



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June,
2014
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



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- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
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**Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce
Democratic Services Officers**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Democratic Services Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

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Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.



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7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership: Committee membership to be determined at the Annual Meeting of Council on Monday 9th June 2014

1. Apologies and named substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests, and any Party Whip.
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)	To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record. (Minutes attached) (No Specific Ward Relevance)
4. Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group - Final Report (Pages 13 - 72) Councillor Alan Mason and guest, Councillor Rod Laight (Chair of the review)	To consider the final report of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group and to determine whether to support the group's recommendations. (The Committee is asked to note that in line with reporting procedures for Worcestershire Regulatory Services this report will be considered by the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee, the joint decision making body for Regulatory Services, before it is referred to the Executive Committees at partner organisations). (Report attached, presentation to follow) All Wards
5. Abbey Stadium Task Group - Final Report (Pages 73 - 100) Councillor Carole Gandy	To consider the final report of the Abbey Stadium Task Group and to determine whether to approve the group's recommendations. (Report attached, presentation to follow) (Abbey Ward)

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<p>6. Overview and Scrutiny Training - Feedback</p>	<p>To consider the outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny training held on 10th June and to determine what further action, if any, is required following this training session.</p> <p>(Report to follow).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>7. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme</p> <p>(Pages 101 - 114)</p>	<p>To consider the minutes of the latest meeting(s) of the Executive Committee and also to consider whether any items on the Executive Committee's Work Programme are suitable for scrutiny.</p> <p>(Minutes attached).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme</p> <p>(Pages 115 - 118)</p>	<p>To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Forward Plan / Committee agendas• External publications• Other sources. <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Task Groups - Progress Reports</p> <p>Councillor David Bush and Councillor Pat Witherspoon</p>	<p>To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <p>a) Football Task Group – Chair, Councillor Bush; and</p> <p>(Members are due to consider the appropriate deadline for the Football Task Group during this meeting).</p> <p>b) Voluntary Sector Task Group – Chair, Councillor Witherspoon.</p> <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

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10. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To receive a verbal update on the recent work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(The Council's representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee remained to be confirmed at the time of publication).

(Verbal report)

(No Specific Ward Relevance)

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".

These paragraphs are as follows:

Subject to the "public interest" test, information relating to:

- Para 1 – any individual;
- Para 2 – the identity of any individual;
- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;
- Para 4 – labour relations matters;
- Para 5 – legal professional privilege;
- Para 6 – a notice, order or direction;
- Para 7 – the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime;
and may need to be considered as 'exempt'.

(No Specific Ward Relevance)

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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor David Bush (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Braley

Officers:

S Hanley, M Hanwell, S Jones and C Walker

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

118. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alan Mason.

119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

120. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

121. MEMBERS' IT - PRESENTATION

Officers delivered a presentation, attached at Appendix 1, which covered the following areas:

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Chair

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- Background information in respect of the Public Services Network (PSN) and steps which the Council had taken in order to achieve compliance.
- Ongoing inspections/audits of the IT systems by representatives of the Cabinet office.
- The introduction of managed devices, which are owned and secured and can only be used for Council business.
- The continued updating of the Council's systems and the upgrading of the Microsoft software programmes.
- The impact of PSN on Members' use of IT, including the introduction of iPads.
- The costs incurred by the Council and the decision to introduce iPads.

Officers also responded to queries which had been received from a number of Councillors in respect of problems with the IT system which they had encountered over recent months. It was anticipated that these would be largely resolved with the introduction of the new iPads. It was acknowledged that printing could be an issue, as following the introduction of iPads and under the PSN compliance it was not possible for Members to have a printing facility at home. There would, however, be a print facility made available in each political party Group Room at the Town Hall.

Following the presentation, Members raised and discussed the following:

- The accessibility of social networks. These were used regularly by Members in order to communicate with their constituents.
- The use of modern.gov to access meeting minutes and agendas electronically.
- The use of the iPad for other areas of Members' work, for example as a County Councillor, a Magistrate and a School Governor.
- The continuous changes in technology and the ability to upgrade the iPads after a two year period.

RESOLVED that

the presentation be noted.

122. FOOTBALL TASK GROUP - INTERIM REPORT

Councillor Bush, as Chair of the Football Task Group, informed Members that the Interim Report had been prepared in order to clarify the position with regard to Redditch United Football Club (FC).

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The Task Group had reviewed the business case put forward in more detail and raised the following points:

- The Council was bound by EU law which prohibited the use of public funds to support a private entity and required it to put any development of a new stadium out to tender.
- The Council was in a difficult position as it was both the landowner and the planning authority for any future development of the land concerned.
- Issues with the current site going forward and the number and type of properties which could be situated on it.
- The flooding issues at the Washford site.
- No allowance being made for Section 106 monies and contingency being put in place in respect of abnormalities at the site.

The Committee discussed how the working relationship between the Council and Redditch United FC had broken down since the decision in November 2013 not to pursue the relocation proposals. It was suggested that the Club and officers should consider together how facilities at the current site could be improved, especially to support community use. Although there was a covenant on the land the option to investigate what might be reasonable to add to the site had not been considered and the group was suggesting that it should therefore be further investigated.

The Task Group Members confirmed that from the information provided it was clear that Redditch United FC was being run in a much more appropriate manner than in previous years. They had been particularly impressed with the presentation delivered in respect of the youth teams and the work carried out with a wide age range of young people. The group was suggesting that the Council should take any action possible to support this work.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the interim report of the Football Task Group be received and noted: and**
- 2) **Redditch United Football Club be encouraged to discuss with Officers how to make the best use of the current football club site and to look at more local options to accommodate its expansion.**

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RESOLVED that

- 1) the second objective of the Task Group, namely “to investigate the sustainability of Redditch United FC for the future with particular focus on the current relationship with the Borough Council and how this has been affected by recent events” be signed off as having been achieved; and
- 2) the final report deadline for the remainder of the Task Group’s objectives be postponed and reviewed at the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2014.

123. LANDSCAPING TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Gay Hopkins, as Chair of the Landscaping Task Group, delivered a presentation which highlighted the areas which had been investigated by the Task Group and which had led to it making seven recommendations for the Executive Committee’s consideration.

Detailed information was provided in respect of the following areas:

- The traditional way of working and the role of operatives within the team including litter pickers and tree surgeons.
- The transformation work which had taken place and how the team was now working, including taking ownership of workloads.
- Improvements that had been made in communicating with residents, which include direct face to face contact made by tree surgeons and place operatives.
- Details of the site visits which Members had carried out together with the interview with the staff based at the depot.
- The ability for staff to use and develop new skills.
- Information about the trees intervention programme and the fact that professional tree surgeons employed by the Council had greater discretion in the trees intervention trial to carry out work required on trees.
- Details about the Place project, a new holistic approach to managing the environment in an area, and how this was being rolled out to other areas from the initial trial location in Winyates.
- The involvement of residents in the place intervention trial which involved encouraging them to liaise with the operatives on site and to take ownership and to have pride in their particular areas when the work had been carried out.

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- The fact that as part of the intervention trials place operatives and tree surgeons were working on cases that might not previously have been addressed by Council staff in order to both meet the needs of the customer and improve the condition of the local environment.

Following the presentation Members discussed the Place project in further detail and officers confirmed that the aim was for less work schedules to be produced and for the operatives to be pro-active rather than reactive in the work that they carried out. Members agreed that allowing the operatives to discuss a particular situation directly with the resident would help in cases where the work being requested was not always possible. This communication was often appreciated by the customer and helped to clarify the reasons why the operatives were delivering work in a particular way.

The Committee thanked Councillor Hopkins and the Task Group Members for the detailed report.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) new Members should be invited to visit teams responsible for tree maintenance, landscaping and cleansing services as part of the Member Induction process to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
 - a) a short briefing outlining the work of the place intervention, tree intervention and landscaping teams should be provided prior to a Council meeting early in the municipal year to provide those Members who are unable to participate in the member induction visit with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
- 2) a contact list of key senior and operational Officers, containing the telephone and email details together with the basic information about the Officers' responsibilities, should be provided for the consideration of Members;**
- 3) Members should be provided with updates on progress made addressing landscaping issues that they have referred to Officers at the request of residents including at the point of resolution;**
- 4) data relating to landscaping cases reported for each area be provided for Members' consideration on an annual**

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basis. Every Member should receive data for the areas they cover;

- 5) one of the Environmental Services Teams' performance measures should be to monitor the number of landscape cases that take longer than six months to resolve. The information obtained through this monitoring process should be reported in the strategic measures for consideration of Senior Officers and elected Members;
- 6) Officers should undertake a feasibility study, risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to assess the potential for the Council to bulk plant trees in Council open spaces and other appropriate locations. This feasibility study should take into account the following matters:
 - (a) the legal implications, if any, of this action;
 - (b) the financial costs involved in planting and maintaining these plants;
 - (c) the availability of grants from the government and other sources to help pay for bulk planting in the Borough;
 - (d) demand within the market;
 - (e) where bulk planting would take place in the Borough;
 - (f) the size of the plots available for bulk planting;
 - (g) the implications for the Council's Planning Department in relation to the Local Plan;
 - (h) the potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council; and
- 7) Officers should investigate how to dispose of logs in a way that would maximise income for the Council. Part of this investigation should involve a risk assessment. Any revenue from these sales should be reinvested in landscaping services.

124. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Committee had received a topic proposal form from Worcestershire County Council, containing the terms of reference for a review of whether there should be a shared waste collection service in Worcestershire. The county Council had contacted every district Council to find out whether there was any interest in doing this jointly. There had been a mixed response from the districts, though Bromsgrove District Council had agreed to participate.

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Members were advised that as this review had been proposed by the county Council it would be facilitated by county Council Officers. If Members chose to participate in this review it would not be treated as one of the quota for Task Groups in 2014/15. The county Council was intending to start evidence gathering in April 2014 with a view to complete the review in October 2014.

The Committee was advised that senior Officers had strong views on this long standing issue. It was suggested that there were other areas where time could be better spent, including through a scrutiny exercise focusing on the relevant PFI (Public Finance Initiative) contract.

Members discussed the council's current waste and recycling service, which it was agreed was efficiently run. This service had secured cost savings through the transformation process and the route optimisation programme. The extent to which a shared service with the rest of the local authorities in the county would make any useful contribution to efficiencies savings within Redditch Borough was therefore considered questionable.

RESOLVED that

Redditch Borough Council should not participate in the Joint Scrutiny of Integrated Waste Collection and Disposal Service.

125. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Officers informed Members that this report contained the latest quarterly update on the action that had been taken to implement scrutiny recommendations.

The updates had been provided in three appendices:

- Appendix 1 – which contained further information about recommendations which had been implemented since the last update was received.
- Appendix 2 – Detailing recommendations that had not yet been implemented. Members noted that wherever possible Officers had been asked to provide an estimate of the date by which these recommendations would be implemented.
- Appendix 3 – Further information about the recommendation from the Promoting Sport Task Group regarding provision of

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outdoor games. This information had been recorded separately due to the amount of detail provided.

The Committee discussed the current poor state of the market area and raised concerns in respect of the lack of progress in response to the proposals that had been made by the Redditch Market Review in March 2013. Members requested that relevant senior Officers be asked to provide a further more detailed update at a future meeting of the Committee in order to clarify the current situation for the market and future intentions for implementing the group's proposals.

In respect of the Sickness Policy Short, Sharp Review it was noted that Officers had been unable to produce an A5 laminated guide to the Council's Sickness Absence Policy. Members stressed that this should only contain a small number of bullet points covering the key areas such as reporting absence and the requirement for a return to work interview to take place. It was suggested that one side could cover the employees responsibility and the other that of the employer. Following discussion it was agreed that this would be revisited and brought to a future meeting of the Committee for Members' consideration.

Members discussed the Access for Disabled People Task Group's recommendations and highlighted the importance of the proposal for a disability awareness session to be provided. At present it was intended this would be delivered as part of the Member Induction Programme. However, it was suggested that all Members, not just new Members, would benefit from this training. The committee agreed that whilst this should not be part of the mandatory training programme, the importance of this subject needed to be stressed and all Members needed to be encouraged to attend by Group Leaders.

RECOMMENDED that

the Member Development Steering Group be asked to extend participation in the annual disability awareness session to all Members rather than to confine to new Members in the Member Induction process; and

RESOLVED that

- 1) a detailed report be delivered, in respect of the implementation of the Market Review's recommendations, for consideration at a future meeting of the committee; and**

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2) a draft bullet point summary of the key points of the **Sickness Absence Policy** be provided for consideration of **Members at a future meeting, as detailed in the preamble above.**

126. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 11th March together with the most recent edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme.

Councillor Brazier reported that he had been contacted by a number of voluntary sector organisations who had raised concerns that they had not been formally contacted in respect of the outcomes of the most recent rounds of the Council's grants programme. Officers explained that they understood that all relevant voluntary sector organisations had been contacted but assured Members that further clarification would be sought from relevant Officers as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 11th March and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.

127. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the latest version of the Committee's Work Programme. Officers highlighted the Overview and Scrutiny Training Session which was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 10th June 2014. All Members were urged to attend this session. The committee was assured that any newly elected Members would also be invited.

RESOLVED that

the Work Programme be noted.

128. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

a) Abbey Stadium Task Group – Chair, Councillor Carole Gandy

Councillor Gandy informed Members that the group had interviewed the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism and discussed a number of issues including his view about leisure

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trusts. The group were due to meet again on Thursday 3rd April with the relevant Head of Service and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources. The group had arranged to meet with the Leader of the Council on 11th April to seek his views on the subject. A further meeting was due to take place on 16th April when the group would be finalising their recommendations with a view to presenting their final report to the Committee's June meeting.

b) Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services Scrutiny Task Group – Redditch Member, Councillor Alan Mason

Councillor Hopkins, substitute Member on the group, informed Members that she had attended the last meeting of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group in Councillor Mason's absence. It had been a most informative meeting and she explained that the members had split into two groups and interviewed a number of Members of the Joint Committee. These discussions covered what they saw as being their role within the partnership and from this it was apparent that they continued to be "localised" and did not give sufficient consideration to the partnership as a whole. The Committee was also informed that the Task Group had begun to formulate its final recommendations and continued to be on track to bring its draft report to the June Committee meeting.

c) Voluntary Sector Task Group – Chair, Councillor Pat Witherspoon

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that the group had made several visits to the Voluntary Sector including BARN where they had been provided with a wealth of information which they had been happy to share with Members. The group had also visited the Sandycroft Centre and heard about the various groups which it worked with and toured the building. Councillor Witherspoon confirmed the Task Group was on track to complete its investigations and final report in time for presentation at the July Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Members also held a general discussion on the role of the Council and the support it provided together with the structure of the Grant Panel.

RESOLVED that

the update reports be noted.

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(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

129. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that the most recent meeting of Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) had been cancelled due to the setting up of new health groups. She therefore had nothing to report on this occasion.

130. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

Under S.100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act, as amended, in respect of the Voluntary Sector Task Group Progress Report (as detailed in Minute 128 above).

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.03 pm

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JOINT WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES (WRS) SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – COVERING REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	The Portfolio Holder was consulted by the group during the review as an expert witness. However, he has not been consulted about the group's recommendations.
Relevant Head of Service	Steve Jordan, Head of Regulatory Services
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides a summary of the work of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group. Members are invited to consider, based on the content of the group's final report, whether to endorse the group's recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee that

**the 12 recommendations of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group be endorsed;
and**

to RESOLVE that

the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 The Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group was originally proposed in summer 2012 by Wychavon District Council. Terms of reference for the review were developed and by spring 2013 the lead Overview and Scrutiny Committee at each local authority in the county, including Redditch Borough Council, had decided to participate in the exercise. Each local authority agreed that Bromsgrove District Council, as the host authority for the shared service, should also host the scrutiny review.
- 3.2 Participating Councils were invited to appoint a lead Member and a substitute Member to the Joint Scrutiny review one of whom had to be either the Chair or Vice

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Chair of the Council's main Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In Redditch Councillor Alan Mason was appointed as the Council's lead Member and Councillor Gay Hopkins, Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2013/14, was appointed as the substitute Member.

- 3.3 The first meeting of the group took place in September 2013. Members subsequently met 15 times during the course of the review. At each of these meetings Members aimed to address the group's key objectives which were to:
- review the final business case for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) and the extent to which the current operation of the partnership compared to proposals contained within the business case;
 - compare previous services levels at each partner authority with current service levels;
 - compare performance of services both prior to and since the introduction of the shared service;
 - compare levels of customer satisfaction with Regulatory Services both prior and subsequent to the introduction of the shared service; and
 - consider the governance arrangements between partner organisations and the shared service.
- 3.4 The group gathered evidence in a variety of ways during the review. This included:
- scrutinising relevant documentation, including the original business case for the shared service;
 - interviewing senior operational Officers, including the Head of Regulatory Services;
 - interviewing elected Member representatives from partner organisations who had been appointed to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee as well as observing meetings of the Committee;
 - interviewing representatives of the Management Board for the service;
 - interviewing relevant Officer representatives from the host authority, Bromsgrove District Council;
 - reviewing customer satisfaction data;
 - visiting Wyatt House, the base for Worcestershire Regulatory Services, located in Worcester; and
 - consulting other elected Members regarding their experiences of working with Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
- 3.5 At the end of the review the group proposed 12 recommendations which are designed to address some of the main challenges for the service that Members identified during the course of the review. These recommendations, together with further information about the evidence basis for the group's proposals, are detailed within the group's final report.

