

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No. 9

Mustafa Chaudhary to ask the Leader of the Council:

### Prevent and NI35

The undersigned organisations, representing a broad section of Reading's Muslims, are very concerned that the new CONTEST 2 strategy and NI35 indicators are going to prove counterproductive. Given that alienation is one of the key drivers for 'violent extremism', this strategy is going to have the opposite effect to the one intended.

At a national level, the Prevent agenda was ill-conceived, having ignored virtually all of the recommendations of the post 7/7 Taskforce. Locally, Muslim communities have raised concerns about PVE considerably, consistently and repeatedly ever since the agenda arrived in Reading. They feel that their collective goodwill and valuable voluntary time and input have simply been exploited. This has damaged trust. Given these very real concerns, would the Council agree that Prevent and NI35 confuse law enforcement issues with community cohesion to damaging effect?

Alexandra Road Mosque  
As-Sabeel Bookshop  
Association of Sri Lankan Muslims Reading  
Berkshire Arab Community Association  
Community Education Trust  
Cumberland Road Mosque  
IMAAD  
Reading Muslim Council  
Reading Muslim Scouts  
Whitely Muslim Education Trust

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

While acknowledging, as we always have, that there have been some unfortunate interpretations of the government's intentions, this Council has sought to work with all the communities of Reading to build on the community cohesion that we have all been committed to over many years. We are trying to ensure a specific Reading response to this agenda, which aims to continue to bring people together. There has been a variety of views from different groups, but given we do not have a choice but to demonstrate that we are taking this issue seriously, it is my view that the approach we are taking is the right one at the moment, but that we need to continue to engage with all communities so that it is clear that we are not just targeting the Muslim community.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No. 9

Mustafa Chaudhary to ask the Leader of the Council:

### Prevent and NI35

NI35 (Building Communities Resilient to Violent Extremism) is highly discriminatory: the plain fact of the matter is that it singles out and targets Muslims. Whatever the intention, the Council's Preventing Violent Extremism Action Plan and Governance Framework are alienating and stigmatising Reading's Muslims. The overwhelming consensus amongst Muslim organisations in Reading is that NI35 should be deprioritised. Would the Council agree that by de-prioritising NI35, the Council can help re-build the trust and confidence which is vital to good Civic Leadership, as well as good Policing, and that by doing so the Council can also send out a strong signal that Muslim communities are, indeed, valued as equal in a 'Fairer Reading for All'?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

The purpose of the Prevent Strategy is to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists and to support vulnerable communities. In Reading we have been very clear that we believe that this work should be aimed at the prevention of violent extremism from any section of the community. At the moment I would be particularly concerned about the influence of far right organisations, who are committing violent acts in other countries. The only person arrested in Reading recently who was regarded as a potentially violent extremist was obsessed with far right propaganda. The recent electoral success of the BNP should be of concern to us all. We are mindful of the diversity of views across our communities on a subject as sensitive as this, where it is almost impossible to please everyone. However, the Local Strategic Partnership's prioritisation or otherwise of NI35 would not change the approach we are taking together in pursuing a plan of action we believe is specific to and appropriate for Reading.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 3 in accordance with Standing Order No. 9

Mustapha Chaudhary to ask the Leader of the Council:

### Prevent and NI35

Despite all the concerns, there is strong interest from organisations to continue to work through the mainstream to decrease alienation and marginalisation and increase community cohesion in Reading. However, the undersigned organisations believe this must be outside of and clearly independent from the Prevent framework, as the issues with CONTEST 2 are insurmountable in that it stigmatises all Muslims as potential 'extremists' due to their personal beliefs and convictions. How will the Council address the imbalance that now exists in Reading where there is plenty of funding for those organisations willing to tow the Prevent agenda (to the detriment of Muslims) and disproportionately less support for the majority of organisations?

Alexandra Road Mosque  
As-Sabeel Bookshop  
Association of Sri Lankan Muslims Reading  
Berkshire Arab Community Association  
Community Education Trust  
Cumberland Road Mosque  
IMAAD  
Reading Muslim Council  
Reading Muslim Scouts  
Whitley Muslim Education Trust

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

The Council is committed to working to decrease alienation and marginalisation and increase community cohesion in Reading and has done so over many years, committing significant financial support to a wide range of organisations. It has been clear throughout the consultation on this issue that there are a range of views about how to take this work forward. I have been lobbied in the last week by Muslims who do support the programme. The action plan before us later on is supported by many people, but of course we will monitor and adapt it as necessary to ensure it is still relevant to the community cohesion agenda we are seeking to promote.

