



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 22nd July,
2014
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch

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**Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce
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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.

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The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.



Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: Jane Potter (Chair) Carole Gandy
 Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) Alan Mason
 Joe Baker Paul Swansborough
 David Bush Pat Witherspoon
 Andrew Fry

<p>1. Apologies and named substitutes</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)</p>	<p>To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>4. Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group - Final Report (Pages 15 - 62) Councillor Pat Witherspoon</p>	<p>To consider the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group's final report and to determine whether to support the group's recommendations.</p> <p>(Report attached, presentation to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>5. Community Infrastructure Levy - Presentation Emma Baker, Development Plans Manager</p>	<p>To consider information about the Community Infrastructure Levy.</p> <p>(Members may want to refer to item six of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th June when this subject was also considered).</p> <p>(Presentation to follow).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014

<p>6. Task Group Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents</p> <p>(Pages 63 - 72)</p> <p>Councillor Joe Baker, Councillor Bill Hartnett, Leader of the Council, Councillor Jane Potter, Councillor Pat Witherspoon</p>	<p>To consider any scoping documents provided for possible Overview and Scrutiny review.</p> <p>(The documents have been listed in the order in which they were received).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of Support Networks for LGBT Community – Proposed by Councillor Baker• Tackling Obesity – Proposed by Councillor Potter• Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy – Proposed by Councillor P Witherspoon <p>(Draft scoping documents attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>7. Overview and Scrutiny Training Session Two - Feedback</p> <p>(Pages 73 - 84)</p> <p>Councillor Jane Potter</p>	<p>To discuss the outcomes of the second half of the Overview and Scrutiny Training session held on 2nd July.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>8. Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker - First Quarter Report</p> <p>(Pages 85 - 102)</p>	<p>To consider the first quarter update on action that has been taken to implement recommendations made as part of the Overview and Scrutiny process.</p> <p>(Report attached).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme</p> <p>(Pages 103 - 116)</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>

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014

<p>10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 117 - 120)</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>11. Task Groups - Progress Reports Councillor David Bush</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Football Task Group – Chair, Councillor Bush. <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>12. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Pat Witherspoon</p>	<p>To receive a verbal update on the recent work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(Verbal report)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014

13. 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’.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Natalie Brookes (substituting for Councillor Andrew Fry), David Bush, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, Paul Swansborough and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Rod Laight (Chair of the joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group, Bromsgrove District Council) and Mr Derek Taylor (co-opted member of the Abbey Stadium Task Group).

Officers:

S Brinkworth, Kevin Dicks and Dave Wheeler

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Andrew Fry. Councillor Natalie Brookes attended as his substitute.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

4. JOINT WRS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Committee welcomed councillor Rod Laight, Chair of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group, from Bromsgrove District Council, and invited him to deliver a presentation on the subject of the review.

During the delivery of this presentation the following issues were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The review had originally been proposed in July 2012 but, due to delays arising from the consultation process with every Council in Worcestershire, it had not been possible to start the exercise until September 2013.
- Each of the seven Councils in Worcestershire had agreed to participate in the review.
- The group had proposed 12 recommendations focusing on particular themes.
- The group had found that in the past there had been inconsistent monitoring of service performance. This was partly due to ICT problems, though these had been resolved.
- Communications had been a significant weakness identified by the group. Due to poor communications the public and Councillors struggled to contact the service.
- There were also problems with process for communicating developments with Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) from members of the Worcestershire shared Services Joint Committee to other elected Members at partner authorities.
- One of the key challenges facing the shared service was the financial support available from partner organisations. In recent years financial austerity had impacted on many of the partners and a number were requesting significant savings placing the future of the partnership at risk.
- To address these financial challenges Officers were considering entering into a strategic partnership with a private sector partner.
- The governance of the shared service had also been a significant issue considered by the group. Members had concluded that the current governance arrangements were too complex and did not enable the partnership to operate effectively. In some cases, the group had concluded that elements of the governance structure were in fact undermining the shared service.
- A number of lessons had been learned during the review, with implications both for future shared services and for any further joint scrutiny exercises.
- Despite current difficulties with WRS the Task Group had concluded that the benefits of the shared service outweighed

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

these problems and that it was essential to retain an effective partnership into the future.

Following presentation of the group's report a number of additional issues were raised by Members.