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Report Route

- 3.6 Members will be aware that generally the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and approve recommendations from Task Groups which are then referred directly to the Council's Executive Committee for determination. However, the initial decision making body for Worcestershire Regulatory Services is not the Council's Executive Committee but, rather, the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee, to which two representatives from every partner authority, including Redditch Borough Council, are currently appointed each year. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is therefore being asked to consider whether to endorse the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations and to refer their conclusions to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee in the first place.
- 3.7 The Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee has the power to make some decisions on behalf of all partners, though in other cases, particularly where a decision requires a change to policy, recommendations may be referred to Executive Committees at participating Councils. The report is not due to be considered by the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee until 2nd October 2014. It is unlikely, therefore, that the scrutiny Task Group's findings will be considered by the Executive Committee until October 2014 at the earliest.
- 3.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees at each Council in Worcestershire will be considering the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group's final report at meetings during June and July 2014. The exception to this arrangement will be consideration of the report by Bromsgrove District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board. To ensure that feedback from every partner can be taken into account by Members at the host authority alongside the group's findings it has been agreed that the Board will consider the report in September 2014.
- 3.9 The Scrutiny Task Group recognises that it is possible that some Overview and Scrutiny Committees may wish to suggest alterations to the report and / or to reject some of the recommendations whilst endorsing other recommendations. To avoid the need to reconvene the Scrutiny Task Group to consider and respond to feedback potentially from seven different scrutiny Committees, which could elongate the reporting process, the group is proposing that in cases where Overview and Scrutiny Committees wish to highlight concerns or differing opinions these should be attached as addendums to the group's final report. All addendums will then be presented for the consideration of both the host authority's Overview and Scrutiny Board and for the consideration of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.

Financial Implications

- 3.10 There are a number of financial implications to the group's recommendations as detailed in the report. There is also a specific chapter in the report dedicated to financial considerations.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17th June 2014

- 3.11 The group has highlighted the fact that financial pressures are having a significant impact on the shared services. These pressures and the suggestions proposed by the group to ensure that effective services remain available to residents living in Worcestershire, including Redditch Borough, should be considered carefully when responding to this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.12 There are a number of legal implications to the group's recommendations which are detailed in the main report. In particular, Members should note that there are a significant number of legal implications in relation to the group's proposals concerning the future governance structure of the shared service.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.13 The group's recommendations have a number of service and operational implications which are all detailed in the report. This includes a specific chapter in the report which is devoted to performance and operational matters.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 Many of the group's recommendations will have an indirect impact on the service received by customers. However, a number of the group's proposals, particularly those relating to the future business model for the service and communications, have direct implications for the customer. In both cases these implications are detailed within the main report.
- 3.15 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The group is suggesting in their report that if action is not taken to implement their recommendations and to enact change within the shared service there is a risk that the partnership will become unsustainable and the future role of Regulatory Services within the County and Borough will become uncertain.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group – Final Report

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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**JOINT WORCESTERSHIRE
REGULATORY SERVICES
SCRUTINY
TASK GROUP**

Worcestershire
Regulatory Services
Supporting and protecting you

June 2014



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



(From left to right) Councillors Peter Tomlinson (Vice Chairman), Simon Cronin, Rod Laight (Chairman), Richard Udall, Alan Mason and John Raine.

The Members in the photograph above regularly attended the meetings.

Lead Member

Rod Laight
John Raine
Alan Mason
Simon Cronin
Richard Udall
Peter Tomlinson
Helen Dyke

Substitute

Pete Lammas
Mike Morgan
Gay Hopkins
Paul Denham
Lynn Duffy
Alastair Adams
Tim Ingham

Authority

Bromsgrove DC
Malvern Hills DC
Redditch BC
Worcester City
Worcestershire CC
Wychavon DC
Wyre Forest DC

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Foreword from the Chairman and Vice Chairman

This group came together for the first time in late September 2013. Since then we have met together on 14 further occasions. Our journey together has been taxing, concentrated, at times somewhat frustrating but, in the main, both fulfilling and stimulating. At no time have the divisions which separate us politically played any part whatsoever in our discussions, deliberations or our conclusions. Indeed it became clear from the outset that whatever views individual members of this Task Group may have held about Worcestershire Regulatory Services or whatever their own experiences may have been prior to the review, every single Member was prepared to wipe that individual slate clean and to approach the task with an open and enquiring mind. Working as a team on this Task Group has therefore proved to be very demanding though, for each of us, one of our most worthwhile experiences as Councillors to date.

And it has been some task! We have interviewed 16 people including regulatory professionals, senior Officers from the districts and elected Members representing all the partners in this complex organisation. We have asked for and been given evidence about the performance of WRS in all the areas it covers and we have circulated our own survey amongst elected Members. The overall success of this Joint Scrutiny has been achieved by a team working well together with trust and integrity.

It must be said that all those interviewed by the Task Group have been honest, open and forthright. In particular the Head of Regulatory Services, Steve Jorden, along with his team have been very open and transparent. We have had to listen to and digest a plethora of often divergent views from those sitting on the same Committee. But it would be fair to say that where contrary opinions were put to us they were expressed coherently and with passion. Without exception all those we spoke to believed in Worcestershire Regulatory Services and wanted it to succeed. As our knowledge of the workings of this organisation grew and as we took the pulse, as it were, of all those involved we became ever more certain that the challenge we had taken on was not only timely but vital to the survival of Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The majority of members of the Task Group took their responsibilities very seriously, though unfortunately the representatives from Wyre Forest District Council were unable to attend the majority of meetings. Similarly in most cases those invited to attend our meetings to be interviewed by us came willingly and in a spirit of co-operation. There was, however, one exception, which again we found most disappointing and that was, when given ample notice, no senior Officer was able to attend from Worcestershire County Council. A written response to our questions was provided by the County Council but this allowed no cross examination. Throughout our work, experience proved that whilst written answers were useful, the real meat then came from our probing of those answers.

We think we speak for all of us on this Task Group when we say that our work though onerous and demanding has been both enlightening and fulfilling. Now that the end is in sight we hope that our recommendations will help underpin the future of WRS. It has achieved so much in such a short space of time it deserves to succeed.

On behalf of all the Task Group Members we would like to thank our two Democratic Services Officers Amanda Scarce and Jess Bayley who have kept us on the straight and narrow, prompted us when we stalled, found the evidence we knew we had heard but had forgotten, nudged us with both advice and insight and generally kept this unique group of disparate individuals good tempered, courteous and above all focused. Thank you both, we could not have done it without you.



**Councillor Rod Laight (Bromsgrove District Council)
Chairman (pictured on the right)
Councillor Peter Tomlinson (Wychavon District Council)
Vice Chairman**

Summary of Recommendations

After consideration of all the evidence available (both documentary and from the interviews and other consultations) the Task Group have proposed the following recommendations (with full details of the supporting evidence provided in the chapters following this summary):

CHAPTER 1 - WRS PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation 1
Performance Management Information should continue to be made available for Members' consideration at every meeting of the Joint Committee and be sufficiently high on the agenda to be discussed in detail.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for WRS.
Legal Implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Additional officer time may be required should extra meetings be introduced as suggested under recommendation 9.

Recommendation 2
Twelve months after the new contact centre arrangements for WRS have been introduced, replacing the use of the Worcestershire Hub, the Joint Committee should review the effectiveness of these arrangements for communicating with the public.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications.
Legal Implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Additional officer time would be required in order to produce this additional report.

Recommendation 3

The web-pages of each partner authority should be regularly monitored to ensure they are kept up to date, with the inclusion of a prominent and obvious link to the WRS website.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications to WRS.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

There would be additional Officers' time from within WRS for the monitoring to take place and to follow up on any extra actions necessary identified during the monitoring process.

Recommendation 4

The purpose, content and circulation of the WRS newsletter should be thoroughly reviewed, with a view to it providing a more systematic and comprehensive account of the work and performance of the shared service, and with the content and format being agreed by the Joint Committee.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for WRS.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

A small amount of additional Officer time will be required to review the content of the newsletter and to present it to meetings of the Joint Committee. However, it is likely that the Officers from WRS who already attend meetings of the Joint Committee could present this item for the consideration of Members.

Recommendation 5
That WRS have a designated member of staff to act as a Member Liaison Officer and as a single point of contact to signpost Member enquiries.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications as it should be possible for this work to be undertaken by an existing member of WRS staff.
Legal Implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: There would be additional Officer time required from the member of WRS staff designated to this role.

CHAPTER 2 - FINANCING OF WRS

Recommendation 6
In order to reduce the focus on financial considerations which currently play a major part in influencing partner participation, to the detriment of other equally important aspects of the service, the following should be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A new business model for WRS be developed through the Chief Executives' Panel, building on the proposals already being produced by the Panel. (b) Consideration be given to the option for partner authorities to purchase an "out of hours service".
Financial Implications: Initially there would be no financial implications from carrying out this review. It is acknowledged, however, that the intention behind this recommendation is to identify a financial model that would stabilise the funding of WRS in the long term. Should this financial model vary to the charging mechanism already in place there may be additional costs for certain partners (with reductions in costs for others). The impact of any variances would have to be considered by partner Councils. Each local authority needs to be aware that the option to introduce an out of hours' regulatory service in their area has significant financial implications in term of the Council's financial contribution to the service. Out of hours services are not currently available anywhere in the county and so would require additional expenditure from partners.

Legal Implications:

The existing legal agreement includes a Statement of Partner Requirements, which can be agreed with the Joint Committee. Should the charging model be revised the legal agreement would have to be amended to reflect this and it would have to be approved by the Joint Committee and the Partners.

Resource Implications:

Initially Officer time would be required to carry out the exploratory work although the group understand that the Chief Executives' Panel have already been investigating this matter.

CHAPTER 3 - GOVERNANCE OF WRS**Recommendation 7**

A new strategic decision making board for WRS should replace the Joint Committee, comprising one elected member per partner authority and supported by senior officers. This should be called the WRS Board.

- (a) Meetings of this Board should take place at the base of WRS.
- (b) Responsibility for attendance at Board meetings should lie with each authority's representative, and the quorum for meetings proceeding should be set at 5 representatives in attendance.
- (c) Meetings of the Board should take place bi-monthly.
- (d) Elected members appointed to the Board should be provided with an induction programme and sufficient ongoing training to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.
- (e) Members appointed to the Board be expected to serve a minimum of two years to ensure continuity.
- (f) The Chair of the WRS Board should be elected annually by the members of the Board.

Financial Implications:

Initially there would be some financial implications for this proposal, but these are likely to be quite limited. In particular there would be financial implications in respect of additional meetings of the WRS Board and in relation to holding an induction programme and on-going training.

Legal Implications:

This proposal fundamentally affects the constitution of the Joint Committee under s101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and s20 of the Local Government Act 2000 as established by the founding legal agreement dated 1 June 2009 and would essentially require a re-negotiation of it by member authorities.

Resource Implications:

There would be resource implications in terms of Officer time in preparing additional agendas and minutes for the extra meetings and in planning and delivering suitable training. This could be offset by the fact that Democratic

Services Officers would no longer need to spend time ensuring that the meetings are quorate.

There may also be some initial resource implications in relation to convening meetings at the base of WRS (currently Wyatt House in Worcester) as opposed to Bromsgrove Council House where meetings are currently held.

Recommendation 8

The Management Board be disbanded, with the WRS Management Team taking the lead responsibility for operational decision making under the leadership of the Head of Regulatory Services.

Financial Implications:

There would be a “one off” financial implication due to having to change the partnership’s legal agreement, although this is likely to be limited.

Legal Implications:

This recommendation would require changes to the current legal agreement for WRS and each partner would need to approve these changes.

Resource Implications:

The Officers currently serving on the Management Board would potentially have greater freedom to concentrate on the service needs within their remits of their own authorities.

There are no particular resource implications for WRS staff as operational considerations relating to regulatory services are already within their professional area of expertise.

Recommendation 9

- (a) The Head of WRS should be fully accountable to the WRS Board (as the strategic decision making body).
- (b) The Chief Executive of the host authority to act in a mentoring role as and when necessary.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications:

This will require an amendment to the existing legal agreement as the role of the Management Board and the Head of WRS are set out therein.

Resource Implications:

There are no resource implications. In fact if the Head of Regulatory Services was to report to a single body this might help to reduce both financial and resource implications for all partners.

CHAPTER 4 - LESSONS LEARNED**Recommendation 10**

- (a) All decisions made by the WRS Board be formally reported back to all elected members of the partner authorities in a timely manner.
- (b) Attention should be paid to communicating updates about any planned changes to WRS services to all elected members of partner authorities..
- (c) The agendas and minutes of all WRS Board meetings should also be uploaded on to the WRS website in a timely fashion.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications:

- (a) Minutes of the meetings of the Joint Committee are referred to the participating Councils where further discussion is possible and in some cases agreement required.

Resource Implications:

This could potentially require Members appointed to the WRS Board to spend additional time formally reporting back to their Councils about the work of WRS and the Board. In addition, the Democratic Services Officers at each Council would need to spend a limited amount of time uploading the agendas and minutes on to their websites, together with a representative from WRS carrying out this work on the WRS website. This should be fairly easy to achieve as the host authority provides a prepared pack for uploading.

Recommendation 11

The lessons learned from the WRS shared service experience, particularly as detailed in this report, should be heeded by elected members and senior officers when considering any future proposals for shared service arrangements involving multiple partners.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications. However, by reviewing the lessons learned from the WRS Shared Service when considering future proposals for shared services elected members and senior Officers could potentially save partner organisations a significant amount of money.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

Officer time would be required to consider these lessons, though the time required would vary dependent on the shared service being considered.

Recommendation 12

- (a) The Joint Scrutiny Protocol should be reviewed in order to take on board the lessons learned during this review.
- (b) Consideration should be given to the reinstatement of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Chairs Group as a means of feeding back the monitoring of recommendations from Joint Scrutiny exercises, as and when required.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

Officer time would be required from representatives of all the Democratic Service teams at each authority in Worcestershire to review this document.

Introduction and Background Information

Background to the Joint Scrutiny

Wychavon District Council originally proposed that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) should be subject to a joint scrutiny (in July 2012). Each Council within Worcestershire was consulted about the proposal and all had agreed to participate by spring 2013. Draft terms of reference were drawn up by Wychavon District Council and in line with the agreed framework for joint scrutiny in Worcestershire, each Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered and approved these terms of reference by May 2013.

The potential role of Overview and Scrutiny in holding the Joint Committee and WRS officers to account had in fact been considered in the original partnership agreement for the shared service. However, whilst Overview and Scrutiny was clearly recognised as having a legitimate role to play in this regard, it had also been felt unreasonably onerous for the Head of Regulatory Services to have to report to seven different scrutiny committees across the County. Therefore, as part of the original legal agreement, partners had determined that scrutiny should not be undertaken by any one Overview and Scrutiny Committee but, rather, should be carried out jointly. This review has been conducted in accordance with that principle as a collective exercise.

The terms of reference included the following main tasks (full details are provided at Appendix 1):

- To review the final business case for the shared service (as agreed by the participating Councils) against current operation.
- To compare the previous service levels of each participating Council compared with current levels and those outlined in the final business case.
- To establish the performance of the service for participating Councils prior to and since the establishment of the shared service.
- To review levels of customer satisfaction prior to and following establishment of the shared service and how feedback informs practice.
- To consider the governance arrangements between the shared service and the participating Councils to include how changes to the service requested by one or more Councils can be achieved.

It was agreed that the Scrutiny Task Group should comprise one representative from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the partner authorities and for there to be a named substitute for each. It was also agreed that each representative, or their substitute, should be either the Chair or Vice Chair of their Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At the first meeting of the Scrutiny Task Group the nominated members elected as their Chair, Councillor Rod Laight (being the representative for the

WRS host authority, Bromsgrove District Council). Councillor Peter Tomlinson, from Wychavon District Council, was appointed as Vice Chair.

Evidence gathering

The Task Group gathered evidence through a range of means, including scrutiny of relevant documentation and interviews with various representatives of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee (the elected member decision making body for the shared service), the Management Board (comprising officer representatives from each partner authority who advise the Joint Committee), the WRS management team and officers of the host authority (Bromsgrove District Council). The Group also consulted with parish councillors and other elected members from across the County, who were neither on the Joint Committee nor on the Task Group, to find out about their experiences of working with WRS. The feedback provided through this consultation process has been greatly valued and has helped to inform its conclusions. However, the Task Group would like it to be noted that, since only a very small number of councillors responded, the wider representativeness of the feedback received was difficult to gauge.

Consideration was given at an early stage to the potential for a questionnaire to be circulated to obtain feedback from members of the public and from local businesses about the services they had received from WRS. Whilst the Task Group would undoubtedly have benefited from such additional feedback it was concerned about the difficulties involved in obtaining a suitably large or representative sample of responses from across the County. For this reason it was agreed that it should rely instead on the already available 'complaints and compliments' data held by WRS as a basis for assessing the level of customer satisfaction with the services.

