resulted**

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in a forecast drawdown from HRA Reserves of £5.550m rather than the approved budgeted drawdown of £5.424m;

- g) The HRA Capital Programme was forecasting to spend to budget against the proposed revised budget of £62.154m (Appendix 5).**
 - h) The performance achieved against the Council Plan success measures was as set out in Section 12 of the report and Appendices 6 and 7;**
- (2) That the amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 8 of the report and Appendix 4) resulting in a revised Capital Programme budget of £53.806m for 2025/26 be approved;**
 - (3) That Scheme approval be given for the new Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading scheme and scheme and spend approval given for the fully grant funded Pavement Channels scheme (as set out in Section 8 of the report and Appendix 4);**
 - (4) The the amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 11 of this report and Appendix 5) resulting in a revised HRA Capital Programme budget of £62.154m for 2025/26 be approved;**
 - (5) That funding support for Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) of £3.694m over and above the 2025/26 contract sum in respect of their provisional outturn for the six months trading to 30 September 2025 reflecting services that had been provided prior to transfer of all activities to Reading Borough Council be approved;**
 - (6) That the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to pay or collect any residual financial sums due to or from Brighter Futures for Children up until the point of company closure;**
 - (7) That the write-off of debts as set out in Section 6 and Appendix 8 relating to Non-Domestic Rates (£145,433.70) and Sundry Debt (£25,750.00) be approved.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.27 pm)