

# additional papers 1



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tue 13 Feb  
2018  
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two  
Town Hall  
Redditch

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making  
a  
difference*

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

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# Overview and Scrutiny

COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:

Jane Potter (Chair)  
Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair)  
Matthew Dormer  
Andrew Fry  
Pattie Hill

Gareth Prosser  
Paul Swansborough  
Jennifer Wheeler  
Nina Wood-Ford

4. Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21 - Pre-Scrutiny (Pages 1 - 18)
7. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 19 - 28)

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

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**EXECUTIVE**

**19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 – 2021/22**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering ( Exec Director)
Wards Affected	<b>All</b>
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To enable Members to consider the officer recommendations for the General Fund revenue and capital budget 2018/19 – 2021/22.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 Executive is asked to recommend to Full Council**

**2.1.1 Approve the additional income / efficiencies as attached at Appendix 1:**

**2018/19 £708k**

**2019/20 £18k**

**2.1.2 Approve the unavoidable pressures as attached at Appendix 2:**

**2018/19 £869k**

**2.1.3 Approve the Revenue bids as attached at Appendix 3:**

**2018/19 £10k**

**2.1.4 Approve the Capital Programme bids as attached at Appendix 4:**

**2018/19 £676k**

**2019/20 £560k**

**2020/21 £1.257m**

**2021/22 £2.772m**

**2.1.5 The approval of the return / release from balances of :**

**2018/19 £85k (release from balances)**

**2.1.6 Approval of the Increase of Council Tax by 2.99% per Band D equivalent for 2018/19**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018****Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Over the last 3 years the Council has faced a reduction in Government funding of £1.7m in Revenue Support Grant with further cuts faced in the future as detailed below. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made over a 4 year period. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are:
- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
  - Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
  - Help me live my life independently
  - Help me run a successful business
  - Help me be financially independent
  - Keep my place safe and looking good
- 3.2 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 4 years. The recommendations included within the current financial position at 3.15 are those assessed by officers as being areas where cost saving can be made to enable a balanced budget over the 4 year financial planning period. These potential service changes to realise savings are therefore included in the current projections for members consideration.
- 3.3 As Members are aware there continue to be considerable pressures facing the Council over the next 4 years as a result of a number of issues including:
- Potential further reductions in New Homes Bonus Grant
  - Impact of Negative Revenue Support Grant currently estimated at £330k in 2019/20. There is a consultation paper expected on this in Spring 2018.
  - Impact of the Localisation of Business Rates scheme which is now deferred to 2020/21.
  - Impact of the fair funding review which is to be implemented in 2020/21.
- 3.4 Officers will continue to work with our partners to identify the costs that may be associated with some of these changes.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018****Government Funding****3.5 Settlement**

3.5.1 The provisional settlement was announced in mid-December 2017. A number of issues were included within the information, including;

- Local Government Funding Reform to be implemented in 2020/21. A Consultation paper to be published in Spring 2018.
- Advised that the Business Rates Baseline reset will be in 2020/21
- From 2020/21 all grants to be included in Business Rates Retention
- Council Tax – can increase Council Tax by 3% (previously 2%) without a referendum for both 2018/19 & 2019/20. This would increase Council Tax by approximately £40k.
- Business Rate Pilots – Worcestershire not approved as a pilot. Potential for further rounds of bidding. Therefore Redditch will remain in GBS Pool for 2018/19
- No changes to New Homes Bonus
- Advised that there will be consultation in Spring 2018 in relation to “negative “ grant – currently £330k in 2019/20

**3.6 Formula Grant**

3.6.1 This Council in common with virtually every other Council in the country signed up to the government offer of a four year funding settlement. This brought more certainty to the funding figures but not complete certainty or protection from changes to the funding levels as described below.

