

A G E N D A

Mayor's Announcements

1. To receive Mayor's Announcements.

Declarations of Interest

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

Minutes

3. The Mayor to sign the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 21 October 2014 (Pages A1-A8)

Petitions

4. To receive petitions in accordance with Standing Order 8.

Questions from Members of the Public

5. Questions in accordance with Standing Order 9.

Questions from Councillors

6. Questions in accordance with Standing Order 10.

Reports and Recommendations from Committees

7. Budget 2015-16: Approval of Council Tax Base, NNDR1 Estimate & Estimated Collection Fund Surplus

Report by Head of Finance (Pages B1-B18)

8. Housing Revenue Account - Financial Plan 2015/16

Report by Head of Finance and Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods (Pages C1-C21)

9. Delegations Register

Report by Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages D1-D21)

10. Alteration to the Reading Borough Local Development Framework (Local Plan) on Affordable Housing Provision - Adoption

Report by Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods (Pages E1-E11)

11. Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule - Adoption

Report by Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods (Pages F1-F11)

Motions

12. Youth Voter Engagement

Councillor James to move:

"This Council notes:

1. Reading Borough Council reaffirms its support for votes at 16.
2. For votes at 16 to be successful there needs to be opportunities for debates in schools and colleges as part of the curriculum and wider student engagement.
3. Despite voter turnout in the UK being the highest in 2010 for 13 years (65%), only 52% of 18 - 24 year olds voted.
4. In Scotland, 80% of under 18s registered to vote in the Scottish referendum.

This Council believes:

1. Young people need to be engaged in democratic politics at an early age.
2. That the average age of politicians at national and local level does not motivate young people to participate in elections either as voters or candidates.
3. Investing in young people is an investment in the future. Reading Borough Council must strive to work with young people to encourage their interest in politics.

This Council resolves:

1. To develop a youth engagement project in educational institutions and as part of youth projects, working with the youth cabinet, the youth service, schools and colleges.
2. To promote and continue support of votes at 16.
3. To encourage each councillor to engage with students at local schools, colleges and youth projects as part of the youth engagement project."

13. Financial Crisis Support Scheme

Councillor Lovelock to move:

"This Council notes:

- that the Welfare Reform Act of 2013 included the abolition of the Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants elements of the discretionary Social Fund and replaced this with a discretionary local scheme to be administered and agreed by local authorities.
- that there was government funding of £450k per annum for 2013/14 and 2014/15, but that the government has now announced it will cease this funding from April 2015.
- that the Reading Borough Council local Financial Crisis Support Scheme (FCSS) agreed in January 2013 has delivered many benefits for individuals and families in dire circumstances either directly or via "support in kind" provided by voluntary sector partners funded by the FCSS.
- That because of the uncertainty over future funding the scheme has been managed carefully to keep a contingency of £200k from the grant.

This Council therefore agrees:

- to write to the Government asking for the decision to end the government grant to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- to write to the LGA and Reading's two MPs seeking support for the government grant to be reinstated.
- to continue the support in 2015/16 to the voluntary sector organisations who have helped to deliver the aims of our local FCSS.
- To request a report to Policy Committee on how best to target the remainder of the outstanding grant pending a response from the government."

14. Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons

Councillor Gittings to move:

"This Council notes:

- The increasing concern from the public, animal welfare charities, the Chief Fire Officers Association and the civil aviation authorities regarding the unsafe use of both sky lanterns and helium balloons.

- That several Local Authorities have applied voluntary bans on council-owned premises and are using their licensing powers to issue appropriate guidance.

This Council resolves:

To ask the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services to research this issue further to establish the scale of the problem in Reading and to bring back a report to Policy or Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee regarding policy options and appropriate advice to the public about the associated safety issues.”

15. Free Schools

Councillor White to move:

This Council notes:

- Both nationally and in Reading there is a shortage of school places.
- Unfortunately, under the Coalition government, free schools are one of the few ways to address the school places crisis.
- Many residents, teachers’ unions such as the NUT and the Green Party would like to see an end to the free school experiment. We believe that free schools undermine:
 - teachers' professional status and their pay and conditions;
 - local authorities’ ability to plan and manage school places;
 - common admissions’ arrangements and fuel social segregation;
 - fair funding for schools - free schools are getting a disproportionate share of capital and revenue funding for schools at a time when education budgets are being cut; and
 - democratic local accountability of schools to their communities.

This Council resolves:

That a report be brought back to the appropriate committee on the impact of free schools in Reading, taking the above-mentioned concerns into account and making recommendations on action that can be taken to address the associated problems.