At various stages of the review, updates were provided both to Task Group members and to the Democratic Services teams at participating authorities for use when reporting back to partner Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The lead Member from each authority was also encouraged to inform colleagues about progress with the joint scrutiny review as and when appropriate.

Background to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

The shared Worcestershire Regulatory Service (WRS) was initially conceived as part of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) programme in 2009. Each of the seven authorities in Worcestershire expressed an interest at this stage in participating in the shared service. Three key principles underpinned the design of the shared service as follows:

1. Achievement of service improvement and increased effectiveness.
2. Achievement of greater efficiency, cost savings and return on investment.
3. Achievement of a greater degree of sharing of resources for service delivery.

These key principles underpinned thinking in the drafting of the partnership agreement for WRS where it was specifically stated that the shared service had been established “*for the purpose of achieving financial efficiencies, sharing resources and improving delivery of services*”.

Wychavon, Worcestershire County and Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils each submitted a bid to host the shared regulatory service. Initially, the County Council was considered best placed to take on this role. However, at the request of the Worcestershire Chief Executives’ Panel, an independent external evaluation was requested, from a private sector partner and in September 2009, this concluded that Bromsgrove District Council would be the most appropriate host authority.

The shared WRS service was subsequently launched in 2010. Each of the councils signed up to the current partnership agreement for the service in June of that year. This established the governance arrangements for the service, which included a Joint Committee (of elected members from each partner organisation), a Management Board (of officers from each authority) and a WRS management team (of senior practitioners from the new shared service). The agreement also established arrangements for withdrawal from the service, a scheme of delegated responsibilities and financial arrangements, as well as detailing the arrangements for transferring all regulatory staff from their respective local authorities into the employment of the host authority.

Under the terms of the hosting arrangement, Bromsgrove District Council accepted responsibility for the following:

- Arranging suitable accommodation.
- Administration of the Joint Committee.
- Audit services.
- Data protection and information security.
- HR and personnel services.
- Financial services.
- ICT services (and licensing of ICT systems and equipment).
- Insurance.
- Legal services.
- Pensions and procurement.

(It should be noted that whilst Bromsgrove District Council is the host authority, each partner authority contributes to the overhead costs).

At an early stage partners agreed that the shared service needed to be based at a single location, even though staff would be required to work across the County as necessary. It was also agreed that the base should be a building already in the ownership of one of the partner authorities. A number of such buildings were assessed and Wyatt House in Worcester (owned by Worcester City Council) was eventually identified as offering the most suitable base. Accordingly, WRS entered into a 10 year lease for the premises.

The Role of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

WRS covers three key service areas

- Trading Standards
- Licensing
- Environmental Health

(A more detailed list of the constituent activities is provided at Appendix 4).

Key elements of Trading Standards are statutory responsibilities of County Councils in two tier authority areas (and remain so ultimately even under the shared service arrangement). However, WRS also undertakes a number of trading standards-related activities that are discretionary. The main trading standards functions are; fair trading/consumer protection, product safety, food standards, metrology and animal health and welfare.

Environmental Health functions, on the other hand, are primarily a responsibility of district councils, (again even under a shared service arrangement). These include responsibility for food safety/hygiene, nuisance complaints (e.g. noise), air quality and pollution, and health and safety, again with some statutory responsibilities and some discretionary activities.

There are certain licensing functions which, under the terms of the Licensing Acts 2003 and 2005, remain the responsibility of district councils in a shared service environment. Each district council must determine the fees for licenses in its area and each must have a Licencing Committee and Sub-Committee(s) which make (quasi-judicial) decisions about whether to grant licensing applications. Licenses can be provided for a range of services including taxis, alcohol and gambling establishments and a raft of other regimes. The role of WRS in this context is to provide expert advice to each council and to deliver the services required.

On the whole the majority of trading standards, environmental health and licensing services are provided by WRS consistently across the County. However, there are a few services which certain local authorities within the partnership have chosen not to receive (for example Malvern Hills District Council does not receive a pest control service). All service choices are taken into account when calculating the financial contributions made by each local authority to the partnership.

Chapter 1

WRS Performance and Communications

Performance

This particular joint scrutiny review was launched largely as a result of concerns raised by members from Overview and Scrutiny Committees about the limited information apparently available about the performance of WRS. Requests had been made for performance data to be provided alongside equivalent performance data for the services as provided previously under in-house arrangements by each council.

The Task Group learned that, in the original business case, it had been agreed that WRS performance would be measured in accordance with the five relevant national indicators (NIs) set by the then government. However the launch of WRS coincided with a change in national government in 2010 and the scrapping of the national indicator framework. WRS took advantage of this change and of the new discretion on local authority performance measurement, choosing an outcomes-based model in preference to the largely output-based national performance indicators approach. This was agreed by both the Management Board and the Joint Committee.

The Task Group has thus found it difficult to assess performance and particularly to draw comparisons between the periods before and after the launch of WRS because of the absence of a consistent series of data. Indeed, it found there to be a very limited amount of relevant performance information available for the individual partner authorities prior to WRS with the result that it was difficult for the Task Group to address objective three of the terms of reference in any real depth.

The Task Group also learned of the considerable difficulties WRS had encountered in its first four years in putting in place an integrated ICT support system. Although the original business case for WRS had envisaged an early procurement process for an appropriate ICT system to support the new service, this proved a more protracted process than expected and the service has had to rely on at least 20 different legacy ICT systems for several years. Indeed, at the start of this scrutiny review in September 2013 six of those legacy systems still remained in place and were clearly a continuing source of inefficiency.

The Task Group was informed by the Head of Regulatory Services that the subject of how best to meet the ICT requirements of WRS had been extensively discussed within the Management Board and culminated in a decision to procure something bespoke for the new service rather than an “off the shelf” package, even though this was recognised as meaning further delay and greater cost. Four years on the specially tailored ICT system is finally in place and at last, there is the basis for provision of good quality management and performance information.

The Task Group is keen that such information should, from now on, be available at every meeting of the Joint Committee. Moreover, the Task Group think that such performance reports should be placed sufficiently high on the agendas to ensure that elected members have the opportunity to consider them in a diligent and constructive manner.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

Performance Management Information should continue to be made available for Members' consideration at every meeting of the Joint Committee and be sufficiently high on the agenda to be discussed in detail.
--

Communications with the Public

It was proposed in the original business case that the Worcestershire Hub would play a key strategic role in the new service model for WRS by acting as the main communications centre for the public and other service users. This was justified on the basis that the Hub was well equipped to provide "...a more customer focused and streamlined delivery for the unified regulatory services..." and the Hub was "...nationally regarded as an exemplar of best practice..." in terms of customer access.

However, early in the scrutiny review concerns were raised about shortcomings in the Hub's responsiveness to the public and based on experiences by elected members across the County. Examples are reproduced below:

"I have not been happy with recent experiences, primarily in relation to getting hold of WRS."

"Communication links with officers can be variable".

"The problem I have experienced with WRS is that I have been passed from pillar to post. I have been told "we have never heard of the WRS. We don't know what you mean?" I have been put through to another department... It took me about three hours to contact the person I wanted to speak to and then she had left the office so I had to start all over again the next day."

The Task Group concluded that such comments were particularly indicative of shortcomings in communications between the Hub and WRS rather than any indictment of WRS itself. Moreover, an analysis of WRS 'complaints and compliments' data for the period June 2011 to September 2013 highlighted the extent to which customers' concerns related more to the manner in which their complaint was referred on for action than to the actions subsequently

taken by WRS. In each of those three years the majority of issues related to a breakdown in communications.

The Task Group learned that WRS staff were aware that the contact arrangements with the Hub were not working satisfactorily enough and that discussions had been held with the Hub's senior management about the capacity to meet the needs of WRS customers. The issue had also been raised at the Joint Committee on 26th September 2013 when members discussed a letter from the Chairman of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Services Management Board in which it had been suggested that additional Customer Service Advisors would need to be recruited to handle regulatory services enquiries and for which an increase in funding would be required. In response, the Head of Regulatory Services had advised the Joint Committee that he did not feel convinced about the additional need and cost and that the alternative would be to bring the customer enquiries work in-house within WRS – where it would be easier to refer matters more directly to the appropriate officer. This indeed is what the Joint Committee decided to do and it is understood that the new customer service arrangements were due to be implemented in May 2014.

Given the history of complaints concerning communications with WRS and the frustration that this has caused, the Task Group considers it important that the effectiveness of the new arrangements are closely monitored in the period ahead. The Task Group also suggest that a full report on the effectiveness of the change in customer contact arrangements should be presented to the Joint Committee in 12 months' time – when the change should have become embedded.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 2
<p>Twelve months after the new contact centre arrangements for WRS have been introduced, replacing the use of the Worcestershire Hub; the Joint Committee should review the effectiveness of these arrangements for communicating with the public.</p>

The Task Group also noted that information on partner councils' websites regarding regulatory services was not always up to date or easily accessible. As part of the investigation, each Task Group member reviewed their own council's website to assess the quality of the information on regulatory services and the ease of linkage with the WRS website. In doing so, the Task Group recognised that most customers seeking information about such services online would be likely to visit their own council's website initially (probably being unaware of the existence of WRS). Whilst in some cases the websites were helpful and the links straight-forward, it was found that the available information was not always as comprehensive or as up-to-date as should be expected.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 3

The webpages of each partner authority should be regularly monitored to ensure they are up to date and with the inclusion of a prominent link to the WRS website.

Internal Communications

The Task Group also considered other mechanisms for communicating information about WRS to interested parties across the County and particularly focused on the WRS Newsletter (which is circulated to all members in Worcestershire on a quarterly basis). This is a potentially informative and valuable means of communication, but in its present format the document tends to be more selective and anecdotal than systematic and comprehensive in presentation of the work and performance of WRS.

The Task Group recognises the challenges involved in communicating effectively the diverse work of a multi-functional service in a manner that is satisfactory both to elected members and to a range of other potentially interested parties. However, the Task Group believe the current format and content of the Newsletter could be much improved and that this would help to promote a better understanding of WRS and its work among the wider body of elected members and other stakeholders. The Task Group suggests that members of the Joint Committee should take a more active part in agreeing the style and content of a quarterly newsletter and that its members should be consulted about each edition before it is published.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 4

The purpose, content and circulation of the WRS newsletter should be thoroughly reviewed, with a view to it providing a more systematic and comprehensive account of the work and performance of the shared service and with the content and format being agreed by the Joint Committee.
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Since one of the key concerns raised by elected members across Worcestershire was the difficulty experienced in contacting a representative of WRS directly (despite recent re-circulation to all members of the directory of WRS staff telephone and email contact details) the Task Group considers that it would be useful for a lead member of WRS staff to be specifically assigned the role of 'Member Liaison Officer' to provide a further first point of contact, e.g. for queries and issues where there is uncertainty about who might be best placed to assist. This arrangement is felt to work well for the County Council's Highways Department, where there is an area-based structure of Member Liaison Officers.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 5

That WRS have a designated member of staff to act as a Member Liaison Officer and as a single point of contact to signpost Member enquiries.
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Chapter 2

Financing of WRS

As detailed in the background section of this report, one of the key drivers for the shared regulatory service was the potential for efficiencies and cost savings. From the Task Group's interviews with the Head of Regulatory Services, it was learned that WRS had already exceeded the originally anticipated financial savings (which had benefited all the partner councils) yet the overall budget had been further reduced significantly since 2010. For 2014/15, it had been proposed that the WRS budget be further cut (by an additional £646,000 from the 2013-14 figure of £5.626m). Members also learned that the Head of Regulatory Services had advised the Joint Committee of his view that this was the absolute minimum with which WRS could realistically operate if it were to continue to deliver services at current levels. Any further reductions would, in his judgement, impact on service delivery and quality.

More generally and over the life of WRS to date, it appeared to the Task Group that the quest for cost reductions has tended to dominate debate within and between the partner authorities rather than issues of regulatory standards and public protection. Indeed, the Task Group considers finance has been the key driver both for the Management Board and the Joint Committee and has largely come to trump the other objectives that had underpinned the rationale for the shared service in the first place.

In the original partnership agreement it was determined that the budget for WRS should be considered and approved by the Joint Committee by the end of November each year. This would ensure that the partner authorities would be clear about their financial contributions ahead of their own budget setting processes. The Task Group was advised that this arrangement had worked well in the early years of the partnership but that, because of the deterioration in the financial position of partners' budgets, it would probably not be so suitable for future years. Indeed, whilst this joint scrutiny review was taking place, Worcestershire County Council proposed significant reductions in its budget contribution – to be implemented incrementally over a three year period (and which would see the County Council's contribution to WRS decreasing from £1.5m in 2014/15 to £250,000 in 2016/17).

Such a reduction, the Task Group was informed, would have significant implications for the quality and level of services of WRS. Already since 2010, staff numbers have decreased from 154 to 117 (in 2013), and the Head of Regulatory Services indicated to the Task Group that, if implemented, the further proposed budget reductions would imply further shrinkage to an estimated 102 in 2014/15 and probably still smaller numbers in subsequent years.

The Task Group was also advised more specifically of the potential implications for trading standards staff. In this respect, the indication is that,

by 2016/17, the level of funding might support just six trading standards officers for the whole of the County (compared with 25 in 2013/14). . Such a contraction clearly raises questions about resilience within WRS to respond to unforeseen challenges or emergencies such as the horse meat scandal of 2013. In this regard the Task Group was interested to learn that, nationally, the Trading Standards Institute has recently commissioned research on the impacts and cost-effectiveness of different trading standards activities to understand better the possible consequences of such funding and staff reductions.

Recognising the potential risks for all partner councils and their communities if funding is reduced to the point where capacity is unduly compromised, the Joint Committee recently agreed that the WRS budget should in future be planned on a three year rolling programme basis to facilitate longer-term planning. In the same context, a new budget matrix has been designed to assist decision-making as to the costs of different service options for partners. This matrix approach, which was also approved by the Joint Committee in September 2013, has been developed from a “zero based” budget exercise and indicates the minimum resources and budget required to meet existing levels of demand and statutory obligations in all relevant functional areas. The matrix also provides risk assessments in relation to key regulatory objectives of protecting vulnerable people, supporting the local economy and improving health and well being.

A further issue that has recently been pursued as a response to the difficult financial context for WRS and its partners is that of seeking a private sector strategic partner. Here the rationale is to look to grow WRS (either or both by acquiring more local authority partners and undertaking more work for others on a contractual basis) and for which, the argument goes, the commercial experience and marketing skills of the private sector would be especially helpful. In November 2013, during the early months of this joint scrutiny, the Joint Committee approved initial ‘soft marketing’ ahead of a decision to commence a formal procurement process in 2014.

At this early stage, the Task Group has had little information by which to form a view as to the potential of such a private sector strategic partnership in helping WRS in relation to its financial challenges. Accordingly, the Task Group do not draw any conclusion or make recommendations on this issue. However, it is fair to say that the Task Group received mixed feedback on the proposal. Some officers and members on the Joint Committee regarded it as the only viable solution while others stated their concerns that the process was being brought forward too quickly and without sufficient consideration of other options. Concerns were also articulated that a private sector partner’s interests might be selective in focusing largely on the more commercial of WRS’s services and that if capacity was further reduced as a result of shrinking partner financial contributions, the organisation might likely become less attractive to the private sector in any case. The general view taken by the Task Group was that, whilst a strategic partnership might well help to achieve some early financial stability for WRS, a more fundamental reconsideration of the business model and rebuilding of partner commitment

were probably required if the partnership were to remain viable for the longer term.

In this context, a more significant concern of the Task Group was the possibility of members of the partnership losing confidence in the venture and for financial and other reasons, deciding to withdraw and instead once again provide their own regulatory services. The Task Group's clear view here is that any such development would not just be highly regrettable but at odds with the logic of more integrated public service provision that has been pioneered within Worcestershire.

It could also be quite costly as, under the current governance arrangements, the agreement specifically states that

"... the Member Authority giving notice of termination (or if there is more than one such Member Authority then each of them in equal shares) shall bear all costs arising out of or in connection with such termination and shall indemnify the remaining Member Authorities against all costs and expenses incurred by them arising out of or in connection with that termination..."

This would include costs such as those for redundancy or redeployment of staff, termination of any leases or licenses for use of premises or equipment, procurement of alternative accommodation, preparation and disaggregation of relevant data or records and reimbursing staff or administrative overhead costs. Feedback received by the Task Group from various witnesses during the review suggested that awareness of this clause within the original agreement was less widespread amongst partners than perhaps it should have been, since, in the current economic climate at least, most authorities would struggle to afford such costs.