3.6.2 The formula grant provisional settlement for 2018/19 was notified in December. This represents a 60% decrease when compared with our grant for 2016/17 as shown in the table below:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>RSG received £'000</b>	<b>Actual Reduction £'000 (%)</b>
2015/16	1,567	
2016/17	901	666 (42%)
2017/18	363	538 (60%)
2018/19	35	328 (90%)

3.6.3 Within the current projections there is an assumption that a repayment will be made to Government in 2019/20. This is due to the calculated core spending power for the Council being less than the estimated funding received. For 2019/20 the provisional settlement provides for a £331k repayment. Officers have projected that this will continue into 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018****3.7 Business Rates**

- 3.7.1 For 2018/19 the government assessed baseline for business rates is £2.2m. If business rates grow above the baseline, then this council keeps a proportion of that funding. The Council is part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull (GBS) Business Rates Pool and this enables the levy to go into the pool for regeneration projects rather than returned to Central Government. The Council had submitted a bid to form part of a Worcestershire wide Business Rates pilot which would have enabled more income to be retained in the Borough. Unfortunately the council has been advised that the Worcestershire bid was unsuccessful and therefore will remain in the GBS Pool for 2018/19.
- 3.7.2 Within the settlement the Government advised that a reset to Business Rates will be made in 2020/21 which will coincide with the proposed changes to Business Rates within the Business Rates retention framework. Further consultation on this scheme is expected in 2018.

**3.8 New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

- 3.8.1 The amount of NHB for 2018/19 has been confirmed as £674k which is £196k less than the £870k anticipated within the MTFP.
- 3.8.1 The Government announced in the settlement figures a reduction in the number of years for which NHB payments are made from six to four and a transitional year in 2017/18 where five years are payable to the authority. They also announced that NHB would not be paid for what they term as baseline growth, or housing growth that would happen naturally. This equates to a 0.4% levy that discounts the circa 126 additional houses in Redditch each year from the NHB calculation. The total cost over the 4 years of the changes to New Homes Bonus is estimated at £2m.
- 3.8.2 In 2017/18 the increase in Band D equivalent properties was less than anticipated at 84 units and therefore a marginal payment of £22k has been made to the Council as the growth is below the baseline set by Government. It is worth noting that the calculation is based on Band D equivalent and therefore there is less income generated if properties are developed that are Band A-C which is the case across the Borough.
- 3.8.3 The MTFP will continue to be refreshed annually to take account of future changes in funding and this will be based on future planning assumptions.

**3.9 Council Tax**



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

3.9.1 Within the settlement the Government allowed Councils to increase Council Tax by up to 3% without the need for a referendum for 2018/19 & 2019/20. The Council will decide the level of the council tax for 2018/19 on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018. If the recommendations contained in this report are approved, the demand on the collection fund to meet the Council's own needs will be £6,097,619 representing a 2.99% (£6.79) increase on Band D Council Tax compared to the current financial year. The Council Tax relating to the Councils services in 2018/19 will rise from £227.21 to £234.

3.9.2 An estimation has been made in the budget proposals for the increase to be £5 per annum for 2020/21 & 2021/22 although this may change depending on Government settlements.

**3.10 Collection Fund**

3.10.1 The collection fund has a declared surplus of £1.23m as at March 2017 together with a forecast surplus of £59k. The total surplus of £1.82m will be distributed amongst the major preceptors using the prescribed formulae. This Councils share of the surplus payable is a one off sum is £179k.

**3.11 Precepts**

3.11.1 The precepts from Worcestershire County Council, the Hereford and Worcester Combined Fire Authority, and the West Mercia Police Authority have not yet been received. The precepting bodies have until 28 February to provide this information, which will be needed to enable the Council to make its formal decisions.

**3.12 Capital Programme**

3.11.1 The Capital Programme has been extended to a 4 year rolling plan and officers are currently working to ensure that the level of expenditure falls within the current estimated project allocation. Those schemes that are funded from S106 are not included in this report as they have already been approved during the legal agreements, however they will form part of the final programme as reported to members later this month. The borrowing costs associated with any schemes have been factored into the summary statement. The Capital Programme is attached at Appendix 4 for consideration.

**3.12 Efficiency Plan**

3.12.1 The Efficiency Plan as approved in October 2016 included a number of areas whereby the costs to the Council could be reduced in a number of ways. The following key themes were identified to enable officers to manage the shortfalls in funding:

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

- Identifying opportunities to increase income and growth
- Identify alternative models of delivery in the provision of services and to consider the most appropriate provider
- Identify further efficiency by continuing to drive waste out of services and reduce cost
- Continue to redesign services to provide quality support and service to the customer whilst releasing savings
- Assessing the value for money of service provided and demonstrating where resources can be realigned
- Designing services across public and voluntary sector organisations to secure better outcomes and reduce overall spend
- Resetting future budget to meet prior years expenditure and income

3.12.2 The budget includes the delivery of the savings and income as identified in the Efficiency Plan. It should be noted that whilst annual savings have been included to meet those referred to in the plan there may be changes to funding and services delivered from 2018/19 that require alternative savings and income profiles to be delivered. Therefore further detailed reports will be presented to members advising of the relevant income and savings to be delivered.