The money for the Prevent agenda is allocated on a national basis and is in addition to any local prioritisation of funding. The funding is over three years from 2008/09 to 2010/11 and is £361,000. Of this, £238,100 has been committed and new projects across communities will be considered. It comprises a small proportion of the Council's overall grant aid support for voluntary organisations, many of which support the wider cohesion agenda, which over the same period is currently estimated at over £2.0m. I therefore believe that there is an increase in available funding for cohesion work rather than the reduction suggested in the question.

The Council remains committed to working across all communities and welcomes the strong interest in working to decrease alienation and marginalisation and increase community cohesion.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 4 in accordance with Standing Order No. 9

Nizam Khan to ask the Leader of the Council:

### Preventing Violent Extremism

Despite the existence of over 20 Muslim organisations and Mosques in Reading there is only one Muslim group that is currently 'on-board' with the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda in Reading. This organisation has no credibility at the grass roots regarding PVE as they have not consulted the community that they claim to represent on this issue and it would appear that they are being dictated to.

Does the leader of the council acknowledge that the majority of Muslims in Reading are not 'on board' with this work and if she disagrees with this assertion can she inform us how the Muslim community can articulate this position such that she will acknowledge it?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

There has been a range of activities to engage groups across Reading with the direction, shape and delivery of Prevent based work. It is recognised that this is challenging and that work continues to be needed to support knowledge and understanding of the agenda in Reading. It is disappointing that our local approach and activities in response to the national agenda have not been fully clear to some people, and that some misinformation appears to be circulating, which needs to be further explained. We have always understood that there are concerns about the way in which this has been framed nationally. Many people from across all our communities remain in dialogue with us, sometimes in critical dialogue, but are nevertheless supportive of what we are trying to do. We must continue to find ways to engage with the widest number of residents so that people do understand that we are focussed on community cohesion and challenging extremism from all sections of the community and that this work is not just aimed at Muslims.

I think it is important for people to understand that the Council and its partners do not have a choice about whether to engage with this national agenda. What we have sought to do is work with a range of community groups to make this appropriate for Reading. We need to ensure that we engage with as many people as possible as we take the work forward.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor T Harris to ask the Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health:

### RiverView Care Home

After the recent news reports regarding the heating at River View care home, can the Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health please inform me as to what action has been taken to ensure that the heating at River View Care home will not fail next winter?

REPLY by Councillor Orton (Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health):

I assume the news reports referred to relate to the incident on 6 February 2009 when an elderly resident of Riverview was admitted to hospital and later died. The death was initially linked to a loss of heating at the home although this was later found not to be the case.

The initial concerns were immediately responded to under the under the Adult Protection procedures and a full investigation was completed and a range of immediate and follow up actions have been completed. These actions included direct intervention with the Care home and its national and local management teams and with CSCI (now CQC) the national organisation responsible for the regulation of all care homes.

Since 6 February the following actions have been taken:

1. On 7th February the boilers at Riverview Care Home were fully inspected and found not to require replacement.
2. On 7th February two industrial sized calorifiers, (which treat the heated water) were replaced and RBC specialists replaced a water pump at the request of Southern Cross management in order to avoid any delay in the work being completed.
3. A full audit of care provision for all residents within Riverview was conducted on Reading service users with both social care and nursing specialist staff input. No risks were identified.
4. Service users at Riverview who were the responsibility of Wokingham, West Berkshire and Oxfordshire Councils were identified and liaison with the other authorities led to similar audits of care provision being completed.
5. Senior (National) management of Southern Cross, owners of Riverview home, and Adult Social Care senior managers met and agreed a plan to ensure the quality of recording, management and monitoring of the services provided at the Home.
6. The maintenance contracts from third party agents of Riverview and Southern Cross were checked to ensure that they were robust and of a high standard.