- Disappointment was expressed regarding the limited number of responses that had been received from other Councillors consulted during the review about WRS.
- The potential impact of proposed budget reductions on service levels. In particular, concerns were expressed that if Worcestershire County Council's budget cuts went ahead as planned the trading standards function in Worcestershire would not necessarily have the resilience to cope with local demand.
- The benefits of having a Member Liaison Officer for Councillors to contact.
- Concerns were expressed that residents as well as local public sector bodies did not always appreciate the valuable contribution made by Regulatory Services to public health, safety and fair trading.
- The benefits of preventing issues from arising and the risk that as a result of budgets being reduced too heavily the shared service would become more reactive than proactive.
- The fact that budgets had already been reduced significantly. There would come a point where further reductions could not be undertaken without the future of the partnership being placed at risk.
- The progress that had been made in relation to the proposed strategic partnership between WRS and a private sector partner. Five companies had already expressed an interest in entering into a strategic partnership, though no final decisions had been made on the subject by the date of the meeting.
- The development of the existing budget matrix to enable partners to reduce budgets whilst continuing to receive services that met local needs. The matrix had been designed to enable partners to assess the risks involved in reducing budgets for particular service areas.
- The benefits of sharing services across such a large number of partners. In particular, it was noted that as a result of sharing services partners were able to access expertise and resources that would not have otherwise been available to their customers if the service had been retained in house.
- The need for Members of the WRS Board (currently the Joint Committee) to be appropriately trained and briefed on the subject of regulatory services and who were willing to commit to learning about and engaging with the service effectively.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

- The potential impact, in terms of workload, if the Chief Executive of the host authority was to assume a mentoring role for the Head of Regulatory Services. Officers confirmed that this would not have a significant impact as this mentoring role was largely already implemented.
- The benefits involved in disbanding the Management Board as proposed by the group. The Task Group had found that members of the Management Board tended to interfere in operational matters, despite the fact that many did not have experience or training in this sphere unlike members of WRS staff. This was making it difficult for WRS staff, particularly senior officers, to undertake their work effectively and was encouraging both Members and Officers to focus on the needs of individual authorities rather than on how to make the shared service and effective partnership.
- The role of the joint committee which had been delegated with the power to make some decisions on behalf of all partner organisations. For this reason the Task Group's recommendations would be referred to the Joint Committee before the Council's Executive Committee was invited to consider the group's findings.

The Committee also discussed the value of joint scrutiny exercises. Members noted that this was the first joint scrutiny exercise involving every Council in Worcestershire that had been hosted by a local authority other than Worcestershire County Council. Members suggested that it would be useful to undertake further joint scrutiny reviews, as and when appropriate, in future. Due to the complicated nature of this joint scrutiny two Democratic Services Officers, Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce, had supported the review. The Chair of the review thanked them for the support that they had provided to this exercise, however, it was suggested that if further joint scrutiny exercises were to take place in the future all partners should be encouraged to contribute equally to the review process at both a Member and Officer level. This would help to minimise stress levels amongst both Officers and Members and ensure that there was a common level of understanding of the review's aims and outcomes when reports were delivered back to participating authorities.

RECOMMENDED to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee that

- 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;**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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";
- 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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 12 a) the Joint Scrutiny Protocol should be reviewed in order to take on board the lessons learned during this review; and
- 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.
5. **ABBEY STADIUM TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Carol Gandy, as Chair of the Task Group, introduced the presentation and provided background information. Former Councillor, Derek Taylor was welcomed back as a co-opted

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

member of the Task Group. It was confirmed that all Members of the Task Group had been in support of the six recommendations put forward in the report.

Members were provided with background information in respect of the scrutiny exercise and the areas which the Task Group had covered, which had included the scoping document being amended following details of a forthcoming business case for the Abbey Stadium being put forward. It was now understood that this had been delayed and would not be brought before the Executive Committee until the autumn.

It was appreciated that in order to make improvements to the Stadium significant financial investment would be required. The Task Group had therefore looked at other ways to allow the Council to continue to provide the service as an alternative going forward. As part of the investigation the Task Group had therefore, following a visit to the Abbey Stadium, visited other leisure facilities throughout the country which were run by various types of leisure trusts.

Those visits included Evesham Leisure Centre, which was run by Wychavon Leisure on behalf of Wychavon District Council. The trust was run on a not-for-profit basis and from the information provided in a detailed interview with officers at the site it was understood the contract did not include any form of performance targets. It was a relatively new centre which had excellent facilities and Members had been very keen to note that the sauna and steam room were well used and looked upon as a good addition to encourage and maintain membership.