**3.13 Current Position**

3.13.1 When proposing the budget, officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2017/18 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition income shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning. The pressures and income shortfalls are included at Appendix 2.

3.13.2 In addition officers have identified revenue bids to improve and enhance service delivery.

**Financial Position**

3.14 The current summary includes the following assumptions:

- 2% pay award in relation to the National Agreement in place. The initial budget was increased by 1% but the revised 2018/19 - 2019/20 budgets take into account the nationally proposed 2% increase for staff
- General inflationary increases in relation to contract arrangements

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- In line with new government regulations, the introduction of a 20% increase in planning fees from Wednesday 17 January 2018
- Payment of “negative grant” to the Government in 2019/20 - 2021/22 of £330k pa. This remains to be confirmed as part of the localisation of business rates implementation
- Increases as per the fees and charges proposals
- Borrowing costs resulting from the capital programme
- An estimation of the New Homes Bonus income based on planning numbers
- Additional growth income estimated in relation to the Business Rates receivable by the Council
- Council Tax at 2.99% for 2018/19-2019/20 and £5 for 2020/21-2021/22
- Impact of moving to a Local Authority Trading Company for Leisure Services

3.15 The summary below shows the financial position for 2018/19-2021/22:

	2018-19 £000	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000
Departmental Expenditure	8,859	9,276	9,297	9,354
Incremental Progression/Inflation on Utilities	60	1	1	1
Housing admin subsidy & general grant reduction		70	30	33
Unavoidables	869	-214	-155	0
Revenue Bids/Revenue impact of capital bids	10	0	0	0
Savings and Additional income	-708	-18	0	0
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>	<b>9,091</b>	<b>9,115</b>	<b>9,173</b>	<b>9,388</b>
Investment Income	-538	-534	-534	-534
MRP (Principal)	1,020	1,134	1,268	1,280
Recharge to Capital Programme	-425	-425	-425	-425
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>9,147</b>	<b>9,291</b>	<b>9,483</b>	<b>9,709</b>
Revenue Support Grant	-35	0	0	0
Negative grant repayable to Government	0	331	331	331
Business Rates Retention (Baseline Funding)	-2,239	-2,171	-2,171	-2,171
Expected Levy Payment (net) - payable to Business Rate Pool	93	96	98	100
Bad Debt Provision - increase	50	50	50	50
New Homes Bonus income received	-674	-703	-619	-619
Council Tax - 2.99% (18/19 & 19/20)	-6,098	-6,428	-6,731	-7,025
Parish Precept	8	8	8	8
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-167	0	0	0
Proposed Funding from Balances	-85	0	0	0
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>-9,148</b>	<b>-8,817</b>	<b>-9,034</b>	<b>-9,326</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>383</b>

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The future years shortfalls may change as a result of changes to Government policy. Future reviews of the Medium Term Financial Plan will address and changes to financial projections.

**General Fund Balances & Reserves**

3.16 The total level of balances and reserves is £3.6m.

**Balances :**

The level of the general fund balance is currently £1.8m which is £1.1m more than the recommended level of £750k. It is reasonable to keep this level maintained to support future uncertainties.

**Reserves:**

There are £1.8m of earmarked reserves available for future projects to support service delivery in the future.

**Legal Implications**

3.17.1 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level

3.17.2 There are a number of requirements that the Council's Section 151 Officer (the Council's designated Senior Finance Officer) has to include in the budget report. These are set out below, together with S.151 comments on each of the issues:

- a) The level and use of reserves to be formally determined by the Council must be informed by the judgement and advice of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

*Section 151 Officer's comments: The level of reserves and budgets are consistent with the framework established in the approved MTFP. I believe this strategy to be robust. However further work needs to be done to identify savings in future years to maintain balances at an acceptable level.*

- b) The CFO to report the factors that have influenced his/her judgement in the context of the key financial assumptions underpinning the budget, and ensure that his/her advice is formally recorded. Where that advice is not accepted, this should be formally recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

*Section 151 Officer's comments: The main assumptions included in the calculation of the budget are included within the report. The budget updates and considerations at previous Committee meetings have been formally recorded.*

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

- c) The report should include a statement showing the estimated opening balance on general fund reserves for the year ahead, any contribution to/from the fund, and the estimated closing balance.