7. There is regular contact with the manager at Riverview, the most recent being on 1 June 2009.
8. Riverview has been inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) under its regime of regular unannounced inspections and has had its rating increased from adequate to good . This reflects the judgement that the standards being assessed have improved.
9. The regular contact will be maintained and specific heating reporting will be checked.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor T Harris to ask the Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health:

### Heating in Care Homes

Whilst we are in the summer period and have time to make any changes required, can the Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health please inform me whether he is comfortable that all Care Homes utilised by this Council:

- a. Have had the heating checked for every resident's room;
- b. Have an ongoing process to regularly check heating;
- c. Staff are trained to trigger a certain process, if they notice a room 'feels cold';
- d. Have a action plan to prevent their heating failing;
- e. Have emergency plans in place should the heating fail;
- f. Have an audit report to highlight this;
- g. Have an action plan to resolve any issues that have been uncovered?

REPLY by Councillor Orton (Lead Councillor for Community Care and Health):

The Council utilises both Homes run by the Council and those run by private organisations so I will address both.

In the Care Homes run by Reading Borough Council I can confirm:

- a. All radiators in residents' room have thermostatic controls so are adjustable to the level required by the individual resident. Staff will be aware of what this is when they visit for care duties.
- b. Each care home has a computer link from its boiler to the Council's Reactive Maintenance unit, which monitors and adjusts the temperature within the Home. Water temperature is also checked weekly, which would show if boilers are not working, along with checking water temperatures in each room regularly. There is a routine annual inspection of all boilers and equipment. There are back up boilers in all homes.
- c. Staff duties include reporting any concerns about temperature to the Duty Officer who would contact the Reactive Maintenance unit immediately and there is training on this. Such a report would trigger checks and immediate actions. Also, staff close all windows as soon as there are any concerns with the heating in order to stop heat loss.
- d. As stated already, each boiler is monitored regularly and the temperatures monitored centrally from the Council's Reactive Maintenance Unit.
- e. Emergency Plans are in place for each unit and cover issues such as heating failure. The response will depend on the severity of the problems and can be just the provision of heaters, if safe, or in extreme cases the evacuation of the Home to more suitable and safe accommodation. These matters have to be properly risk assessed for proportionate action.

- f. The Emergency Plans are regularly updated and there is a formal process of checking management of the homes which includes checking that there is an emergency plan. The Homes are also subject to unannounced inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who audit the management checks. In addition, all the boilers are monitored and the water temperatures are recorded by the computer linked to the Reactive Maintenance Unit.
- g. Any issue that presents a risk in performance of the heating system is recorded and an action plan followed through to completion and resolution of the issue.

In privately owned Care Homes the immediate responsibility to ensure adequate heating for residents rests with the managers and owners of the Home, and it is the responsibility of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as regulator and inspector to check that Care Homes are complying with the Care Standards in place and to take necessary action to ensure that the Homes comply. The National Minimum Standards (NMS) that apply are:

NMS 20: Service users have access to safe and comfortable indoor and outdoor communal facilities.

NMS 24: Service users live in safe, comfortable rooms with their own possessions around them.

NMS 25: The heating, lighting, water supply and ventilation of service users' accommodation meet the relevant environmental health and safety requirements and the needs of individual service users.

NMS 25: Rooms are centrally heated and heating may be controlled in the service user's own room.

In addition, the Council's contract process requires that standards are properly met and social workers who visit residents routinely check provision of adequate heating and ventilation, and report any concerns.

If issues of concern arise and are reported to or identified by the Council then the Adult Safeguarding procedures will be put in to operation.

The question asks me specifically if I am comfortable with all the aspects in the question. My frank answer to this is that I do not believe that any Lead Councillor, or Chief Executive or Director, can ever be completely comfortable with these responsibilities in the area of the welfare and safeguarding of adults who can be vulnerable. There is no total comfort or room for any complacency. In addition to the discussions and correspondence that I have, the lead councillors in this area for the other two Groups have the same facility and opportunities to raise issues. If any member has any concerns or good ideas they can talk to me, the Director, or both, about them.

Officers' reports are presented both to Cabinet meetings and the Housing, Health and Community Care scrutiny panel. Members of these have the opportunity to pursue issues at these meetings.

Finally, I thank Councillor Harris for his important question and I hope he can see from the reply that both councillors and officers are paying great attention to the issue of heating in Care Homes.

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 JUNE 2009**

**QUESTION NO. 3** in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Epps to ask the Leader of the Council:

**Use of provisions of Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) Act 2000**

To ask the Leader of the Council:

- a) who within the Council currently holds powers to authorise covert investigations under the provisions of the RIPA Act;
- b) whether the Council requires investigations under these powers to be authorised by elected Councillors, and if so under what circumstances and by whom;
- c) whether it is her view that in the light of ongoing public concern about the use of intrusive surveillance powers originally designed to combat serious crime, it would be appropriate to ensure that all authorisations of covert investigations under the provisions of the RIPA Act should be subject to elected member authorisation?