Instead, the Task Group is keen to propose a more constructive option for the future. This would build on the work undertaken recently by the Worcestershire Chief Executives' Panel in developing a budget matrix that indicates costs for different activities and for different levels of provision. In this way, more tailored and costed packages of regulatory services might be offered to partners to suit their local needs and budgets, which could be helpful in building partner confidence in WRS. Indeed, such a bespoke approach might well include enhanced as well as reduced services, for example, the possibility of an 'out of hours' service for partners with concerns about late night noise nuisance problems.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 6

In order to reduce the focus on financial considerations which currently play a major part in influencing partner participation, to the detriment of other equally important aspects of the service, the following should be addressed:

- (a) A new business model for WRS be developed through the Chief Executives' Panel, building on the proposals already being produced by the Panel.
- (b) Consideration be given to the option for partner authorities to purchase an "out of hours service"

Chapter 3

Governance of WRS

The partnership agreement for WRS was drawn up by Legal Services Officers representing all seven partner councils in Worcestershire and is divided into two parts; the first section introduces the framework and the second provides details on regulatory services.

In that agreement the main elements of the governance structure for WRS are defined as follows:

- **Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee**, comprising two councillor representatives per authority, is designated as the key strategic decision-making body.
- **The Management Board**, comprising officer representatives from each partner authority is responsible for providing advice on both strategic and operational matters.
- **The WRS Management Team** is responsible for service delivery.

As WRS was the first and only shared regulatory service in a two-tier local government structure, there has been no exemplar framework agreement or constitution available to replicate or learn from. Accordingly, the above governance arrangements were proposed and approved without knowing for sure how well they might work in practice.

Governance Review

Two years on, the Head of Regulatory Services requested that the Chief Executives' Panel conduct a review of those governance arrangements in light of concerns particularly about the Management Board. While the Task Group understand that assurances were given, no governance review had taken place ahead of this joint scrutiny Task Group. However, consultations with stakeholders have highlighted further recognition of the need for such a review and not least because of the possibility now of a private sector strategic partner also becoming involved. Indeed, several consultees alluded to the importance of getting the governance arrangements as effective and efficient as possible to ensure that WRS would be able to present itself as an attractive proposition to commercial organisations. The following comments from representatives of both the Joint Committee and the Management Board underline this viewpoint:

“... there will need to be a full governance review of both the Joint Committee and the Management Board and an alternative solution found. It would be a very different picture with much less Member involvement and would very much be at arm's length.”

“I think that if a strategic partnership with the private sector is pursued further all of the governance arrangements for WRS will need to be reviewed and a different structure put in place.”

“The partnership agreement was very constrained and no one was aware at the time of how things would change. The partners now need to make changes to governance to make it more flexible.”

The Task Group has been surprised and concerned at the delay in undertaking such a governance review following the request by the Head of Service two years ago and particularly given the level of confusion encountered amongst some members of the Joint Committee about their own role and that of the Management Board (outlined in detail below). However, the Task Group’s terms of reference for this scrutiny included (at point 5) an objective ‘*to consider the governance arrangements between the shared service and the participating councils*’ and accordingly the Task Group has paid particular attention to this issue and made a number of key recommendations which are designed to resolve some of the problems it identified.

Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee

In first establishing WRS as a shared service, legal requirements had to be followed (notably, that, under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, there would need to be an elected member decision-making body which resulted in the formation of the Joint Committee). At the time, it was agreed by the Executive Committees/Cabinets of each partner authority that delegated power should be granted to the Joint Committee to consider and make decisions on all the regulatory functions detailed in the agreement on their behalf, albeit that any additional changes to policy should be referred back to the respective Executive Committees/Cabinets.

The particular roles of the Joint Committee, as detailed within the agreement, were as follows:

- To make strategic decisions on behalf of the partnership.
- To oversee the development, implementation and operation of the shared service.
- To establish a framework for the operation of the shared service.
- To appoint sub-committees where necessary.

Under the terms of the agreement, each member authority was required to appoint two members to the Joint Committee each year. In the case of those authorities operating Leader/Cabinet arrangements, at least one of these members has to be a member of the Cabinet/Executive Committee. The agreement also permitted substitute members to attend in place of the lead member when necessary. Some councils have chosen to appoint named substitutes each year (although this is not a requirement).

The agreement states that a minimum of one elected representative from each authority should be present at meetings of the Joint Committee in order for those meetings to be quorate (although, as a Legal Services representative informed the Task Group, this is not a general legal requirement, purely something that the partners for this particular agreement insisted upon). The quorum for the Joint Committee was reviewed in 2013 when Members decided to continue with these same requirements.

Attendance, however, is not without its problems and the Task Group learned that Democratic Services officers frequently have to spend significant amounts of time contacting and “chasing” Joint Committee representatives to ensure quorate meetings. To minimise the resources involved in this respect, the Task Group concluded that the onus should be on each partner authority, rather than the officers of the host authority, to ensure that their representatives would indeed be able to attend or to arrange substitutes.

The Task Group was also concerned about the potential for conflicts of interest to arise between membership of the Joint Committee and membership of a particular authority’s Cabinet/Executive Committee in making budgetary decisions (i.e. if the financial pressures of their own local authorities were to influence their voting in relation to the WRS budget). Further potential conflicts of interest were identified in relation to those members of the Joint Committee who were both district and county councillors; and also for the Chair of the Joint Committee in relation to their particular own local authority.

Under current arrangements the Chair of the Joint Committee is appointed on an annual basis from the membership and on a rotating basis. Of concern to the Task Group here, however, was the possibility of a member assuming the chair (because it was ‘their turn’) but without necessarily having a sufficient understanding of the nature of regulatory services or sufficient time to devote to the responsibility. The Task Group considered the alternative of having an independent chair person – someone who specialised in regulatory functions. However, it was recognised that finding such a suitable and willing person could be difficult and also that this approach might seem inappropriate for an essentially democratic decision making body. Consequently, the Task Group concluded that probably the best approach to choice of chair would be for the Joint Committee membership to elect its chair based on merit rather than rotation.

The Task Group was keen to ensure that the Joint Committee as a whole was able to operate effectively as the key decision-making body for WRS and to this end, the Task Group discussed a range of pertinent issues including, duration of appointment for members, size of committee, frequency and location of meetings and training arrangements:

- With regard to duration of appointment, the Task Group considers that members should be expected to serve a minimum term of two years (to develop the necessary understanding and experience of WRS). At present, as indicated, appointments are made on an annual basis and

this has tended to result in frequent turnover of representatives from some authorities. The Task Group believes a minimum term of two years would also help to strengthen commitment and ensure greater continuity in the composition of the Joint Committee, so enabling the level of expertise and experience as a whole to grow.

- Regarding the size of committee, the Task Group believes a committee of fourteen members (two per partner authority) to be unwieldy, especially so as there are usually at least four officers also in attendance in support roles). Indeed, when the Task Group observed a meeting of the Joint Committee, it witnessed how difficult it was for many members to engage fully in such a large ‘conference-like’ setting and for discussion to develop in any depth on the issues under consideration. Accordingly, the Task Group’s clear view is that it would be better to have just one member nominated from each council rather than two as now. This would help to ensure more inclusive debate, it would facilitate deeper discussion and it would facilitate more efficient and effective decision-making and provision of the clear strategic steer that the Head of Regulatory Services and his team look for from the Committee.
- Rather than the current quarterly meetings, the Task Group considers that meetings every other month (i.e. six times per year) would also help to build expertise and commitment in relation to regulatory services. Additional meetings might also mean shorter agendas but create more opportunity to consider the important issues in more depth. Its own experiences as a Task Group illustrate, much time is needed together for rapport and understanding to build between representatives from different local authorities. The Task Group is sure that a leaner Joint Committee, with members meeting more frequently, will greatly help in making the Joint Committee a more effective decision-making body.
- A smaller committee would more easily support the ideal – as the Task Group sees it - of Joint Committee meetings being held at WRS’s main office location where the professional staff and other supporting resources are on hand. While no doubt there are some advantages in the current arrangement of holding Joint Committee meetings at the base for the host authority, with just seven members (and supporting officers) the base of WRS would seem a more appropriate setting and one that would of course afford members with the opportunity to see more of the staff and some of the regulatory work first hand. It would also represent a suitably neutral location for all members.
- The issue of training for members of the Joint Committee was also considered – this, too, being seen as vital to the building of a stronger and more competent governance body for WRS. Accordingly, the Task Group asked all the members it interviewed about the amount of training they had received both prior to and during their periods of service on the Committee. Some longer-serving members explained

that in the first year of the shared service, a programme of training had been provided (prior to the first meeting) and that there had been follow-up half day sessions in subsequent months. However, it was understood that members appointed more recently had not received the equivalent induction or training opportunities (some having received little more than a half hour briefing from their authority's representative on the Management Board).

Some relevant comments in this regard were as follows:

"I have not received any specific training although I did receive a briefing from the Council's representatives on the Management Board and I have not had a chance to visit Wyatt House."

"I learnt by osmosis and I think it is up to members to be proactive and to find out what the role is themselves."

"I received a briefing from my Council's representative on the Management Board and I spoke with the other councillor from my authority on the Committee as he had served on it for a number of years. I also made a point of arranging to visit Wyatt House and met with the Head of Service and some of the other staff. I found the visit in particular really useful as it helped to explain the role of WRS."

"I have an understanding of the workings of a Council and the Committee as I have been a councillor for seven years. Members should make time to educate themselves. Having said that I did receive a two hour briefing from my Council's representative on the Management Board when I started."

From all such feedback the Task Group concluded that training provision was less than consistent and together with the policy permitting substitutes (who would typically be attending without any prior training at all), meant that levels of understanding and experience of regulatory services around the Committee table were likely to be, at best, variable and in many cases quite inadequate for the nature of responsibility being exercised.

The shared view of the Task Group is that something akin to the requirements for development control committees should be in place. There, members must undergo at least a basic training programme before they can play any part in development control decision-making. Whilst recognising that the decisions in relation to WRS are not quasi-judicial in the manner of those for development control, the Task Group believe that mandatory training for Joint Committee participation is similarly justified, particularly given the diverse and technical nature of the work and the importance of the governance role and the various decisions that members are entrusted to make here.

Despite the quite specific purposes and roles for the Joint Committee (as described in the original formal agreement and summarised above) the Task Group was also surprised to find some quite significant differences of

understanding and viewpoint between members, particularly about the Committee's relationship with the other key body – the Management Board. In the various interviews with members of the Joint Committee, the Task Group listened to a number of apparently conflicting accounts of the Joint Committee's role. For example, while some understood their primary role as being to make strategic decisions on behalf of the partnership, others talked of it more in terms of providing a 'critical friend' role and holding the Management Board to account, as the following comments illustrate:

"The Joint Committee is the democratic arm that considers the work of the Management Board and ensures that the delivery of services is efficient and equitable."

"We could be seen as the critical friend of the senior management of the service, holding them to account for strategic decision making as well as monitoring the budget and performance of the service. We are appointed by our Councils with some powers of delegation as laid down in the original partnership agreement."

"The Joint Committee is the critical friend of the service as well as the ultimate decision maker for the service. We are also ultimately responsible for the setting of the budget and the management of the finances as well as agreeing to the strategic direction of the service."

"The difference is that the Management Board is held in private and Joint Committee meetings are held in public."

"The Joint Committee is ultimately in charge of decision making. However the Management Board generates reports and provides advice and therefore has influence over the decisions that are made in a similar manner to Officers influencing decisions at Cabinet."

"The role of the Joint Committee is to act as a watching brief to see that the service is being provided and the money spent well"

Moreover, the Task Group's own doubts about the clarity of understanding among Joint Committee members as to their role were echoed by at least one of the members themselves, as follows:

"I do not know if all present members fully understand the governance or the structure. It may be the case that even long-term members do not fully understand it."

The Task Group is in no doubt that the prevalence of such role ambiguities and uncertainties represents a serious weakness in the governance arrangements for WRS and one that needs to be addressed as a matter of high priority. Of particular concern to the Task Group was the perspective held by more than a few members that regarded their primary objective as being to 'represent' the needs of their own local authority in relation to WRS – with the needs of WRS being very much a secondary consideration. It was

also suggested that the listing on the front page of the agenda papers for Joint Committee meetings of the names of the local authorities with members' names alongside only served to reinforce such a representational mind-set.

"I believe that members need to strongly represent the interests of their district when attending meetings of the Joint Committee, though this should be tempered by the fact that WRS is a shared service. One local authority should not be allowed to dictate the direction of the service to all the other partners, regardless of its size and status."

"... the primary role of members on the Joint Committee is to protect the interests of their council with the function of WRS being secondary"

To be fair, other members indicated feeling no conflict between the two roles and argued that they were able to represent the interests of both their Council and WRS equally.

"At a Joint Committee meeting I feel I am representing the district's needs and the needs, requirements and future of WRS across Worcestershire. I am very aware that each Council has its own individual needs and requirements but there are many things which we all share."

A number of the officers that were interviewed also commented on the tendency of some Joint Committee members to prioritise their own local authority considerations over the needs of the partnership and were similarly concerned that this risked undermining the partnership. One such interviewee suggested that *"localism has no place in Regulatory Services"*. While recognising the contentious nature of such a statement, the Task Group is clear in the view that, unless and until the full membership of the Joint Committee can demonstrate its prioritisation of a shared interest in WRS over that of individual local authority interests, this will always be a weak and fragile partnership and one that will struggle to sustain itself, let alone grow and flourish.

One further small change that the Task Group feels could help make a significant difference in this respect would be a change of title from one that tends particularly to emphasise the 'representational' role of members in relation to their local authorities (i.e. 'Joint Committee'), to one that more specifically focuses on the shared responsibility for WRS governance (i.e. 'Board'). Accordingly, the Task Group considers that switching to a new title - 'the WRS Board' - could be an important step forward.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 7

A new strategic decision making board for WRS should replace the Joint Committee, comprising one elected member per partner authority and supported by relevant officers. This should be called the WRS Board.

- (a) Meetings of this Board should take place at the base of WRS.
- (b) Responsibility for attendance at Board meetings should lie with each authority's representative and the quorum for meetings should be set at 5 representatives in attendance.
- (c) Meetings of the Board should take place bi-monthly.
- (d) Elected members appointed to the Board should be provided with an induction programme and sufficient ongoing training to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.
- (e) Members appointed to the Board be expected to serve a minimum of two years to ensure continuity.
- (f) The Chair of the WRS Board should be elected annually by the members of the Board.

Management Board

The other key body in the governance structure for WRS - the Management Board - was similarly the subject of careful consideration by the Task Group. As with the Joint Committee, a set of roles for the Management Board were defined in the original partnership agreement, these being as follows:

- To oversee and guide the development of WRS, in particular in relation to operational matters.
- To help develop a shared vision and strategy for the partners that takes into account partners' varying needs and priorities.
- To contribute to the transformation of service delivery.
- To resolve matters of concern to the partnership.
- To advise elected Members and to make recommendations to the Joint Committee (alongside the Head of Regulatory Services).
- To report back to their local authorities on the work of WRS and the decisions of the Joint Committee.

Membership of the Management Board comprises the Head of Regulatory Services together with one senior officer representative from each partner authority. Meetings of this Board are also attended by the lead Finance Officer from the host authority and the two Business Managers from WRS, while chairing is undertaken in (annual) rotation by one of the partner authority representatives.

The Task Group heard various viewpoints on the Management Board but, above all, the good news that, in recent times at least, it was felt to have been working more effectively than in the past. Several members of the Joint

Committee that were interviewed highlighted the value to them of the briefings they themselves had received from the representatives on the Management Board of their own authorities regarding the agendas of business and generally, the Management Board was considered to have contributed helpfully to recent discussions on key matters such as the possibility of a strategic link with a private sector partner. Joint Committee members also valued the corporate management expertise that officers appointed to the Management Board were able to add to deliberations and the useful links their representatives also had with other relevant services, such as the Hub shared service.

The Task Group also learned of several other aspects about the Management Board and its role that were concerning, including the following:

- Most of the officers on the Management Board, as representatives of partner authorities, are not from a regulatory services background and may not, therefore, necessarily have the specialist experience to appreciate fully the requirements of and expectations upon WRS.
- Engagement by the officer representatives tends to be variable and with a small core of officers being particularly influential in shaping thinking and conclusions.
- Some of the officers tend to prioritise their own Council's interests over and above those of the partnership.
- Differences of viewpoint between the Head of Regulatory Services and some of the other officers comprising the Management Board have frequently arisen and been quite difficult to resolve because only the Joint Committee has the authority to direct the Head of Service.
- Officers on the Management Board tend to be inconsistent in reporting back to their councils about developments in relation to WRS and do not always act as "advocates" for the shared service within their authorities.

The Task Group was also concerned about apparent differences of viewpoint as to the appropriate role of the Management Board amongst its officers. In particular, some such officers clearly regard their role legitimately as including the provision of advice on operational matters and the Task Group learned of a worrying tendency by the Board to attempt to micro-manage the Head of Regulatory Services.

The Task Group's clear view is that this is both unhelpful and inappropriate and that WRS itself – with its professionally qualified cadre of managers and staff - should be entrusted with full operational responsibility under the leadership of the Head of Regulatory Services. Two principal benefits here, as identified by the Task Group are as follows:

- WRS officers should be the source of advice to elected members about operational matters based on their professional expertise and experience (as, of course, is the case in most other specialist public service contexts – e.g. children's and adult services, highways and transport and planning).

- Officer leadership from WRS itself would be likely to result in a stronger focus on the needs of the partnership as a whole rather than on those of individual councils.