*Section 151 Officer's comments: statement included in this report (3.16)*

- d) The report should show the extent to which reserves are financing ongoing expenditure.

*Section 151 Officer's comments: reserves are used to fund specific expenditure and not ongoing liabilities.*

- e) The report should include a statement from the CFO on the adequacy of general reserves and provisions both for the forthcoming year and in the context of the medium term financial plan.

*Section 151 Officer Comments: the Council holds adequate reserves to manage future liability and financial constraints*

- f) The report should include a statement on the annual review of earmarked reserves showing:
- i) list of earmarked reserves
  - ii) purpose of reserve
  - iii) advice on appropriate levels
  - iv) estimated opening / closing balances
  - v) planned additions / withdrawals.

*Section 151 Officer's Comments: The current reserves are reported on a regular basis through the financial monitoring reports*

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.18 The MTFP will enable services to be delivered across the Borough within the reduced financial funding arrangement that the Council has faced.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.19 The impact on the customer has been reduced due to the savings being realised by reduction of waste in the services and ensuring that all services that create value to the customer are resourced.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 To mitigate the risks associated with the financial pressures facing the Authority regular monitoring reports are presented to both officers and Members to enable proactive action to be undertaken to address any areas of concern.

**EXECUTIVE**

**19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME - RBC

APPENDIX 1

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Comments
Business Transformation - ICT	All Strategic Purposes	Annual Revenue Budget Saving	-172				Review of IT contract spend
CCTV	Keep my place safe and looking good	accommodation charge	-18				Review of budget required
CCTV	Keep my place safe and looking good	telephones	-4				Review of budget required
Housing Strategy	Keep my place safe and looking good	travellers and unauthorised campers costs	-7				Review of budget required
Housing Strategy	help me find somewhere to live in my locality	staff savings from reduced mileage and reduced hours	-3				Review of budget required
Housing Strategy	help me find somewhere to live in my locality	additional income	-2				Review of income generated
lifeline	help me to live my life independently	NNDR	-1				Savings identified
lifeline	help me live my life independly	accommodation charge	-18				Review of budget required
Corporate	Enabling	Amalgamate postage budget	-14				Savings identified
Corporate	Enabling	RBC staff awards	-3				Savings identified
Corporate	Enabling	Insurance	-27				Savings identified
Customer access & financial support	Enabling	Reduction in Hrs	-5				Savings identified
Customer access & financial support	Enabling	Additional income	-125				Additional income based on previous year
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Fuel and Vehicle R&M	-63				Savings identified

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Agenda Item 4

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Comments
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Materials, equipment and waste disposal	-21	-10			Savings identified
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Overtime	-6				Savings identified
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Contractors and Credit Card Fees	-5				Savings identified
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Increase in cremation income	-50	-4			Additional income generated
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Additional work for County Council and inflation of fees	-15	-4			Additional income generated
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Replacement waste bins	-72				Revenue savings achieved by capitalising all bin replacements
Finance & Resources	Enabling	Subscriptions	-4				Savings identified
Finance & Resources	Enabling	Subscriptions	-25				Savings identified
Finance & Resources	Enabling	Subscriptions	-8				Savings identified
Sports Development	Give me good things to see, do and visit	savings on spend budgets	-5				Mainstream funding no longer needed received/in place
Civic Suite	Give me good things to see, do and visit	Furniture purchase for Chamber	-4				Savings identified
Community Centre Management	Give me good things to see, do and visit	Vehicle Costs	-3				Savings identified
Sports Development	Give me good things to see, do and visit	savings on accommodation costs	-8				Savings identified
Cultural services	Give me good things to see, do and visit	Additional income	-20				Increased income generated at Palace Theatre
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>-708</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	



## UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES - RBC

APPENDIX 2

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of Pressure	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Comments
shopmobility	help me to live my life independently	Reduction in income budgets	11				Due to income from charging being included in the service the budget for donations is no longer required
Dial A Ride	help me to live my life independently	income target not met	20				Income not achieved due to issues with the fleet and delays in development of a car scheme
Community Safety	keep my place safe and looking good	external funding not available	15				Loss of external funding
Corporate		HRA contribution pension	106				HRA to General Fund review
Housing General Fund	Help me find somewhere to live in my locality	cessation of Inspire Project	14				Changes to service delivery
Business Development	Give Me good things to see, do and visit	Civic suite Income	8				Whilst the team have promoted the Civic Suite extensively and worked to get more commercial use - difficulties with the inability to develop regular bookings due to the need to provide consistent spaces for Council business.
Business Development	Give Me good things to see, do and visit	Roundabout Sponsorship	15				Difficulties in achieving sponsorship as sponsors have moved to different advertising mediums. Traditional advertising is now less attractive and more costly than social media outlets
Customer Support	Enabling	Reduction in WCC funding for customer enquiries	26				Funding based on number of transactions which are reducing.
Property		Business Rates Crossgates House	25				Business Rates re-evaluation
Property		Commercial Rents	40				Reduced income due to void unit at Woodrow and a reduction in C/Hill Centre income

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Agenda Item 4

Property		Concessionary Rents	48				Concessionary rents support community and charity groups to operate out of our properties but result in a cost to the authority.
Property		Asset Valuation Efficiency Saving	15				Savings not realised in relation to estimated asset reviews
Leisure & Cultural services		Impact of new leisure company set up	220	-220			Delivery of leisure options model later than originally budgeted - one year pressure only
Corporate		Salary Contingency	156	0	-156		Additional 1% salary pay award - 18/19 & 19/20 only
Corporate		Pressure from carparking charges in parks not being implemented	150				
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>869</b>	<b>-220</b>	<b>-156</b>	<b>0</b>	

## NEW REVENUE BIDS - RBC

APPENDIX 3

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of revenue bid	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Comments
		Funding for WODA 2018/19	10				Partner contribution
Business Transformation	Enabling						
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

**CAPITAL BIDS - RBC**

**APPENDIX 4**

Department	Description	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Commentary ( link to priorities etc)
Strategic Housing	Home Repairs Assistance Lifetime Loan Scheme	60	60	60	60	Extension of previous years allocations to lifetime loan scheme
Strategic Housing	Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund	110				Capital Funding from an existing reserve was used to set up the Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund for 2015 - 2017 financial years, finishing at the end of the current financial year.
Customer Access & Financial Support	Public Buildings	0	0	250	250	Public building essential maintenance
Customer Access & Financial Support	Asbestos Public Buildings	0	0	40	40	Compliance with Asbestos Regs
Environmental Services	Replacing 3 fuel pumps and upgrading tank monitoring equipment	25				Essential works at Crossgates Depot
Environmental Services	Replacing the fixed four post vehicle lift within the workshop with a mobile four column lift	25				Essential workshop equipment
Environmental Services	Vehicle Replacement Program			412	1,927	Required replacement vehicles
Environmental Services	Wheelie Bin procurement	96	75	70	70	Bin replacement programme
Environmental Services	Small Tractor with front and back bucket	40				Essential equipment
Abbey Stadium	Reconstruction of overspill car park to formal car park	165	0	0	0	Detailed in Business Case
Parks and Open Spaces	Contribution to pitch improvements at Terrys field.	6	0	0	0	Contribution to pitch improvements at Terrys Field.

**CAPITAL BIDS - RBC**

**APPENDIX 4**

Department	Description	2018-19 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	Commentary ( link to priorities etc)
Economic Development	Improvements at Business Centres	80				Development and refurbishment of the Council owned business centres
Environmental Services	Vehicle Replacement Dial a Ride	40				
Environmental Services	Locaity Improvement Programme		400	400	400	To provide funding to improve the locality and environment for the community
Environmental Services	Car Park Maintenance	25	25	25	25	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>672</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>2,772</b>	

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## Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6 February 2018

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Juliet Brunner, Debbie Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Mark Shurmer and Pat Witherspoon

#### Also Present:

Councillor Michael Chalk

#### Officers:

Clare Flanagan, Chris Forrester, Sue Hanley, Mark Hanwell, Dean Piper and Judith Willis

#### Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

#### 91. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 93. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the following items, which had been due to be considered at the meeting, had been deferred:

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2021/22. Instead the Committee would be receiving an update in respect of the Council's budget during the meeting.
- The Pay Policy Statement 2018/19.
- Redditch Business Centres Review.

.....  
Chair

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6 February 2018

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Members were asked to note that the meeting of the Executive committee immediately prior to Council on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 had been reinstated and would be starting at 7.00pm.