**REPLY** by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

- a) The following officers currently have the power to authorise covert investigations:

Licensing Enforcement Team Leader  
Licensing Manager  
Senior Licensing and Enforcement Officer  
Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Environmental Health Team Leader  
Director Environment, Culture and Sport  
Head of Parks, Sport and Recreation  
Head of Marketing and PR and Promotions  
Director of Resources  
Head of Audit and Risk Management  
Benefits Manager  
Senior Investigator, Anti-Fraud  
Consumer Protection Manager  
Health and Safety Enforcement Manager  
Trading Standards Manager  
Team Leader (Trading Standards)  
Food Law Manager  
Community Safety Manager  
Technical Support Manager  
Service Manager (Landlord Services)  
Housing Needs Manager  
Head of Finance and Accountancy (DECS)

b) The Council Policy does not require investigations under these powers to be authorised by elected Councillors.

c) Legislation currently dictates that the use of covert techniques under RIPA can only be authorised by designated officers of sufficient seniority. They must have the necessary level of oversight, judgement and objectivity to validate applications. They must have understanding of operational realities to give them a clear knowledge of what is reasonable and workable. There is currently a Home Office consultation taking place on the use of RIPA and the powers it gives public authorities. That consultation document states that the Chief Executive, Heads and Assistant Heads of Service, Service Managers or equivalent are of sufficient authority to authorise the use of RIPA. However, local authorities are being asked to consider whether elected councillors should have a role in overseeing the way RIPA techniques are used. The Council will be giving consideration to this proposal in due course.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 4 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Willis to ask the Leader of the Council:

Salary Packages

Would the Leader of the Council inform me how many directly employed Council staff have salary packages worth in excess of £100,000? Please list the relevant posts and the current and last year's salary levels.

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

Directly employed Council staff with salary packages worth in excess of £100,000 are as follows (post salary ranges are shown, no additional payments are made to postholders):

Post	Salary band 2008/09		Salary band 2009/10*	
	From	To	From	To
Chief Executive	£136,500	£154,101	£136,500	£154,101
Director of Education and Children's Services	£90,651	£119,979	£90,651	£119,979
Director of Housing and Community Care	£90,651	£119,979	£90,651	£119,979
Director of Environment, Culture and Sport	£90,651	£114,979	£90,651	£114,979
Director of Resources	£90,651	£114,979	£90,651	£114,979

In addition, 2 Headteachers are in receipt of salary packages in excess of £100,000 per annum, although full details are not held by the Council as the schools in question use an external payroll provider.

\* The salary band for 2009/10 is the same as for 2008/09 as RBC senior managers have agreed that no pay award will be applied for the current year.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 5 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Goodall to ask the Lead Councillor for Environment and Sustainability:

Graffiti Removal

- a) For each of the last 3 years, how many requests have been made for payment of the cost of removing graffiti (including materials) from private and commercial properties in Reading;
- b) Of these requests, on what percentage of these has payment been received, and to what total value;
- c) In addition, what is the average period of time spent before the graffiti is cleaned up as a consequence of waiting for payment in advance?

REPLY by Councillor Gittings (Lead Councillor for Environment and Sustainability):

a) Requests for quotations to remove graffiti

2005/6	120
2006/7	300
2007/8	Number during this period were minimal due to the Graffiti Big clean
2008/9	190

b) Payment received for work carried out by Reading Borough Council

2005/6	53 paid £5082
2006/7	93 paid £9929
2007/8	Number during this period were minimal due to the Graffiti Big clean
2008/9	25 paid £2496

c) Period of time spent before the graffiti is cleaned up

In normal circumstances agreement to pay is given at the time of receiving the quote and work is carried out without delay. Occasionally we do insist on payment before work is carried out if it is inappropriate to send an invoice (when minimal cost is involved) and this can cause varying delays.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 6 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Swaine to ask the Lead Councillor for Planning and Transport:

### Parking Permits

Could the Council please publish the current percentage levels of permits to parking spaces across the borough for each parking zone in operation, and also give a figure for the number of people who have been ticketed for parking in an adjacent zone to one for which they held a valid permit at the time of the ticketing?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Planning and Transport):

A list showing the current occupancy levels of all the Residents' Parking Zones in Reading is attached.