The Task Group's conclusions go further than this. For it does not see a sufficient case for retaining a Management Board as well as a Joint Committee (WRS Board) within the governance structure for WRS. Instead, the Task Group thinks that the disestablishment of this additional layer of management would greatly simplify, clarify and unify the governance structure. Instead, the Task Group considers a more appropriate role for officer representatives from the partner authorities to be in attendance at the WRS Board (Joint Committee) meetings as non-voting participants – sitting alongside and supporting their respective elected members, and providing additional advice (particularly from the perspective of the partner authorities).

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 8

The Management Board be disbanded, with the WRS Management Team taking the lead responsibility for operational decision making under the leadership of the Head of Regulatory Services.

The WRS Management Team

The Head of Regulatory Services leads the WRS team and should, the Task Group suggests, be formally accountable to the WRS Board (Joint Committee) as the corporate governing body. At present, line management and oversight of his role (including conduct of his annual performance development review) is provided by the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council as head of paid service at the host authority. This arrangement generally works well; the Task Group learned and felt it to be entirely appropriate that the Head of Service should enjoy the benefits of chief officer support (from the host authority) and the additional accountability that this involves. The recommendation to disband the Management Board would, be further beneficial in protecting the Head of Service from feeling over-managed and accountable to multiple senior officers.

The Task Group recommends the following:

Recommendation 9

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Head of WRS should be fully accountable to the WRS Board (as the strategic decision making body). (b) The Chief Executive of the host and with the host authority to act in a mentoring role as and when necessary. |
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Chapter 4

Lessons Learned

The Task Group has undertaken a wide ranging and detailed review of a complex shared service and in the process, inevitably, a number of lessons have been learned of potential value to other shared service arrangements and indeed, for other joint scrutiny exercises. In this chapter the key such lessons are summarised.

Communications between a Shared Service and Partner Authorities

At the launch of the WRS shared service, consideration was given to the most appropriate methods by which the work of the new organisation and the decisions of its Joint Committee might be reported back to partner authorities. A formal protocol was developed for the referral of decisions to partner authorities and this stipulated that the following arrangements should be in place:

- The committee clerk for each meeting should draft and circulate minutes from the meetings within ten working days to Joint Committee and Management Board members as well as to the Democratic Service teams from across the county.
- The minutes should be submitted to the next Executive Committee/ Cabinet meetings at each authority for consideration, both in cases where decisions have been taken under delegated powers and where recommendations have been proposed.
- In cases where the minutes contain a recommendation, the supporting reports should be provided for the consideration of the Executive Committees/Cabinets at each authority.
- The Executive Committee/Cabinet at each authority should make a decision about any recommendations referred for their consideration, the result of which should be referred back to the Democratic Services Officer of the host authority who maintains appropriate records.
- In the event that any recommendations are not approved by all partners the Head of Regulatory Services is required to report this fact back to the next Joint Committee meeting.

Despite the specificity and clarity of these protocols, the Task Group investigation identified that partner authorities were not always complying with the expectations, particularly in relation to the handling of minutes of the meetings of the Joint Committee. While in some cases, minutes were consistently being presented for consideration by the Executive Committee/ Cabinet, in others they were only circulated when there happened to be a particular recommendation within them requiring partner approval. In very few instances, the Task Group learned, was there much, if any, discussion at partner authorities of the issues presented in the minutes of WRS Joint Committee meetings.

One consequence of such variable practices is that the majority of elected members in partner authorities have very limited awareness and understanding of the work of WRS, or of the decisions of its Joint Committee. In discussion with Joint Committee members the shortcomings of the communications process with the wider membership of partner authorities was recognised, as was their personal responsibility, as Joint Committee members, to report back to their respective councils. As one acknowledged:

“There is also a need for the Joint Committee member to promote the service back at their Council and ensure that members are kept informed of how the service is developing”.

On the other hand, another member of the Joint Committee argued that it was the responsibility of every elected member in the County, not just those appointed to the Joint Committee, to familiarise themselves with the work of WRS:

“There are few problems with internal communications. At some councils, the minutes of each Joint Committee meeting are considered at Executive meetings and copies are also published on every Council’s website. It is the responsibility of every member to read these minutes and to familiarise themselves with the subject”.

While some may well subscribe to such a point of view, Task Group members were concerned about the reality that, in practice, the wider body of elected members across the County (i.e. those who had not been involved with the Joint Committee) had very limited knowledge or understanding of WRS and its important public protection functions. Indeed, the Task Group was persuaded that this was a significant enough problem, which needed to be addressed by the following circumstances:

1. Concerns about performance data (e.g. the National Indicators) not being provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committees suggested that scrutiny members had not been aware of the decisions taken by WRS to change their performance monitoring arrangements. At some councils there was also surprise that the partnership agreement for WRS did not allow for scrutiny by local Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
2. When the Scrutiny Task Group consulted with other elected members across the County (and with parish council representatives) several of the responses referred to aspects outside the remit of WRS, demonstrating the level of misunderstanding.
3. Several months after the Joint Committee’s decision to explore the potential for a strategic partnership with a private sector partner for WRS, the Head of Regulatory Services presented a series of updating briefings on the subject to different partner authorities, but encountered at one, widespread ignorance of the decision (and dismay at not having been aware of, or consulted on, the matter).

Such apparent failures in communication have underpinned the Task Group's conclusion that more systematic processes need to be put in place to ensure that all decisions made by the Joint Committee (WRS Board) are indeed communicated back to all elected members of partner authorities and that regular updates of WRS and its work are provided to partner councils. The Task Group suggest that a common approach should be followed in all partner authorities, whether this takes the form of written reports to Executive Committees/Cabinets and/or to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and full Council meetings.

It would also help if Democratic Services officers in partner councils took responsibility for drawing their elected members' attentions to the publication of both the agendas and minutes of each meeting of the WRS Board (Joint Committee) and by highlighting the web links to the relevant pages of the WRS website).

Although the website for WRS was updated and refreshed during the time that the scrutiny Task Group was underway, it noted that copies of agendas and minutes from meetings of the Joint Committee were not always uploaded promptly on to the WRS webpages and available for viewing via the websites of partner authorities. Not least for the purposes of transparency, the Task Group considers it important that such documents are indeed made accessible to all at the earliest opportunities (along with other relevant information about WRS and its operation and governance structures).

Such lessons about the importance of good communication and transparency are relevant of course to all shared services and it is to be hoped that the recommendations in this respect will promote like-minded actions in relation to other such partnership arrangements.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) All decisions made by the WRS Board be formally reported back to all elected members of the partner authorities in a timely manner. (b) Attention should be paid to communicating updates about any planned changes to WRS services to all elected members of partner authorities. (c) The agendas and minutes of all WRS Board meetings should also be uploaded on to the WRS website in a timely fashion.

Sharing Services

In conducting this scrutiny review the Task Group inevitably encountered and debated the many strengths and weaknesses that apply to any shared service arrangement, particularly those involving multiple partners. For example, the opportunity to share resources and skills across several councils and so have better overall capacity and capability was widely recognised as a positive outcome by members and officers alike. Similarly, the financial savings that

could be achieved through this way of working were also universally welcomed, especially in the current climate of public sector austerity.

The following comments illustrate such positive perspectives on multi-partner shared services arrangements:

“In my experience smaller district councils often struggle to attract the good, qualified, professional staff needed to deliver regulatory services. Amalgamation with other local authorities has helped us to attract and retain these types of staff”.

“Because the countywide model inevitably involves working with a larger team and a bigger budget, you can attract the professional and skilled staff you need to deliver the services.”

“One of the benefits of sharing regulatory services, particularly for district councils, is that it enables those councils to access expertise and resources that might not otherwise have been available. For example, as a result of this shared service, Bromsgrove District Council has been able to directly access officers with expertise in the field of air quality, which has been useful because there are significant problems with air pollution in Bromsgrove district.”

However, the scrutiny consultations also underscored some of the problems often associated with shared service arrangements, particularly where multiple partners are involved. Above all is the potential for shared service operations to seem remote and detached from the councils they serve, at least for most councillors and officers. Indeed, there is a tendency for bodies like WRS to seem to operate more like separate organisations, delivering services on behalf of the councils, akin to contract-based provision rather than as partnerships of the councils and in which there is a common interest and responsibility.

The following comments expressed to the Task Group epitomise such perspectives:

“Sometimes we are all partners. Sometimes, usually when something goes wrong, there is a feeling that WRS is acting as a contractor providing services rather than being an integral part of the local government offering”.

“Some partners have tended to regard WRS as having been outsourced once the shared service was launched. For example, some of the early problems with ICT were exacerbated by the fact that partner organisations were not always willing to engage in discussions about how to resolve the problem”.

Such a sense of distance and detachment between the councils and WRS probably also explains, in part at least, the determination of some partners to impose financial reductions on WRS that to regulatory service professionals at

least seem quite unreasonable and unrealistic, as illustrated in the following comment:

“Very disappointingly some partners have come forward seeking very large reductions but without any clear idea of the necessary changes to their services to achieve this.”

Compounding this distancing and detachment problem has been some widespread negativity about WRS arising early on in its life as a result of difficulties encountered by councillors (and the public) in contacting regulatory staff and in getting apparently small and simple problems resolved (e.g. complaints about barking dogs or odour problems). It is to be hoped that the new in-house customer contact arrangements now in place will help overcome such negativity and that WRS’s reputation for responsivity will quickly improve. A key lesson is that, under shared service arrangements and particularly one where staff are located elsewhere from the local authority, contact and communication arrangements need to be especially well planned and managed for confidence in the venture to be sustained.

In this context the Task Group was also intrigued as to why, after much initial interest in the Worcestershire initiative from other local authorities, WRS remains the only two-tier regulatory partnership in England. Probably part of the reason has been inertia and fear, particularly on the part of district councils, of surrendering more public service responsibility to their counties and so inadvertently bolstering arguments for unitary council status in the future. Perhaps also a reason has been concern among district councils at the prospect of losing control of some important protective services, notably environmental health and licensing and of councillors feeling that this would weaken their ability to directly address many of the problems routinely raised by local people and businesses. But once again, the key lesson here concerns the quality of the contact and communication arrangements that are put in place between councils and the shared service and the confidence that the partnership body is able to instil among councillors and the general public.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 11
The lessons learned from the WRS shared service experience, particularly as detailed in this report, should be heeded by elected members and senior officers when considering any future proposals for shared services arrangements involving multiple partners.

Joint Scrutiny

This scrutiny is not the first such joint scrutiny review to be undertaken in Worcestershire, although it is the first one involving all seven councils and hosted by one of the district councils. Perhaps because of the increasing number of shared service arrangements now being established within the

County there will be more such joint exercises in the future. Assuming so, the Task Group considers the lessons that it has learned during the process of this joint scrutiny should be of considerable value for others to follow.

The Task Group's review was conducted in accordance with the Framework for Joint Overview and Scrutiny in Worcestershire (which was approved by all councils in 2011). That framework details the principles underlying joint working, processes to be followed and conduct to be expected during such work, resource requirements, meeting arrangements and other matters conducive to effective collaborative working. (A copy of the framework can be viewed at Appendix 2).

As in this case, joint scrutiny reviews are normally hosted by an individual council, usually the one that first proposed the review or the host authority if the subject is a shared service. However, the expectation with all joint scrutiny work is that there should be representation and participation from all the relevant authorities and full co-operation with the process by all parties, for example, in providing evidence and participating in proceedings.

During this joint scrutiny, members of the Task Group sought evidence from a wide range of parties – both elected members and officers from each of the seven partners and of course, from WRS as well. In most instances the Task Group encountered very positive co-operation and generous support, including willingness to travel some distances to attend interviews and preparedness to provide written, as well as verbal, responses to questions. The Task Group wishes to thank all the witnesses who gave evidence during the review for their time and their helpful contributions.

Unfortunately, the Task Group have to report that it did not encounter the same level of co-operation and support from every quarter. It struggled, in particular, to obtain the evidence needed from Worcestershire County Council, particularly regarding the authority's proposed budget reductions for the next three years. Initially, the Task Group sent a letter to the Leader of the Council and to a senior officer (in early February), prior to the authority's setting of its budget. The letter outlined the Task Group's concerns about the implications of budget reductions for the viability of WRS and requested that the Council consider postponing the decision on funding until this joint scrutiny review had been completed. It proved necessary to chase the County Council for a response to this letter and the Task Group subsequently invited a representative to attend one of its meetings (in early April) to respond to various questions. Although a written response was eventually received, the Task Group was disappointed that no-one from the County Council offered to attend the meeting and indeed, the written response itself was quite short and generally less helpful than those received from other witnesses.

The Task Group was also disappointed that not all partners played an equally active part in the joint scrutiny exercise. While most authorities were consistently represented at the meetings, one council, Wyre Forest, was represented at only 5 out of the Task Group's 15 meetings (and this despite the fact that this Council, as with all seven, had designated a substitute as

well as a lead member). While recognising the extra time pressures that participation in such scrutiny exercises creates for members and the various legitimate reasons for absence, the Task Group was nevertheless surprised at the persistent failure to submit apologies or to propose a change in the nomination to ensure due representation from Wyre Forest and the opportunity, with other partners, to shape the final recommendations.

There are lessons here, for sure, for other joint scrutiny exercises and the Task Group considers that in future, particular care should be taken to minimise such missed opportunities for participation. To this end the Task Group suggests that some aspects of the formal framework should be revisited and perhaps amended. In particular, it would be useful to give more consideration to the barriers and constraints likely to affect participation in such Task Groups and to ways of ensuring the desired level of commitment on the part of all members and partner authorities. It would be good to give early priority to reviewing the framework for joint scrutiny and to giving thought to how engagement might be maximised since it is understood that another joint exercise – this on joint arrangements for waste collection and disposal - is about to commence.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 12
<p>(a) The Joint Scrutiny Protocol should be reviewed in order to take on board the lessons learned during this review.</p> <p>(b) Consideration should be given to the reinstatement of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Chairs Group as a means of feeding back the monitoring of recommendations from Joint Scrutiny exercises, as and when required.</p>

Conclusion

The perspectives of the membership of the Joint Scrutiny Task Group on WRS changed quite markedly during the course of this exercise as the evidence was gathered and as more of the realities of the situation became clear. At the start of the review there was some scepticism among Task Group members about the quality of service being provided by WRS, particularly based on anecdotal evidence from customer complaints and members own experiences of trying to get problems resolved. However, by the conclusion, the Task Group members had developed a much better understanding of the challenges and pressures being experienced by the shared service and of the difficulties and shortcomings in relation to governance. Indeed, the Task Group had developed greater empathy with the situation and this has inspired its desire to see the weaknesses and problems addressed and to ensure a better future for WRS.

Some of the proposals to this end may seem radical. But in the Task Group's analysis, significant changes are called for in a number of respects if WRS is to survive and flourish in the manner expected of it at the outset.

The Task Group recognises that, if the recommendations are accepted by partners, each council is likely to have to relinquish a further measure of control and place more trust in the practitioners in WRS to lead and manage the service in Worcestershire's best interests. The Task Group recognises and supports all the efforts currently being made to improve the viability and prospects for the shared service in difficult financial times, including consideration of the possibilities offered by a private sector partner. However, it also considers that a number of other changes – particularly to the governance framework and to the communication processes between WRS and partner authorities – need to be made as well and with similar priority.

Returning to the old (fragmented) way of providing regulatory services at both district and county levels is, the Task Group is sure, not a sensible or realistic option for Worcestershire - tempting though it might perhaps appear in present times when the challenges of partnership working and of coping with financial pressures seem so daunting. Instead, the Task Group concludes, the way ahead lies in building on the foundations that have already been laid; in learning the lessons of the first few years of WRS and in being prepared to adjust and adapt in light of those lessons. The way forward, the Task Group is sure, is to address the challenges as a partnership with renewed commitment and with confidence. Worcestershire's pioneering work in developing a more integrated regulatory service has indeed already been worthwhile and not just in achieving financial savings but also in ensuring higher quality protection for citizens and businesses across the county and beyond.

Appendix 1Joint Scrutiny of Worcestershire Regulatory ServicesTerms of ReferenceObjectives

1. To review the final business case for the Shared Service (as agreed by the participating Councils) against current operation, including:
 - resilience in the model to cope with fluctuations in workload;
 - efficiencies achieved;
 - cash savings and how these have been used;
 - its level of fitness for purpose;
 - the impact of the model on service levels/quality.
2. To compare the previous service levels of each participating Council compared with current levels and those outlined in the final business case.
3. To establish the performance of the service to participating Councils prior to and since the establishment of the shared service.
4. To review levels of customer satisfaction prior to and following establishment of the shared service and how feedback informs practice.
5. To consider the governance arrangements between the shared service and the participating Councils to include how changes to the service requested by one or more Councils can be achieved.