## 94. MINUTES

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## 95. ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR REDDITCH ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) presented the Economic Priorities for Redditch Annual Report 2016/17 for Members' consideration. During the presentation of this report the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Council's current economic priorities were agreed in 2015. Since then good progress had been achieved in delivering on these priorities.
- The local economy had performed reasonably well over the past 12 months, though was being out performed by neighbouring areas.
- In 2016 employment levels had declined when compared to 2015, though overall employment rates remained relatively positive.
- In September 2017 the NWEDR had commissioned Mr Brendan Nevin to review the economic performance of Redditch and how this fitted within the local region. This had identified a number of challenges and opportunities.
- Average earnings in Redditch were lower than the regional average.
- Links had been identified between the West Midlands economy and the economy in the Borough, with the regional economy being largely southward facing.
- Redditch Borough Council needed to work closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to ensure that the economies of both prospered.
- An action plan had been developed to help improve productivity in Redditch moving forward.
- The action plan had been refreshed for Redditch and a fifth theme had been added; Connecting Redditch, to ensure the Borough was connected to the wider regional economy.



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Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of matters in detail:

- The time taken to develop the report and action plan and the extent to which the Economic Development Theme Group and Town Centre Partnership had been engaged in this process.
- The involvement of Worcestershire County Council in developing the action plan. Members were advised that the County Council was primarily engaged through the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and both the Worcestershire Employment and Skills Board (ESB) and the North Worcestershire ESB.
- The Council's membership of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and the WMCA.
- The choice of Redditch, as a non-constituent member of the WMCA, in which to launch the Swift Card, the West Midlands equivalent of the London Oyster Card, and the benefits of a forthcoming launch event to help promote this card.
- The recent visit of the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, to Redditch and the discussions that had been held during this visit with regards to economic development.
- The Redditch Eastern Gateway, which had recently received planning permission from Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the opportunities for economic development potentially arising from this site.
- The Opening Doors event at the Palace Theatre, which had provided students from local schools with an opportunity to learn about careers in different industries.
- The £1.5 million investment in a centre of excellence in respect of engineering in Redditch.
- The £5 million in funding identified for regeneration works in the town centre and the extent to which the Council had definitely secured this funding. Officers advised that the funding was provisional and subject to the submission of a robust business case, though it was anticipated this would be successful as the proposals for regenerating the town centre had received an 'A' rating on strategic fit by GBSLEP and was seen as essential to the delivery of the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. It was anticipated that the outline business case would be submitted by the end of 2018.
- The extent to which the Redditch Town Centre Partnership had been consulted about the emerging regeneration proposals for Redditch Town Centre. Members were informed that representatives of the partnership had been consulted during the process and further engagement would take place during 2018.

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- The timescales in which a report in respect of the town centre regeneration would be presented for Members' consideration. Officers advised that this report would be presented for Members' consideration in 2018.
- The completion of the first phase of the public sector realm works on Alcester Street at a cost over £800k.
- The fee that had been charged for the work that had been undertaken by the consultants on behalf of the Council. Officers advised that they would check this and notify Members accordingly after the meeting.
- The number of business representatives regularly attending meetings of the Economic Development Theme Group. Officers acknowledged that engaging with the private sector in respect of the work of the group had been challenging but three local business representatives regularly attended meetings and efforts were being made to encourage more businesses to engage.
- The action that was being taken by NWEDR to encourage businesses to remain in the Borough. The Committee was informed that the NWEDR provided support to help businesses remain in Redditch.
- The approach adopted by NWEDR to encourage businesses to utilise business premises when these became available in the Borough.
- The level of public funding provided to projects detailed in the action plan and the potential for funding to be provided through private finance initiatives (PFI). Members were advised that a significant amount of funding from the private sector underpinned many of the projects detailed in the action plan, though there remained a need for leadership from the public sector.
- The Council's close working relationship with the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.
- The recent announcement that the Marks & Spencer retail outlet in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre would be one of a number across the country to close in spring 2018.
- The need for greater action to be taken to promote Redditch and the benefits of basing businesses in the Borough.
- The opportunities that could potentially arise from introducing an Enterprise Zone in Redditch and the role of the WMCA in helping the Council to make the case to the Government.
- The employment figures that had been provided for Redditch. Officers explained that these figures related to employment within the private sector only.
- The causes of a decline in employment within the Borough. The Committee was informed that there were multiple factors influencing this including improving productivity within organisations and increasing economic growth in areas neighbouring Redditch.