Figures for the number of people ticketed for parking in an adjacent zone are not available.

I would like to take this opportunity to update the Council on the review of residents' parking. Earlier this year I asked officers to commission a small-scale review of the residents' parking function by an independent consultant. The cost of this work, £7K, has been met from existing transport budgets and has resulted in a report which, following further work by officers over the next few months, will form the basis of recommendations to the Environment Scrutiny Panel on 15 September and then on to Cabinet on 28 September. In my view it would then be appropriate for any proposed changes to be the subject of a period of public consultation. I hope those members with residents' parking schemes in their wards will participate in the forthcoming review.

## Parking Permits Availability 1st June 2009

	zone	spaces on street	Totals	Availability
ZIN ZAN STREET AREA	A1	403	429	106%
DE BEAUVOIR ROAD AREA	B1	152	199	131%
EASTERN AVENUE	B2	34	25	74%
DENMARK ROAD	B3	44	27	61%
REDLANDS ROAD	B4	6	2	33%
UPPER REDLANDS ROAD	B5	5	4	80%
WHITLEY PARK LANE	B6	6	5	83%
PRINCE OF WALES AVENUE AREA	C1	884	936	106%
WANTAGE ROAD AREA	C2	642	576	90%
BERESFORD ROAD AREA	C3	534	426	80%
NORCOT ROAD	C4	18	7	39%
ST BARTHOLOMEW'S ROAD	D1	56	53	95%
PALMER PARK AVENUE AREA	E2	108	55	51%
ST JOHN'S ROAD AREA	F1	156	174	112%
ELDON TERRACE AREA	F2	114	103	90%
ORTS ROAD AREA	F3	56	9	16%
GLEBE ROAD	G1	22	11	50%
HIGHGROVE STREET	G2	98	112	114%
MOUNT PLEASANT AREA	G3	70	64	91%
BASINGSTOKE ROAD AREA	G4	23	17	74%
ESSEX STREET	H1	32	37	116%
ELGAR ROAD	H2	370	458	124%
MILMAN ROAD	H3	48	62	129%
LINCOLN ROAD	H4	130	121	93%
SWANSEA ROAD AREA	J1	372	435	117%
VASTERN ROAD AREA	J2	165	124	75%
HEMDEAN ROAD AREA	K1	101	118	117%
SOUTH STREET CAVERSHAM	K3	24	27	113%
WESTFIELD ROAD AREA	K4	175	209	119%
QUEEN'S ROAD CAV AREA	L1	180	260	144%
PATRICK ROAD AREA	L2	10	13	130%
MORGAN ROAD	MN	72	38	53%
BEDFORD ROAD AREA	N1	376	344	91%
GOWER STREET AREA	N2	171	154	90%
BAKER STREET AREA	P1	372	440	118%
FIELD ROAD AREA	R1	424	420	99%
LIMA COURT	R2	38	59	155%
RECTORY ROAD AREA	RP	205	207	101%
SIDMOUTH STREET AREA	S1	71	80	113%
LONDON ROAD	S2	7	6	86%
VACHEL ROAD AREA	TC1	70	48	69%
VALPY STREET	TC2	3	4	133%
BLAKES COTTAGES	TC3	16	15	94%
CASTLE STREET	TC5	10	5	50%
TUNS HILL COTTAGES	TH	20	17	85%
SHERMAN ROAD AREA	UC	202	258	128%
NEW LANE HILL	W1	20	20	100%
WOLSEY ROAD	WY	24	26	108%
CHOLMELEY ROAD AREA	X1	537	501	93%
HENRY STREET AREA	Y1	77	114	148%
KATESGROVE LANE AREA	Y2	50	31	62%
CRAIG AVENUE	Z1	25	17	68%
		7828	7902	101%

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 7 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Byrne to ask the Lead Councillor for Planning and Transport:

### Issue of Parking Permits Review

Whilst trying to sort out a problem with the non-delivery of visitors' parking permits for someone in my ward I was informed that a consultant had been engaged to look at the whole ordering and issuing process with a view to making it an on-line facility.