Membership

6. The Team will be made up of one representative from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch Borough, Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Councils.
7. Each authority will also appoint a named substitute, who will be sent details for each meeting and may attend meetings as an observer to keep up to date with the exercise.
8. That at least one of the appointed Members to the Team or their named substitute must comprise either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Roles

9. Members of the Panel are expected to:

- undertake appropriate reading and research, which may involve consultation, visits and evidence gathering between meetings;
 - having agreed a programme of meetings of the Team, to attend as many of them as possible;
 - to ask for support, training and development if/when they feel it is necessary;
 - to contribute fully to the drafting of any reports.
10. Each member is responsible for reporting back to parent Overview & Scrutiny Committees as appropriate.
11. Officer support will be provided by Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority, for meeting arrangements and scrutiny support, as well as liaison with officers from each authority to provide evidence and practical help (provision of meeting rooms etc)

Arrangements for Meetings

12. The Team will make its own arrangements for meetings.
13. The meetings may be held in public or in private. In considering how it will meet, the Team will balance the desire for transparency and openness with making visitors feel welcome and comfortable, to encourage frank and open discussion.
14. It will not normally be the case that full notes will be made of each meeting. In most cases a short “action list” will be sufficient for the Team’s use.

Deadline: April 2014.

Appendix 2**FRAMEWORK FOR JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN WORCESTERSHIRE****Principles Underlying Joint Working**

Any joint scrutiny process needs to ensure:

- a) Good quality scrutiny – which adds value and properly investigates issues of concern to participating authorities.
- b) Efficiency – avoiding duplication and bureaucracy.
- c) Confidence in the outcomes of the joint scrutiny exercise by each participating authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and clear communication of expectations from the outset.
- d) Clear working planning and co-ordination.
- e) A coherent approach to scrutiny for external partner organisations
- f) Clear arrangements for reporting and follow-up to ensure action on recommendations.
- g) Reporting arrangements should not create delay through over complexity, and should not create scope for other bodies to block recommendations.
- h) Flexibility in how to carry out joint scrutiny.
- i) It does not undermine each authority's O&S Committee's remit, or officer support available.

Deciding to Scrutinise Jointly

It is for each authority's O&S Committee to decide if they wish to participate in a joint scrutiny but this needs to be done as efficiently and speedily as possible.

To initiate a joint scrutiny proposal a scoping form should be completed and circulated which will then be subject to agreement of each authority's O&S Committee.

The Worcestershire Scrutiny Officers' Network, in consultation with their respective Chairmen should make proposals for joint scrutiny for considered by the scrutiny chairmen's network (possibly in between meetings) and subsequent recommendation to individual overview and scrutiny committees.

Carrying out Joint Scrutiny

There are a number of ways that joint scrutiny can be carried out.

There may be times when an individual authority wishes to co-opt members from other authorities onto a particular scrutiny.

There may also be times when it is agreed by each O&S committee that one authority takes the lead in scrutinising an issue on behalf of all authorities.

However, it is suggested that in Worcestershire joint scrutiny should usually be carried out by joint time-limited scrutiny task and finish groups, led by the authority from which the scrutiny originated.

Agreeing Membership of Joint Scrutiny Task Group

After O&S Committees agree to participate in a joint scrutiny they then nominate members.

As the task group would not be an official council committee, political balance requirements do not apply.

The number of Members participating in a joint scrutiny will depend on how many authorities are involved but if all Worcestershire authorities take part it is suggested that one member be appointed from each authority.

Agreeing Chairmanship of a Joint Task Group

Nominations for chairing the task group will be sought from all members of the task group.

Where one authority is leading the scrutiny it may be appropriate for the Chairman to be appointed from that authority.

Agreeing Terms of Reference/Scope of the Scrutiny

Each participating authorities' Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be asked to agree terms of reference for the scrutiny as per the scoping and proposal form.

Conduct of the Scrutiny

Meetings of the joint task group will be arranged by the supporting scrutiny officer(s).

The task group should strive to conduct their business in a consensual, open, responsible and transparent way across the political divides and seek to avoid expressing views based purely on political considerations.

Equal Participation

It is important for all members to be equal participants in the process and for officer support to be available on an equal basis.

Meeting Venues

To be decided by the Review Panel as appropriate to the particular review.

Approval of Report's Recommendations

The joint task group would agree their report and recommendations, normally by consensus. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would then be asked to endorse the report, and could submit their own comments to their Executives.

Time constraints for recommendations need to be fully considered at the scoping stage.

Publicising Outcomes from Joint Scrutiny/Sharing Findings

Once the scrutiny report is agreed by the overview and Scrutiny Committees it should be circulated to Executive members, witnesses and any others involved, by the scrutiny officers supporting the scrutiny.

It could also be put on the website of all the participating authorities.

Resourcing and Supporting Joint Scrutiny

It is intended that joint scrutiny will be supported within the existing resources available to all seven authorities for scrutiny.

Scrutiny officer support for each joint scrutiny should be agreed at the outset. Whilst the authority leading the joint scrutiny would normally provide support for it, ways of sharing the workload should be explored at the scoping stage.

Any expenses for members of a joint scrutiny should be paid by that member's authority in line with that authority's allowance scheme.

Tracking the Outcomes of the Scrutiny

The Review Panel will decide upon arrangements for tracking the implementation of recommendations.

Individual O&S Committees may wish to adopt their own methods for joint scrutiny recommendation tracking.

It is suggested that recommendation tracking for joint scrutinies should be part of the watching brief of the Joint Chairmen's meeting.

Appendix 3**SUMMARY OF MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE**

Meeting Date	Summary
26 th September 2013	Appointment of Chair / Vice Chair, endorsement of terms of reference and work planning (including setting future meeting dates).
10 th October 2013	The Task Group reviewed the content of the original business case for WRS and one of the WRS newsletters. Members also provided some initial feedback on behalf of colleagues at participating local authorities about Members' experiences of working with WRS.
22 nd October 2013	Interview with Steve Jorden, Head of Regulatory Services, and consideration of feedback on WRS experiences from other elected Members and Parish Councillors.
12 th November 2013	Consideration of WRS Partnership Agreement and Shared Services Joint Committee Protocol and consideration of further feedback as detailed above.
21 st November 2013	Observed Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee meeting prior to interview with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee.
4 th December 2013	Consideration of written responses to questions put to the Chair of the Management Board together with work planning, including questions for future witnesses.
18 th December 2013	Interview with Steve Jorden, Head of Regulatory Services, and WRS senior managers.
16 th January 2014	Interview with a member of the Management Board – Ruth Mullen (Ivor Pumfrey was unable to attend).
29 th January 2014	Interview with Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive of the Host Authority, and Jayne Pickering, Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Bromsgrove District Council.
6 th February 2014	Visit to Wyatt House.
20 th February 2014	Interview with Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor of the Host Authority, and Ivor Pumfrey, Chair of the Management Board.
19 th March 2014	Complaints and compliments data analysed and review of the investigation so far.
26 th March 2014	Interview with a number of Members of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.
20 th April 2014	Agree draft recommendations and report format.
28 th May 2014	Agree the draft report.

ATTENDANCE RECORD

	TOTAL ATTENDANCE	
	Lead	Sub
Bromsgrove	11	1
Malvern Hills	13	0
Redditch	7	4
Worcester City	12	0
WCC	10	0
Wychavon	13	3
Wyre Forest	0	5

Appendix 4**LIST OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY WRS**

The following services are delivered by WRS:

- Air quality.
- Animal health and welfare (including dog warden service).
- Consumer and business advice.
- Contaminated land.
- Environmental packaging
- Environmental permitting (pollution control).
- Fair trading / anti rogue trader activities.
- Food safety.
- Food standards (labelling and composition).
- Health and safety.
- Health promotion.
- Infectious diseases.
- Licensing.
- Metrology.
- Nuisance investigations.
- Pest Control.
- Product safety.
- Public health (burials, drainage, water supplies etc.)
- Under age sales.

Appendix 5**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Task Group would like to give particular thanks to Steve Jordan and members of the WRS team, especially Mark Kay and Simon Wilkes, who provided evidence, both in person and in writing, throughout the review.

Thanks also go to the following Officers:

Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils

Kevin Dicks	Joint Chief Executive
Jayne Pickering	Executive Director, Finance and Resources
Clare Flanagan	Principal Solicitor
Pauline Ross	Democratic Services Officer (responsible for clerking meetings of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee)

Management Board

Ivor Pumfrey	Malvern Hills District Council
Ruth Mullen	Worcester City Council

Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee - Councillors

Lucy Hodgson	Chair - Worcestershire County Council
Mark Bullivant	Vice Chair - Bromsgrove District Council
Kit Taylor	Bromsgrove District Council
Bronwen Behan	Malvern Hills District Council
David Hughes	Malvern Hills District Council
Brandon Clayton	Redditch Borough Council
John Fisher	Redditch Borough Council
Lynn Denham	Worcester City Council
Roger Berry	Worcester City Council
Anthony Blagg	Worcestershire County Council
Ron Davis	Wychavon District Council
Ken Jennings	Wychavon District Council
Marcus Hart	Wyre Forest District Council

Appendix 6**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At each meeting Members were asked to declare any interests. The following declarations were received:

Councillor Cronin, Worcester City Council, declared an other disclosable interest as the publican at The Plough Inn, Broadheath, Worcester.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Abbey Stadium Task Group

2013/14



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Membership of the Task Group

Councillors Gandy (Chair), Fry, Mason and former Councillor Derek Taylor.

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Completed

June 2014

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FOREWORD

I was delighted to be asked to Chair this Task and Finish Group whose scope included looking at ways to increase the Council's income from the Abbey Stadium but also more importantly improve the offer provided by the Stadium to local residents.

As many of you will know Redditch waited many years for a new Leisure Centre and pool and I was determined when Leader to achieve this during my term of office. Many of you will also know that this project took place during a particularly severe recession and therefore whilst Councillors were keen to see as many facilities as possible at the new centre, finance was limited.

As Members will be aware the Sports Centre has been a fantastic success for the town with over 500,000 visits in the first year, 2012. The biggest success has been the increase in people wanting to access health and fitness facilities with over 2000 members enjoying the facilities on a regular basis and much of this is down to the hard work of the staff at the Abbey Stadium.

We visited the Abbey Stadium at the start of the process, firstly to look in detail at what was being provided but also to chat to users of the service. The general feedback was very positive and there is no doubt that for many the Stadium is not just somewhere to exercise but is part of their social life.

Two years on, it became clear to us that due to competition from other fitness centres, in order for the Abbey Stadium to continue to grow, but more importantly retain its existing members, the offer needed to continually improve. The fitness industry is very competitive and the Abbey Stadium is now having to compete against some 'big boys'.

I believe that this report and the recommendations, have addressed the issues confronting the Abbey Stadium going forward. I would like to thank all those officers whose brains we picked during this process as well as staff at both Evesham Leisure Centre and Stratford Leisure Centre who gave up their time to assist us. I would particularly like to thank Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce for their guidance and also their hard work in the background. I know that I am not always easy to control!

Finally I must thank the rest of the team, Andy Fry, Alan Mason and Derek Taylor. I believe we worked well together and throughout the process they continually demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the Abbey Stadium goes from strength to strength.

**Councillor Carole Gandy,
Chair of the Abbey Stadium
Task Group**



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**CHAPTER 1: LEISURE TRUST****Recommendation 1**

The Council should explore the option for the Abbey Stadium to be managed by a leisure trust.

Financial Implications: There is the potential for significant financial savings to be made through the management of the Abbey Stadium by an external trust. However, the group is only suggesting that this option should be explored further and is not identifying a specific trust model for the future management of the stadium. It is therefore not possible at this stage for the group to outline the exact level of savings that could be secured for the Council if a trust was to manage the stadium.

Legal implications: The selection of a leisure trust partner to manage the Abbey Stadium on behalf of the Council would be subject to a procurement process. The Council would also need to specify requirements in a legal contract to be agreed by the successful leisure trust.

Recommendation 2

Subject to the Executive Committee agreeing to investigate the trust management option further the Overview and Scrutiny Committee arrange to pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of the Abbey Stadium.

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications to this recommendation.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation. Members are asked to note, however, that as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to agree the content of the scrutiny Work Programme this pre-scrutiny can be resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CHAPTER 2: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**Recommendation 3**

The provision of therapeutic services should be considered under any new trust arrangements put in place in future at the Abbey Stadium.

(The following is based on the group presupposing that recommendation 1 would be approved).

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications for the Council. If a leisure trust opted to provide therapeutic services at the stadium in the future this could have financial implications for the trust, though the figures involved would vary according to whether the trust provided the services directly or through a franchise arrangement.

Legal implications: This suggestion would need to be incorporated into a contract with an external trust in order to ensure that the introduction of therapeutic services is investigated as part of future arrangements for managing the stadium.

Recommendation 4

The provision of a sauna/steam room should be considered under any new trust arrangements put in place in future at the Abbey Stadium.

(The following is based on the group presupposing that recommendation 1 would be approved).

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications for the Council. The group has been advised that a new sauna / steam room could cost approximately £64,500 to install and a further £8,000 for on going maintenance costs, though the costs would be subject to the outcome of a procurement process. The group is anticipating that these costs would be met by a leisure trust.

Legal implications: This suggestion would need to be incorporated into a contract with an external trust in order to ensure that the introduction of a sauna / steam room is investigated as part of future arrangements for managing the stadium.

CHAPTER 3: MARKETING**Recommendation 5**

Officers should identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years or over.

Financial Implications: More proactive use of particular marketing tools may require some financial investment, though this is likely to be minimal if the Council continues to use existing resources. The group is not specifying which marketing measures should be adopted to achieve this objective and it is therefore not possible to clarify the exact expenditure required.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

There should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retail provision at the Abbey Stadium.

Financial Implications: The group believes there is the potential for retail sales to make a larger contribution to revenue at the Abbey Stadium through secondary spend. However, it is difficult to determine the exact figures involved. If a leisure trust manages the stadium on behalf of the Council this revenue would benefit the trust.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications to this recommendation as the Council already sell some products via a contractual arrangement at the Abbey Stadium.

CHAPTER 4: ITEMS TO NOTE

Car Wash Members wished to highlight that early in the review they identified the potential for a car wash facility to be introduced at the Abbey Stadium. This idea was welcomed by Officers who have already started the process to introduce a car wash.

Apprentice Opportunities Members explored the opportunities available for apprenticeships at the Abbey Stadium and have reached some conclusions which are highlighted in the report.

Café Members visited the café at the Abbey Stadium and wanted to promote this facility. Full details are highlighted in the report.

Bus Services The group investigated the potential for bus links to be extended between the Abbey Stadium and other sites in the Borough. However, conclusions were limited as this coincided with a countywide review of bus services.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The suggestion that the expansion of the Abbey Stadium be considered as a topic for scrutiny was raised by Councillor Derek Taylor during the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event in June 2013. Further consideration was given to this idea by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it was agreed that a Task Group should be launched to investigate the matter. Members considered that this review would be particularly timely following the redevelopment of the Abbey Stadium in 2012 as it would provide an opportunity to test the effectiveness of the redevelopment and any need for further improvement.

There were a number of key objectives to this review, as detailed in the scoping document. At the start this included consideration of the gym and dance facilities at the stadium. However, as the investigation progressed Members were advised that Officers were separately carrying out an investigation into actions that could be taken to revamp the gym and dance facilities at the venue. In part this was in response to the recent opening of a branch of Pure Gym in the town centre as Officers recognised that this could create significant competition in the leisure service field. Therefore Members altered their scope to include reviewing the Officers' business case (Please view Appendix 1).

The main objectives for the review were:

- 1) To review the business case for the revamped Abbey Stadium.
- 2) To investigate the potential to expand the facilities at the Abbey Stadium.
- 3) To assess the potential to provide more employment and apprenticeship opportunities for young people at the Abbey Stadium.
- 4) To investigate the potential for Hopper Bus service links to be expanded between the Abbey Stadium and other sites in the Borough.
- 5) To review the financial costs involved in delivering any actions that could be taken to expand the Abbey Stadium.

The review consisted of a variety of approaches to gathering evidence including a number of site visits. At an early stage in the review Members visited the Abbey Stadium to view existing facilities and to provide them with an opportunity to identify options for improvement. Following this visit Members concluded that it would be useful to visit other leisure centres for comparison purposes in order to view the services and activities provided at those venues and how they were managed. The group therefore visited Evesham Leisure Centre and Stratford Leisure Centre. Full details about the findings from these visits are detailed in the body of the report.

The group also interviewed a number of Officers with professional expertise in relation to leisure services. This included interviews with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Human Resources Officers, the Democratic Services Apprentice and Finance Officers. Evidence was also obtained from the Portfolio

Holder for Leisure and Tourism, Councillor Phil Mould, and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Hartnett.

The group finalised their recommendations in April 2014. One member was not present when the recommendations were agreed and will not be present when the group presents their report. However, he has confirmed that he is supportive of the group's recommendations.

CHAPTER 1: LEISURE TRUST

Recommendation 1	The Council should explore the option for the Abbey Stadium to be managed by a leisure trust.
Financial Implications	There is the potential for significant financial savings to be made through the management of the Abbey Stadium by an external trust. However, the group is only suggesting that this option should be explored further and is not identifying a specific trust model for the future management of the stadium. It is therefore not possible at this stage for the group to outline the exact level of savings that could be secured for the Council if a trust was to manage the stadium.
Legal Implications	The selection of a leisure trust partner to manage the Abbey Stadium on behalf of the Council would be subject to a procurement process. The Council would also need to specify requirements in a legal contract to be agreed by the successful leisure trust.