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- The extent to which sufficient car parking spaces would be available in the town centre to support the night time economy if existing car parks were included in any redevelopment schemes. Members were advised that there were some car parks in the town centre that were open 24 hours a day.
- The location of a Recording Studio in the Borough and the positive impact that this had on the local economy.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the annual report setting out progress against the delivery of the economic themes, priorities and Action Plan be endorsed;**
- 2) **the economic narrative set out at Appendix 1 to the report and the challenges and opportunities faced by the Borough be noted and endorsed;**
- 3) **the need for a 'Redditch Deal' with the West Midlands Combined Authority incorporating the proposed '10 point Action Plan' as set out at paragraphs 3.19 and 3.20 to the report be endorsed;**
- 4) **the updated Economic Themes, Priorities and Action Plan set out at Appendix 2 to the report be endorsed; and**
- 5) **an annual report be brought back to this Committee in 12 months' time.**

**96. WORCESTERSHIRE OFFICE FOR DATA AND ANALYTICS (WODA) - ENDORSEMENT OF DATA SHARING CHARTER**

The ICT Transformation Manager presented a report in respect of the Worcestershire Office for Data and Analytics (WODA). WODA had been formed in 2016 in response to work that had been undertaken by KPMG on behalf of partners in Worcestershire. The main premise of WODA was to encourage partners to share information except where there was a legal or ethical reason not to do so. The report was calling for Members to endorse the data sharing charter underpinning this data sharing arrangement.

The Worcestershire Partnership Executive Group (PEG) had initially agreed to launch a pilot. Since then a Chief Data Officer had been appointed and six business cases had been selected as the focus for data sharing. Further work needed to be undertaken in respect of staffing and infrastructure and all partners were being asked to provide a financial contribution to support WODA. The financial contribution from each partner organisation varied according to size; Redditch Borough Council was being asked to contribute

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£10,000. This cost would be submitted as a budget bid in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Members welcomed the report and noted that the data sharing arrangements could help partner organisations to more effectively support some of the most vulnerable members of society, such as victims of domestic violence. The committee also welcomed the application of WODA across the county, though it was noted that the base for staff would be at County Hall.

**RESOLVED that**

**Subject to the approval of the 2018/19 £10k budget bid by Council, the Worcestershire data sharing charter attached at Appendix 1 be noted and endorsed.**

**97. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2018/19**

The Legal Services Manager presented the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP's) report and recommendations for 2018/19. Members were advised that the Council was required to take account of, though not bound by, the recommendations from the IRP. The proposals from the IRP had financial implications for the Council; if all of the Panel's proposals were accepted this would lead to an increase of £68,500 on the total projected expenditure for Members' allowances.

Members noted that the Panel comprised skilled members of the public who were completely independent from the Council. In some years the Leaders of the Council were invited to attend interviews with the Panel; this had not occurred in 2017/18. Members recognised that the allowances paid to elected Councillors at Redditch Borough Council were much lower than at other Councils in the county. However, concerns were expressed about the financial implications of approving all of the recommendations that had been made by the IRP. The Council had previously written to the Government enquiring about the possibility of allowances for Councillors being set at the national level. However, Members had been advised that this needed to be a local decision.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**having regard to the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP):**

- 1) the Basic Allowance for 2018/19 not be increased and this continue at the current level set for 2017/18, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the IRP's report;**

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- 2) the Special Responsibility Allowances remain at the current levels set for 2017/18, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the IRP's report;
- 3) travel allowances for 2018-19 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance;
- 4) subsistence allowances for 2018-19 remain unchanged;
- 5) the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged; and
- 6) the Parish Council in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Redditch Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

## 98. HRA INITIAL BUDGET 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Financial Services Manager presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Initial Budget 2018/19 to 2020/21. Members were advised that £5.1 million had been allocated to the Housing Repairs Account for 2018/19. A total of £600k remained in balances within the HRA.

In 2017/18 to date 41 Council houses had been sold under right to buy. The Council's budget and three year forecast had assumed that the Council would sell 75 properties over a three year period. This trajectory in right to buy sales had financial implications for the Council in terms of lost revenue from rents. Members questioned the number of houses that had been sold during the past three years and Officers were asked to provide this information after the meeting.