Could the Lead Councillor for Planning and Transport please tell me how much the consultant was paid and why it was thought that we did not possess the skills in-house to undertake this assignment?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Planning and Transport):

Reading Borough Council provides a residents' parking permit service through its Parking Services Team based within its Transport Service Area. The service deals with residents' parking scheme management once the scheme has been established. Procedures for scheme identification and related traffic orders to set up any scheme are dealt with by the Network Management section, also based within the Transport Service Area.

Residents' parking was established in Reading over 30 years ago with the first scheme introduced in the Zinzan Street/Baker Street area following a campaign by myself and the then Castle Ward Councillors. Since then the demand for schemes from residents in Reading means that the service has evolved and grown over the years, and is now responsible for issuing 7900 residents' permits each year.

The process of evolution over the last 30 years has meant that a collection of policies have been introduced, each to extend the function of the service and this has resulted in a very complex approach to certain aspects of the service. The service is provided free of charge, in respect of all first permits, and had a £120,000 deficit in the last financial year.

In December 2008 I agreed with the Head of Service that it would be beneficial to undertake a small-scale review of the residents' parking function. It was felt that a completely dispassionate, external review was essential, particularly from someone with experience and knowledge of other schemes. This review was carried out by an independent consultant, Mary Frances, and cost £7k. The cost was met from existing transport budgets.

At my request the review was specifically aimed at providing an improved and simplified service to residents, and the consultant's report and recommendations will reflect that requirement.

The brief for the study and accompanying reports and recommendations will be available in the autumn and are on the forward planning list for both Environment Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in September 2009. As I said in my previous reply, I anticipate that any proposals for change will be subject to a period of public consultation.

Let me conclude by reminding colleagues that residents' parking schemes are very popular in Reading and play an important part in helping thousands of residents to live more tolerable lives in many areas of the town, which would otherwise be overrun with indiscriminate commuter and shopper parking.

I hope that the forthcoming review will further strengthen the effectiveness and popularity of our residents' parking schemes.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 8 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Stanway to ask the Leader of the Council:

### Payment Services Regulations

What are the implications for the Council and what plans are in place to deal with the Payment Services Regulations which come into force on 1 November 2009?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

The Act amends previous acts to comply with recent EU legislation. It would appear that these amendments relate to cash and electronic payments, and not to paper-based transactions such as cheques.

We have raised this query with our bank, The Co-operative Bank, who investigated and identified the following which would be of consequence to us as an Authority:

Part 6 of the Regulations makes provision for the rights and obligations relating to the provision of payment services. This includes provision for matters including:

- consent to payment transactions (regulation 55),
- unauthorized or incorrectly executed payment transactions (regulation 59)
- liability for unauthorized payment transactions (regulations 59 to 62),
- refunds, execution of payment transactions (regulations 63 to 79)
- execution time and the liability of payment service providers (regulations 63 to 79)

They set down maximum losses incurred for customers (regulation 62) (ie RBC) depending on whether the transaction was fraudulent or whether the customer was fraudulent or negligent. It also sets a maximum of 8 weeks to dispute such payments.

As such, in overall terms, the conclusion reached is that the impact/implications on us as an Authority is likely to be insignificant.

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 JUNE 2009**

**QUESTION NO. 9** in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Willis to ask the Leader of the Council:

**Trips to non-UK destinations**

Could the leader of the Council inform me:

1. How many trips to non-UK destinations have been undertaken at public expense in the last 3 years:
  - a. by Councillors,
  - b. by Council Officers;
  
2. What were:
  - a. the destinations,
  - b. the purpose of each trip,
  - c. the cost of each trip to the Council-tax payer including any subsistence paid;
  
3. Who authorised each overseas journey?

**REPLY** by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

In the last 3 years there have been 15 occasions when Councillors and Officers have travelled to non UK locations and there has been an expense to the Council.

2 of these occasions involved Councillors and 2 involved the Mayor. There were 13 occasions when the journey involved Officers.

The requested details of these journeys are shown in the summary table attached.