The review took place in a context of continuing financial constraints for the Council and with this in mind the group was keen to explore any options that might lead to a reduction in costs whilst maintaining quality services at the Abbey Stadium. It became clear from data provided about numerous other leisure venues in the region that leisure facilities were often managed by external trusts on behalf of local authorities. With this in mind the group concluded that it would be useful to visit some leisure facilities run by trusts to learn about this model of management. This led to the group's visits to Evesham Leisure Centre and Stratford Leisure Centre.

Evesham Leisure Centre

The Evesham Leisure Centre was managed by Wychavon Leisure (Community Association Limited) on behalf of Wychavon District Council. Wychavon Leisure had first been awarded the contract to manage the centre in the 1990s in the year in which the trust was established to manage leisure facilities on a not for profit basis. The remit of Wychavon Leisure had since expanded so that the trust was managing leisure centres in a variety of locations and for a number of clients, including local schools, Malvern Hills District Council and Bromsgrove District Council.

The group conducted a detailed interview with senior representatives of Wychavon Leisure and a senior Officer from Wychavon District Council during their visit in December 2013. This included discussions around the operating model, the relationship that the trust had with the local Council, including

Councillors, details of membership packages and information about franchising arrangements. The group also undertook a tour of the facilities which included; two swimming pools, gym facilities, dance studios, badminton courts, sauna/steam room and Jacuzzi, café, beauty therapy treatments and a climbing wall.

Stratford Leisure Centre

The Stratford Leisure Centre was managed by Sports and Leisure Management Limited (SLM) on behalf of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. SLM, which was established in 1987, worked with approximately 25 local authorities in the country and operations were managed by the organisation on a regional basis with the West Region including Stratford and covering 100 leisure centres. The trust had had the contract to manage Stratford Leisure Centre for 20 years and Members were impressed to observe that all marketing materials were provided with dual branding (for both the trust and the Council)..

At the time of the group's visit SLM was in the fourth year of their third contract with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and managed four sites on behalf of the local authority. The Council set performance targets which the trust needed to meet. They have now reached a stage where the trust is in a position to return money to the Council as part of an on going arrangement, though this was only possible after the contract had been in place for a number of years.

As with their visit to Evesham the group conducted an extensive interview with senior representatives of SLM during their visit in February 2014. This interview focused on a variety of issues including; SLM's operating model, aims and objectives; and the group was interested to note that SLM was widening their business portfolio to include museums, theatres and golf courses. The group also was provided with a guided tour of the venue, which was built in the 1970s. Facilities included: two swimming pools, three dance studios, a main hall that could be used for sports such as badminton and five-a-side football, gym facilities, a separate spin room, crèche and nursery, café and extensive retail facilities.

Trust Model Summary

The group identified a number of key advantages to management of a leisure facility by an external trust on behalf of a Council. These included:

- The potential to make financial savings as the trust would be employing the staff and covering overhead costs. However the group is not able to state what savings could be achieved for Redditch Borough Council as they are not specifying which model should be adopted and they recognise that the costs would be subject to the outcome of a procurement exercise.
- There is the possibility to receive an income in the long term, which could be reinvested in the services dependent on the model of trust chosen.
- Trusts have greater flexibility to borrow as well as to bid for external sources of funding than local authorities.

- At each of the venues visited the trusts had helped to invest in the centre, either via the infrastructure or an expansion of the services available.
- Trusts have greater flexibility than the Council to negotiate costs with potential contractors in any procurement process (creating opportunities to expand the venue).
- Staff would potentially be more dedicated to a specific site rather than having to cover various responsibilities as they do at the Council.
- Trusts, particularly those that are well established, often have the expertise and investment in professional marketing techniques which would help to promote the stadium.

The group recognises that if a trust was to manage the Abbey Stadium on behalf of the Council a number of key considerations would need to be addressed for example:

- The content of the contract would need to specify clearly the requirements for managing and maintaining the stadium as well as the governance links between the trust and the Council. Performance monitoring arrangements would also need to be agreed and a break clause would need to be negotiated in the event the working relationship could not continue.
- If a trust was to manage the Stadium on behalf of the Council there is the potential that this could lead to a reduction in income from business rates.
- The position of staff currently employed at the Stadium would need to be considered carefully with options for TUPE transfer to be included in the contract and staff to be consulted alongside trade unions throughout the process.
- Senior Members and Officers may wish to consider whether a contract should be offered to manage the Abbey Stadium alone or alongside other leisure venues in the Borough. The group did not feel they could explore this option further as consideration of other leisure facilities was not within their remit.

Members are therefore proposing that the option for a trust to manage the Abbey Stadium on behalf of the Council should be explored further. However they recognise that there are many different trust models and options available to the Council and they have only investigated two of these arrangements. Members therefore do not feel that at this stage they should specify which model should be adopted.

Recommendation 2	Subject to the Executive Committee agreeing to investigate the trust management option further the Overview and Scrutiny Committee arrange to pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of the Abbey Stadium.
Financial Implications Legal Implications	There are no financial implications to this recommendation. There are no legal implications to this recommendation. Members are asked to note, however, that as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to agree the content of the scrutiny Work Programme this pre-scrutiny can be resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members understand that if Recommendation 1 is approved Officers will need to produce a business case exploring the various options which could be adopted for the management of the stadium by a leisure trust. This business case would need to be reported back to the Executive Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee in recent years has increasingly made a valuable contribution to the decision making process by pre-scrutinising a number of items. It was felt that this business case would be suitable for pre-scrutiny due to the expert knowledge that non-executive Members have gained during this investigation.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to agree the content of its own Work Programme. This recommendation can therefore be resolved upon by the Committee and the Executive Committee will simply be asked to note this decision.

CHAPTER 2: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendation 3	The provision of therapeutic services should be considered under any new trust arrangements put in place in future at the Abbey Stadium.
Financial Implications	<p>(The following is based on the group presupposing that recommendation 1 would be approved).</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications for the Council. If a leisure trust opted to provide therapeutic services at the stadium in the future this could have financial implications for the trust, though the figures involved would vary according to whether the trust provided the services directly or through a franchise arrangement.</p>
Legal Implications	<p>This suggestion would need to be incorporated into a contract with an external trust in order to ensure that the introduction of therapeutic services is investigated as part of future arrangements for managing the stadium.</p>

During the visits to other leisure facilities in the region, and from the data provided in respect of other venues, Members became aware of a number of additional services which could enhance the experience available to their customers. This included:

- Therapeutic services such as massage and other beauty related facilities.
- Sauna and steam rooms.
- Jacuzzi.
- Creche and nursery.

There is increasing competition within the leisure sector locally, following a growth in the number of leisure venues that have been opened in the Borough. Members feel that the offer at the Abbey Stadium needs to be continually updated to ensure that the venue remains an attractive proposition in the face of this competition. Whilst these additional services could help the Council to secure a small amount of income the group believes that the main benefits of these additional services are that they would be extra attractions that would help the stadium both to retain long standing members as well as new customers.

After further investigation the group agreed that the introduction of therapeutic services in particular should be explored further. Therapeutic services could be provided at the stadium in two different ways:

- 1) Delivered directly by a trust managing the Abbey Stadium. This might be more likely to occur if a large trust wins the contract to manage the stadium on behalf of the Council.
- 2) Provided through a franchise arrangement with an external company. This could apply whether the Council or an external trust is managing the Abbey Stadium in the future and would be a useful source of additional revenue as a regular income could be provided through the rent of the premises.

The group believes that it might be more appropriate to explore the potential to introduce therapeutic services at the Abbey Stadium once a decision has been reached in respect of the operational arrangements at the venue.

Recommendation 4	The provision of a sauna/steam room should be considered under any new trust arrangements put in place in future at the Abbey Stadium.
Financial Implications	(The following is based on the group presupposing that Recommendation 1 would be approved). There are no direct financial implications for the Council. The group has been advised that a new sauna / steam room could cost approximately £64,500 to install and a further £8,000 for on going maintenance costs, though the costs would be subject to the outcome of a procurement process. The group is anticipating that these costs would be met by a leisure trust.
Legal Implications	This suggestion would need to be incorporated into a contract with an external trust in order to ensure that the introduction of a sauna / steam room is investigated as part of future arrangements for managing the stadium.

Another of the additional facilities observed by the group during their visits and included in the list above, which Members felt would enhance the membership package available at the Abbey Stadium, was a sauna/steam room. This was a popular facility at both Evesham Leisure Centre and Stratford Leisure Centre and the staff at both venues concurred that whilst not generating significant profit this facility was a useful attraction.

The group discussed this idea in some detail with members of the Leisure Services team. Members were informed that external consultants had advised the Leisure Services team that saunas/steam rooms were being increasingly removed from leisure centres due to the high running costs and limited demand. However, the popularity of the services observed by Members during their visits seemed to contradict this advice.

Members acknowledge the significant financial implications involved in introducing a sauna/steam room at the stadium. Officers have advised that if the Council was to introduce a sauna/steam room the installation costs would be approximately £64,500 and there would be a further estimated £8,000 required to cover annual maintenance costs. Members understand that in the current economic circumstances the Council could not afford to meet these costs. However a trust would have greater flexibility to negotiate prices with potential contractors as part of the procurement process.

CHAPTER 3 - MARKETING

Recommendation 5	Officers should identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years or over.
Financial Implications	More proactive use of particular marketing tools may require some financial investment, though this is likely to be minimal if the Council continues to use existing resources. The group is not specifying which marketing measures should be adopted to achieve this objective and it is therefore not possible to clarify the exact expenditure required.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications to this recommendation.

During the investigation the group received a significant amount of data covering membership figures and usage of the facilities at the Abbey Stadium. Members were advised that there were around 2,500 members of the Abbey Stadium, with monthly membership costs set at £25 for off peak use and £32 for peak use. The group considered that membership of the Abbey Stadium was value for money when compared to the costs of other local leisure facilities. Whilst there was significant use of the facilities during peak times there was more limited use during non-peak hours.

Officers have already recognised the benefits of targeting particular groups through active marketing to increase use of facilities during non-peak hours. Existing groups that are being targeted include:

- Mother and baby groups / Water Babies.
- Particular groups of elderly citizens, including a local Alzheimers' Group
- The Inspire Me Project, a health and wellbeing group.

From the information provided by Officers the group concluded that it was clear that promotional work in respect of these specific groups was carried out effectively. However, after further discussions Members agreed that there was one niche market which had not been targeted but had the potential to make use of the facilities at the stadium during off peak hours. This was people aged 55 and over. The data had shown that membership levels in this age range were currently low.

People aged 55 and over would be ideally placed to take advantage of all aspects of the Abbey Stadium at these times because they are more likely to be retired and / or have more leisure time available during non-peak times. In many

cases people of this generation may have the disposal income to take up this opportunity. The group is aware that promoting these facilities to this age group would enable Officers to address some of the health inequalities, particularly obesity levels, affecting residents living in the local area in line with the Council's commitments under the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy.

The group is not specifying the types of marketing tools that should be used by Officers to target this age range. Instead, they are encouraging Officers to use existing methods more effectively, in particular by concentrating on those tools which are known to appeal more to older residents.

Recommendation 6	There should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retail provision at the Abbey Stadium.
Financial Implications	The group believes there is the potential for retail sales to make a larger contribution to revenue at the Abbey Stadium through secondary spend. However, it is difficult to determine the exact figures involved. If a leisure trust manages the stadium on behalf of the Council this revenue would benefit the trust.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications to this recommendation as the Council already sell some products via a contractual arrangement at the Abbey Stadium.

Whilst it was accepted that currently there are some leisure products available for customers to purchase at the Abbey Stadium Members felt that this was an area which could be expanded further. This could be achieved at a minimal cost to the Council with the potential to generate additional revenue through secondary spend.

The idea that more could be done to promote retail sales was highlighted during the group's visit to Stratford Leisure Centre. In this centre, merchandise was displayed prominently in the reception area and produced a significant income for SLM. Members were also advised that in the opinion of experts within the industry, retail offers can also enhance the customer's experience, particularly in cases where key equipment has been forgotten or broken.

In the event that the Abbey Stadium develops a reputation for selling good quality leisure merchandise it is possible that these sales could help to attract new customers. The group therefore believes that investment in this area can only benefit the Abbey Stadium.

CHAPTER 4 – ITEMS TO NOTE

There were a number of issues that, whilst Members did not feel it was appropriate to use as the source for any recommendations, they wished to highlight in the report.

Car Wash

Early in the review Members identified the potential for a car wash facility to be introduced at the Abbey Stadium. The group felt that, given the close proximity of the stadium to local road networks and to a number of businesses, the introduction of a car wash on the site had the potential to attract significant business and therefore additional revenue for the Council.

Officers were keen from the start to explore this option further to the extent that after investigation it was concluded that a car wash could be introduced at the stadium on a trial basis. At the time of writing the Council was already undertaking a procurement process to identify a suitable company to manage this facility on behalf of the Council.

The group was advised that the permanent introduction of a car wash facility at the Abbey Stadium would be subject to receiving planning permission. In order to receive planning permission for this type of facility the stadium would need to be able to demonstrate that it was able to dispose of contaminated water satisfactorily which could require significant expenditure. Members have raised concerns as to whether these conditions are observed more generally by other car wash facilities in the Borough and feel that this should be investigated further.

Apprenticeship Opportunities

In line with the group's terms of reference Members did interview a representative of the Council's Human Resources team to find out more about employment and apprenticeship opportunities that could be made available at the Abbey Stadium. They were also delighted to have the opportunity to speak directly with the Democratic Services Apprentice, in order to obtain further information about the reasons why young people might apply for an apprenticeship and how opportunities were promoted as well as to hear about her personal experiences of the process.

During their visits to other leisure centres Members found that a large variety of apprenticeship opportunities were available at external trusts. In particular, at larger trusts there were greater employment and training opportunities available for both apprentices and other staff than would be available to staff employed by a local authority.

The group was advised that although in the past an apprentice employed at the stadium had not completed their placement the Leisure Service team was shortly due to employ two new apprentices. Members have been assured that one of these apprentices will be based in the Council's leisure centres. The group

therefore concluded that there was no need to make any recommendations on this subject.

Café

Members visited the café at the Abbey Stadium shortly after it opened in January 2014 and were delighted with the quality of the food and drink on offer. The group feels that this café should be promoted more actively wherever possible to customers as it will both help to enhance the experience of existing members and potentially attract new customers to the stadium.

Bus services

The group investigated the potential for bus links to be extended between the Abbey Stadium and other sites in the Borough. This included considering the potential for the Hopper Community Bus Service, which currently operates between Webheath and the Abbey Stadium, to cover additional routes that would enable residents living or working in various parts of the town to access the venue.

The Task Group review coincided with a review of bus services conducted by Worcestershire County Council. As part of this review the county Council was considering savings that could be achieved from reducing the subsidy the Council allocates to funding these services. Members acknowledged that it was therefore unlikely that Worcestershire County Council would consider funding any additional service for the Hopper Community bus which is provided by that Council.

Options for increasing use of the Dial a Ride service for Abbey Stadium customers were also considered during the review. However, the group was informed that the Dial a Ride service already transported some groups to the stadium. In addition, Members noted that, in line with a recommendation made by the Youth Services Provision Task Group in 2012 Dial a Ride vehicles are now available for groups to hire outside of normal working hours.

Lockers

During the group's visit to the Abbey Stadium Members were advised by female customers that they had concerns about the accessibility of lockers to keep their personal items secure. Following the visit the location of the lockers was changed. The group believes that this demonstrates the value of consultation with customers to the continuing improvement of the venue.

CONCLUSION

Members wish to highlight that despite the fact that the Council is currently experiencing difficult economic circumstance the Abbey Stadium is a well-run, well attended local leisure facility which is an asset to the Borough.

The recent redevelopment of the Abbey Stadium was largely successful. However, there is a danger, as indicated by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, that the stadium could become a victim of its own success. The group felt it was important that the Council does not become complacent about the quality of services available and the ability of the venue not only to retain existing customers but also to attract new customers.

The group's recommendations are designed to contribute to the continuing improvement of the stadium so that it remains an asset for the people of Redditch for the foreseeable future.