The Committee was advised that 2018/19 was the third year in which rents for tenants in the social housing sector would be reducing by 1 per cent a year. It was uncertain whether the Government would continue to impose this after 2019/20 or introduce alternative arrangements. However, the reduction in rent had significant financial implications for the Council; the authority would otherwise have increased rents at the CPI rate of four per cent per annum. This equated to a loss of £900k in income.

Following the presentation Members discussed the report in detail and noted that the Council was responding to the increase in Right to Buy sales by investing in the Housing Growth Programme and Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The Council was also commissioning a

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Stock Condition Survey so that the authority could take a more proactive approach to managing the housing stock.

Members noted that they had recently received through a Tenancy booklet which stated that total spend on repairs was £4.89 million rather than the £5.1 detailed in the report. Officers agreed to get back to Members to clarify this matter further.

Questions were also raised about the increase in funding for Supervision and Management when compared to the previous year. Officers advised that this increase was due to a range of factors including an increase in maintenance charges, the additional support for housing staff that had been required during the year and an increase in staffing costs. Officers agreed to provide a breakdown of the costs for Members' consideration after the meeting.

Capital spending was discussed by the Committee with questions being raised about the use of reserves. Officers explained that £12 million of reserves were earmarked for expenditure on the Housing Growth Programme. In addition, funding would need to be used to help pay the government back for the purchase of the Council's Housing Stock some years ago.

### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the draft 2018/2019 Budget for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A be approved;**
- 2) the budget projection for 2018/19 incorporating the 1% rent reduction be approved;**
- 3) the actual average rent decrease for 2018/2019 be 1%;**
- 4) that a capital budget of £150k be approved for a stock condition survey to be carried out**
- 5) that £0.876k be transferred from the general reserve in 2018/19 to fund the future HRA revenue budgets**
- 6) that £5.1m be transferred from the Major Repairs Reserve to fund the HRA capital programme.**

### **99. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018-19 TO 2020-21 - UPDATE REPORT**

The Financial Services Manager presented an update in respect of the MTFP 2018/19 to 2021/22. Members were advised that over

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the previous three years the Council had experienced a reduction of £1.7 million in funding from the Government in the form of the Revenue Support Grant. An assumption was being made in the MTFP that the Council would be subject to a negative grant from 2019/20 onwards, though this grant arrangement was currently the subject of Government consultation. Assumptions had also been made that Council Tax would increase by 2.99 per cent in 2018/19 and 2019/20 then would increase by £5 in subsequent years of the MTFP. The report had taken into account a two per cent pay rise for staff. Remaining balances were considered to be sufficient and would not be allowed to fall below £700k.

The business rates baseline for Redditch had been set at £2.3 million. Any growth over this figure could be retained by the Council. The Council had worked with other local authorities in Worcestershire to submit a bid to form a business rates pool. However, this bid had been unsuccessful and the Council therefore remained in the GBSLEP's business rates pool.

The Council had received less in terms of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding than had been anticipated. Unfortunately the number of Band D properties built in the Borough was below the baseline that had been set by the Government for NHB funding.

Following the presentation of the report questions were raised as to whether unidentified savings had been included in the baseline and further information in respect of this was requested for Members' consideration. Members also queried the reasons why no increase had been predicted for the figures that had been provided for business rates. Officers explained that this approach was considered to be prudent.

In the report the table summarising the Council's financial position at the time of publication had not included figures for unavoidable pressures, revenue bids / revenue impact of capital bids or for savings and additional income. Officers advised that these were being built into the baseline, though further information could be provided outside the meeting.

The debate in respect of this item concluded with Members noting that the final MTFP 2018/19 to 2021/22 would be provided for Members' consideration at the following meeting of the Executive Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

### **RESOLVED that**

**Officers be asked to continue to review the savings and pressures with the aim to ensure the MTFP shows a balanced position for 2018/19.**

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## **100. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th January 2018 were considered. Officers confirmed that there were no recommendations from the Committee for Members' consideration.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be noted.**

## **101. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.**

The Committee was informed that there were no additional referrals or recommendations for Members' consideration at this meeting.

## **102. CORPORATE PARENTING STEERING GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

Councillor Baker, the Council's representative on the Corporate Parenting Steering Group, advised that there were no updates to provide.

## **103. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

Members considered and noted the content of the Advisory Panels Update Report.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 9.00 pm