COUNCIL MEETING 23 JUNE 2009 - QUESTION NO. 9

TRIPS TO NON-UK DESTINATIONS

Destination	Purpose	Dept	When	Total Cost	CIIs/Officers	Approved By
Cape Town South Africa	Undertake risk assessments and preparation prior to trip by young people to a South African township and Table Mountain	Integrated Youth Development Service	Jan-07	£2,571	2 Officers	Head of Integrated Youth Development Service
Dublin X2	Environmental Health Officer Recruitment - unable to recruit in UK. Cheaper to send 2 interviewers than pay for several candidates to travel to Reading.	Consumer Protection	Feb & March 07	£1426.00	2 Officers	Head of Environment & Consumer Services
Nice	The promotion of Reading at MIPIM positions Reading as an investment proposition along side England's core cities such as Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool etc to an international audience of developers, property advisers, investment companies, banks, architects and designers, construction companies and development corporations. This year CX was required to make a keynote speech at a conference with SEEDA, which is why CIr had to step in at last minute when CX taken ill.	ENCAS	March-07	£2,500	1 Officer/1 CIr (N.B. Councillor stepped in when CX taken ill).	Chief Executive
Istanbul	European Local Authorities Seminar - providing training for Turkish authorities. Officer was invited as 'key note' speaker / trainer.	Policy	April-07	£21	1 Officer	Europe & Community Development Manager
Dusseldorf	Town Twinning - 60th anniversary celebrations	Mayors Office	May-07	£202	Mayor / 1 Officer	Chief Executive
Brussels	Transport Seminar - briefing on proposed changes in EU Commission funding policy	Policy	June-07	£201	1 Officer	UTMC Network Manager
Jamaica	Assessment prior to child being placed with family	Children's Services	July-07	£619	1 Officer	Joint Heads of Targeted Services
Ireland	Civic Relocation Project - site visits with Design Team to see new Civic buildings. Results reported back to Civic board and full Council. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to look at recently built Council offices as part of the information gathering exercise to inform the specification for replacing the Council's Civic Offices.	Civic Services	July-07	£173	1 Officer	Director of Corporate Resources
Dusseldorf	Town Twinning Visit to Xmas Market	Mayors Office	December-07	£189	Mayor	Chief Executive

Los Angeles	Children Social Worker Recruitment Initiative which recruited 5 social workers - a lower cost than UK advertising and overseas travel for candidates	Children's Social Care / Community Care	February-08	£900	2 Officers	Joint Heads of Targeted Services & Head of Adult Care
Nice	The promotion of Reading at MIPIM positions Reading as an investment proposition along side England's core cities such as Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool etc to an international audience of developers, property advisers, investment companies, banks, architects and designers, construction companies and development corporations.	ENCAS	March-08	£500	1 Officer	Chief Executive
Portugal	Accompanied vulnerable Elderly client on return to Portugal, following assessment of family support in England. Completed assessment that suitable and safe support services were in place with family in Portugal.	H&CC	May-08	£1,260	2 Officers	Older Peoples Service Manager - Resources
Italy	Civitas Initiative Forum Transport Conference. Civitas promotes practical measures to improve clean, urban transport. Delegate attended workshops, meeting with transport commissioner and obtained briefings on new grants that may be of benefit to Reading. The outcome of subsequent bids is awaited.	ENCAS	November-08	£494	1 Councillor	Head of Transport
Los Angeles	Children Social Worker Recruitment Initiative which recruited 6 social workers - a lower cost than UK advertising and overseas travel for candidates.	Children's Social Care	April-09	£1,200	2 Officers	Director of Education and Children Services

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

23 JUNE 2009

QUESTION NO. 10 in accordance with Standing Order No.10

Councillor Willis to ask the Leader of the Council:

### European Election Results

Could the Leader of the Council tell me why she thinks that the people of Reading rejected Labour at the ballot box on 4 June?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

I think the question Councillor Willis should be asking is why the Conservatives failed to do better in the recent European elections. Those elections took place in unique circumstances and it was clear that voters were rightly very angry with MPs over the expenses revelations. Naturally voters wanted to get a message to the Party of Government for that, but it is also clear that the two other main parties did not do well either.

In fact the Tory vote in Reading was way behind their results in the South East as a whole. The Liberal Democrat vote was also lower in Reading than across the rest of the South East and they came 4<sup>th</sup> behind the Greens and only narrowly in front of UKIP.

What should be of concern to us all is that the more extreme parties received so many votes. Perhaps Cllr Willis would like to comment on the lurch to the right of the Conservative Party and, in particular, David Cameron aligning the European Conservatives with extreme right wing parties in Europe who are, amongst other policies, openly homophobic.

I can assure Councillor Willis that the Labour Party is very keen to get the message across to all the voters in Reading that the choice before them is between responsible local and national government that seeks to support them in difficult times or the Tories whose only answer is arbitrary cuts across the board.