APPENDIX 1
Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

Note: The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation	Councillor Derek Taylor	Date of referral	23/07/13
Proposed topic title	Abbey Stadium Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>Redditch Borough Council draft strategic purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide good things for me to do, see and visit. <p>Local Strategic Partnership Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health inequalities – (tackling obesity). • Developing the economy of Redditch. 		
Background to the issue	<p>As Redditch Borough Council's former Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism I was the lead Member for the Abbey Stadium at the time of the reopening in 2012. As the Portfolio Holder I met regularly with Leisure Services Officers and participated in a number of tours of the site. Over the past year I have continued to maintain an interest in the site and continue to use services available at the stadium including the swimming pool and the gym.</p> <p>As anticipated the revamped Abbey Stadium is a very successful venture and reached the targets for membership soon after the opening. We have a substantial site which is well established, with extensive surrounding land, good access and parking. The basics of facility, staffing and management are already in place on land that the Council owns.</p>		

	<p>However, from my business and professional background I believe that we could expand this local, well used facility into something that would benefit the local economy, the Council and ultimately the residents.</p> <p>I believe there is the potential to work with the existing space available to offer more activities, facilities and services. This space needs to be managed in an innovative and flexible manner to ensure that we can meet the changing needs and expectations of visitors to the stadium.</p>
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<p>1) To review the business cases for the revamped Abbey Stadium against current operation, taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) elements, if any, of the business case that were not delivered by the date of the reopening of the Abbey Stadium and the reasons why this occurred; and b) to review the business case for the gym and dance classes. <p><i>(This objective should enable all Members of the Task Group to clarify the current situation for the Abbey Stadium).</i></p> <p>2) To investigate the potential to expand the facilities and activities available at the Abbey Stadium.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) interviewing Portfolio Holder and representatives of the Council's Leisure Services team; b) visiting the Abbey Stadium to view existing use of space, facilities and activities; and c) interviewing members of Redditch Town Centre Partnership to assess views on linking in with the potential day tourist economy in the Town Centre. <p>3) To assess the potential to provide more employment and apprenticeship opportunities for young people at the Abbey Stadium.</p>

	<p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) interviewing representatives of the Council's Leisure Services team; b) interviewing representatives of the Human Resources team; c) interviewing officers from the Department for Work and Pensions. (Jobcentre Plus); and d) investigating the Government Apprenticeship schemes. <p>4) To investigate the potential for Hopper bus services to be expanded between the Abbey Stadium and other sites in the Borough.</p> <p>This could include investigating the potential for subsidies to be provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Redditch Town Centre Partnership; and b) businesses based in the town centre. <p>5) To review the financial costs involved in delivering any actions that could be taken to expand the Abbey Stadium, taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the capital costs; b) the revenue costs; c) potential borrowing costs; and d) the projected return of income from any proposed actions.
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)</p>	<p>I think that this review could be completed within six months by a dedicated Task Group.</p>

APPENDIX 2
Witnesses

The Abbey Stadium Task Group would like to thank the following people for providing evidence during the course of the review:

Scott Brinkworth (Operations Manager, Abbey Stadium)
Frances Collings (Democratic Services Apprentice)
Michael Craggs (Democratic Services Officer until 25th October 2013)
Tim Deakin (Development Manager, Wychavon District Council)
Toni Gaskins (Contract Manager, Stratford Leisure Centre – SLM)
John Godwin (Head of Leisure and Cultural Services)
Sarah Greenlowe (Motivator, SLM)
Councillor Bill Hartnett (Leader of the Council)
Iain Mackay (Senior Enforcement Officer – Planning)
Kay McBride (Evesham Leisure Centre Manager – Wychavon Leisure)
Sam Morgan (Financial Services Manager)
Councillor Phil Mould (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism)
Jayne Pickering (Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources)
Dan Steed (Area Contracts Manager, SLM)
Becky Talbot (Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager)
Dave Wheeler (Leisure Services Manager)
Peter Williams (Business Development, SLM)
Peter Williams (Managing Director, Wychavon Leisure).

APPENDIX 3
Timeline of Activities

Date	Task Group Activity
2nd September 2013	Scoping discussion and interview with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, John Godwin.
26th September	Visit to the Abbey Stadium.
16th October	Consideration of review progress and proposing amendments to the group's terms of reference.
29th October	Considering comparable data for various leisure centres in the country.
5th December	Interviews with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, John Godwin, and the Operations Manager for the Abbey Stadium, Scott Brinkworth. Also initial scrutiny of the draft business case for the gym extension at the Abbey Stadium Sports Centre.
12th December	Visit to Evesham Leisure Centre and interview with representatives of Wychavon Leisure Community Association Ltd.
3rd January 2014	Reflections on progress with the review and initial brainstorm of potential recommendations.
24th January	Visit to the café in the Abbey Stadium.
27th January	Interviews with the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources, Jayne Pickering, and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, John Godwin.
12th February	Visit to Stratford Leisure Centre and interview with representatives of SLM.

25th February	Interview with Councillor Mould, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism.
27th February	Interviews with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager, Becky Talbot, and the Democratic Services Apprentice, Frances Collings.
12th March	Consideration of review progress
3rd April	Interview with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, John Godwin, and the Financial Services Manager, Sam Morgan.
16th April	Consideration of feedback received in writing from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Hartnett, and agreement of the group's recommendations.
3rd June	Finalisation of the group's report.



Executive Committee

8th April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors David Bush, Carole Gandy and Gay Hopkins

Officers:

Emma Baker, Jess Bayley, Clare Flanagan, Stacey Green, Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

Ivor Westmore

160. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Rebecca Blake.

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Resources, declared an other disclosable interest in Item 6 (Football Task Group – Interim Report) as detailed separately at Minute 165 below.

162. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April relating to several items on the Executive Committee agenda had been circulated subsequent to the main agenda pack for this meeting.

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Chair

Executive Committee

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163. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11th March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

164. LANDSCAPING TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

The Committee considered the final report and received a presentation from Councillor Gay Hopkins, Chair of the Landscaping Task Group, on behalf of her Group. She and her fellow Councillors had taken the decision to scrutinise landscaping because it was a key issue for the Council and the residents of the town given the green nature of the Borough and one which prompted many enquiries of elected Members.

The landscaping service was undergoing transformation during the course of the review and Members had the benefit of observing the adoption of new processes being introduced. It was apparent to Members engaged in the review that the introduction of multi-operative working by staff on the ground was having benefits for both the areas in which they were operating and for the staff themselves in that they were achieving a greater level of job satisfaction. The positive effects on the landscape in the Winyates area, where the new way of working was being undertaken, was demonstrated through the presentation. Customer satisfaction and community engagement were both reported to be increasing overall as a result.

The Task Group wished to ensure that Members were made aware of the work of the landscaping service generally and of particular landscaping issues within their local areas through regular updates and annual reporting. A suggestion was also made that the Council should consider the potential to generate revenue to fund the service through bulk planting and the sale of logs.

The Executive Committee welcomed the report and commended the enthusiasm of the Members who had been engaged in the review. The Committee broadly supported the recommendations although there was a degree of concern expressed at staff capacity. This concern was expressed in terms of the provision of updates to local Members and also around the carrying out of a feasibility study into bulk planting. It was explained that information for particular areas could be provided from the existing software relatively easily, although there was a cost implication for providing the same information on a Ward by Ward basis. Members were keen to see the provision of such information carried out on a trial

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basis initially to establish take-up rates. The proposal to investigate bulk planting was stated to have been supported by Officers although it was conceded that this would be a limited feasibility study given that it was not a core Council activity.

RESOLVED that

- 1) new Members should be invited to visit teams responsible for tree maintenance, landscaping and cleansing services as part of the Member Induction process to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
 - a) a short briefing outlining the work of the place intervention, tree intervention and landscaping teams should be provided prior to a Council meeting early in the municipal year to provide those Members who are unable to participate in the member induction visit with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
- 2) a contact list of key senior and operational Officers, containing the telephone and email details together with the basic information about the Officers' responsibilities, should be provided for the consideration of Members;**
- 3) Members should be provided with updates on progress made addressing landscaping issues that they have referred to Officers at the request of residents including at the point of resolution;**
- 4) data relating to landscaping cases reported for each area be provided for Members' consideration on an annual basis. Every Member should receive data for the areas they cover on a trial basis initially to gauge levels of take-up across the Council and with the option to receive or not according to Members' wishes;**
- 5) one of the Environmental Services Teams' performance measures should be to monitor the number of landscape cases that take longer than six months to resolve. The information obtained through this monitoring process should be reported in the strategic measures for consideration of Senior Officers and elected Members;**

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- 6) **Officers should undertake a feasibility study, risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to assess the potential for the Council to bulk plant trees in Council open spaces and other appropriate locations. This feasibility study should take into account the following matters:**
- a) **the legal implications, if any, of this action;**
 - b) **the financial costs involved in planting and maintaining these plants;**
 - c) **the availability of grants from the government and other sources to help pay for bulk planting in the Borough;**
 - d) **demand within the market;**
 - e) **where bulk planting would take place in the Borough;**
 - f) **the size of the plots available for bulk planting;**
 - g) **the implications for the Council's Planning Department in relation to the Local Plan;**
 - h) **the potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council; and**
- 7) **Officers should investigate how to dispose of logs in a way that would maximise income for the Council. Part of this investigation should involve a risk assessment. Any revenue from these sales should be reinvested in landscaping services.**

165. FOOTBALL TASK GROUP - INTERIM REPORT

The Committee received an Interim Report from the Football Task Group. The Interim Report outlined the conclusion of the Group's deliberations on just one of the Group's three objectives, that of investigating the sustainability of Redditch United FC for the future. This had been prioritised given the potential financial impact of the outcome on the Football Club.

Councillor David Bush, Chair of the Group, and Carole Gandy, Group Member, outlined the findings of the Review to date. They stated that the Task Group approach had allowed Members to speak to a range of specialist Officers from across a range of Council services which had provided them with a comprehensive picture of the issues to be faced in a possible relocation of the Football Club. These included having to factor in potentially costly flood risk analysis and attenuation measures at the new site, the effect of the Council's policies on affordable housing provision on the viability of the proposed housing development, the constraints on housing development resulting from limited road access to the existing football ground and the potential impact on any relocation

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proposal of contravention of EU laws on State Aid. The outcome of the initial stage of the review was that the Task Group could not support the proposal to relocate Redditch United Football Club to a new site at Washford. Councillors Bush and Gandy explained that the benefit of the Group's review was in being able to bring such matters to the fore over a period of time and avoid any perception that decisions were being taken in this regard behind the scenes.

A number of Members commented that the outcome of the deliberations of the Task Group vindicated the position taken in November by the Executive Committee. The fact that a considerable portion of the information which had come out during the course of the Task Group's work had not been in the public domain at the time of the Executive Committee meeting was attributed to an unwillingness on the part of the Football Club to allow disclosure at that time. In addition, there was some dispute as to how much information had been provided in support of the previous decision to not support the relocation proposal, although this was tempered by a demonstrable lack of financial viability which rendered other considerations secondary. The convening of the special Executive Committee meeting in November was also discussed and it was suggested that the Council had been pushed in the direction of an early decision by the actions of the Football Club. There was a suggestion that the Club had felt there to be a breakdown in communications with the Council but it was stressed that the Council continued to work with the Club to explore options for the future.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the interim report of the Football Task Group be received and noted: and**
- 2) Redditch United Football Club be encouraged to discuss with Officers how to make the best use of the current football club site and to look at more local options to accommodate its expansion.**

(Prior to consideration of this item Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Resources, declared an other disclosable interest, in view of her close relationship to a user of the club's facilities, and withdrew from the meeting.)

166. PLANNING RESPONSE TO STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY - FOCUSED CONSULTATION: 2011 - 2031 HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND STRATEGIC SITES OPTIONS

The Committee considered a request for retrospective approval of a consultation response from Officers to the Stratford on Avon Draft

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Focused Consultation – 2011-2031 Housing Requirements and Strategic Site Options. It was noted that the response, which had previously been considered by the Planning Advisory Panel, reiterated the Council's position on the avoidance of coalescence between Redditch, Studley and Mappleborough Green.

RECOMMENDED that

the Redditch Borough Council Officer response (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) to the SOADC Focused Consultation be approved.

167. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 20th February 2014.

It had been recommended that the Council consider introducing a pilot methodology for dealing with planning consultations and noise nuisance complaints which had been trialled in Worcester City. Members were concerned that the methodology might not translate easily to a Redditch context, urged caution and therefore

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers pilot the changes to planning referrals and report back to Executive Committee after 6 months; and**
- 2) Officers be requested to present a report to the July meeting of the Executive Committee in relation to the proposed changes to the management of noise complaints.**

168. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th March 2014 and a recommendation arising from an item considered at the subsequent meeting on 1st April 2014.

In respect of the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March, Members discussed the recommendations in respect of Threadneedle House but confirmed that, as the Executive Committee had previously determined the course of action it wished to pursue, it could not agree those recommendations.

Executive Committee

8th April 2014**RESOLVED that**4th March 2014

- 1) **the recommendations 1) and 2) from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of Threadneedle House not be approved as the Executive Committee had previously determined its position in this regard; and**

1st April 2014

- 2) **the Member Development Steering Group be asked to extend participation in the annual disability awareness session to all members rather than to confine it to new members in the Member Induction process.**

169. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

170. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The regular update on the activity of the Council's Advisory Panel's and similar bodies was considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

171. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee's Action Monitoring report was considered by Members. Officers undertook to report back to Councillor Brunner on the cost of holding the November Executive Committee meeting by the next meeting of this Committee. It was noted that Members had been provided with an update on the likely impact of County Council funding decisions on the Lifeline service at the most recent meeting of the Council.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.31 pm

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Chair

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

3 July 2014 to 31 October 2014

(published as at 3rd June 2014)

This Plan gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Borough Council's Executive Committee.

(NB: There may be occasions when the Executive Committee may make recommendations to Council for a final decision. e.g. to approve a new policy or variation to the approved budget.)

Whilst the majority of the Executive Committee's business at the meetings listed in this Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. This is called exempt information. Members of the public and media may be asked to leave the meeting when such information is discussed.

If an item is likely to contain exempt information we show this on the Work Programme. You can make representations to us if you consider an item or any of the documents listed should be open to the public.



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Borough Council's Executive Committee, or full Council, in the coming four months.

“Key Decisions” are ones which are likely to:

- (i) **result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £50,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or**
- (ii) **be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in the area comprising two or more wards in the Borough;**
- (iii) **involve any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).**

The Work Programme is available for inspection free of charge at the Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays; or on the Council's website (www.redditchbc.gov.uk).

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided. Alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, The Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Executive Committee's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 7pm on Tuesday evenings at the Town Hall. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527) 64252, ext: 3269 to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any other queries, Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you.

The full Council meets in accordance the Council's Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 7.00pm.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (to be confirmed at the Annual Meeting, 9th June 2014)

Councillor Bill Hartnett	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership & Partnership
Councillor G Chance	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development, Public Transport
Councillor John Fisher	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Councillor Rebecca Blake	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Regulatory Services
Councillor Mark Shurmer	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Debbie Taylor	Portfolio Holder for Local Environment & Health
Councillor Phil Mould	Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism
Councillor Juliet Brunner	
Councillor Brandon Clayton	

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Planning Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy - Focussed Consultation: 2011 - 2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Sites Options Key: Yes	Council 14 Jul 2014		Report of the Head of planning and Regeneration	Stacey Green, Development Plans Officer Tel: 01527 881342
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Key: Yes	Executive 24 Jun 2014		Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	A de Warr, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3177
Review of the Town Hall Concessionary Use Key: Yes	Executive 24 Jun 2014		Report of the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services	John Godwin, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services Tel: 01527 881762
Muslim Burial Chambers at Abbey Cemetery Key: Yes	Executive 24 Jun 2014 Council 14 July 2014		Report of the Head of Environmental Services	G Revans, Head of Environmental Services Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292
Land to rear of Middle House Lane - Disposal Key: Yes	Executive 24 Jun 2014	(This report may contain exempt information)	Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Amanda de Warr, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3177

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Local Development Scheme 2014 and Community Infrastructure Levy Key: Yes	Executive 24 Jun 2014 Council 14 Jul 2014		Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Stacey Green, Development Plans Officer Tel: 01527 881342
Changes in Funding for Extra Care Scheme Key: Yes	Executive, 29 Jul 2014 Council, 15 Sep 2014		Report of the Head of Housing	Emma Cartwright, Housing Performance and Database Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3994
Recovery Policy Key: Yes	Executive 28 Oct 2014		Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	A de Warr, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3177
Job Evaluation Key: Yes	Executive		Report of the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Becky Talbot, Human Resources and Development Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3385
Tenancy Policy Key: No	Executive		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Leisure, Environmental & Community Services)	Derek Allen, Strategic Housing Manager Tel: 01527 881278

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Housing Allocations Policy - Review Key: No	Executive Council		Report of the Head of Housing	L Tompkin, Head of Housing Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3304

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

17th June 2014

WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	Minutes of previous meeting Consideration of the Executive Committee Work Programme Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Referrals from Council or Executive Committee, etc. (if any) Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. Quarterly Tracker Report	Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

17th June 2014

	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Bi-Annual Monitoring Report – Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy</p>	<p>Redditch Borough Council representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED		
10th June 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Training	Relevant Lead Head of Service
17th June 2014	Abbey Stadium Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Gandy
17th June 2014	Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Training	Relevant Lead Head of Service
17th June 2014	Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Mason
22nd July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker – First Quarter Update	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd July 2014	Positive Activities Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd July 2014	Voluntary Sector Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Witherspoon

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

17th June 2014

2nd September 2014	Leisure Services Fees and Charges Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
2nd September 2014	Sickness Absence Policy – Consideration of Laminated A5 Guides	Relevant Lead Head of Service
2nd September 2014	Sustainable Community Strategy – Monitoring Update Report	Relevant Lead Director
September / October 2014	Future Years Financial Plan – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
21st October 2014	Market Task Group – Monitoring Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		
	Football Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Bush
	Former Covered Market Area – Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Abbey Stadium Gym Extension Business Case – Pre-scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Healthwatch Worcestershire – Update Report	

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

17th June 2014

	Proposed Housing Review – Submission of Scoping Document	Councillor Brazier
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