The Task Group had also visited Stratford Leisure Centre, which was of a similar age to the Abbey Stadium. This was run by Sports and Leisure Management Limited (SLM) on behalf of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. Members were provided with details of the contract history (they had held the contract at Stratford for over 20 years) together with how the centre was dual branded and had strict performance management targets to meet. SLM was much larger and worked with approximately 25 other local authorities, which enabled them to have access to an excellent IT system in order to monitor membership and undertake targeted marketing on a regular basis.

Councillor Gandy was keen to assure Members that under recommendation 1, the Task Group was not recommending a specific model of trust, as it had only looked at two options and Members were aware that there were many other types available.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

It was therefore imperative that if this recommendation was accepted then careful consideration was given to all options in order to make an informed decision and to ensure the best outcome for both the Council and its resident.

Councillor Mason provided a summary of the thinking behind recommendations 3, 4, and 5 and in doing so highlighted the following:

- The inclusion of therapeutic services in order to enhance the leisure centre experience.
- The additional revenue that could be gained from these services via a franchise arrangement.
- Similarly the introduction of a sauna/steam room would be an additional benefit to encourage both the retention of current members and act as an incentive for new customers to join the centre.
- There were some off peak times, particularly during the day when the Task Group felt specific groups of residents could be encouraged to invest in membership at the Stadium.
- Specific marketing tools should be considered to promote the Stadium.

Former Councillor, Mr Derek Taylor, provided background information in respect of recommendation 6 and informed Members that he had found his previous experience as the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism invaluable during the investigation. Mr Taylor highlighted the following:

- The current limited amount and variety of goods available to purchase at the stadium and how this could be improved.
- Improvements which could be made to marketing and displays in order to increase sales and revenue.
- The possibility of a major sports supplier franchise being considered.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to the introduction of a car wash facility at the Abbey Stadium. Councillor Gandy provided background information in to this suggestion and explained that when this had been further investigated by the Task Group they were informed that there were a number of planning implications attached to this if it were to become a permanent fixture, including the disposal of the contaminated water. Officers had been keen to take this suggestion further and had already investigated the option of installing a temporary facility. However, the Task Group wished to draw to the Committee's attention the restrictions which the Council had faced in looking at this option as it was understood

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

there were a number of car wash facilities throughout the Borough which might not be meeting the conditions set down by planning regulations.

Following the presentation the Task Group members and supporting Officers responded to questions and the Committee made observations, which covered the following areas:

- Concern over whether people were able to access the facilities without their membership cards being swiped, thus allowing those without membership to access the Stadium. Officers responded by acknowledging that this was a valid point and was an issue which was being addressed.
- “Checking in” at the reception desk (which would address the issue above) and concerns around members having to queue, which might be off putting.
- The location of the Stadium and the luxury of free parking being available.
- The positioning of merchandise and the type of goods which would be popular. Officers confirmed that “wet” products were the most popular items for sale.
- Officers confirmed that they believed the Abbey Stadium was the only local gym facility which allowed under 18s to be members.
- Staff discounts – Members requested details of what percentage of the overall membership were currently Council staff.
- Membership schemes, including families and couples.
- Expansion of the merchandise area and the inclusion of protein type products.

Officers suggested that Members might wish to consider what they saw as the purpose of the Abbey Stadium and the Leisure Team; whether it was to contribute towards the health and wellbeing of residents or purely to be run on a commercial basis. Members agreed it was important to encourage people to participate and enjoy a variety of sports. However, there was the potential for partnership working with GPs and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) which to address health and well being. Members also commented that it was important that the Abbey Stadium was inclusive for all and that those residents from the areas of highest need were encouraged and supported to use the facility.

Whilst discussing the option for a leisure trust to run the Abbey Stadium it was highlighted that a contract could contain whatever the Council wanted. Members expressed concerns that any decision taken on this subject should not be made solely by Officers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

as there was an opportunity for them to, indirectly, have a conflict of interest.

The Committee discussed the other leisure facilities within the Borough and the potential to extend trust arrangements to incorporate these facilities. Councillor Gandy explained that although it was acknowledged that these centres were in need of refurbishment it was not appropriate to include them within this Task Group's recommendations as they had not been part of their terms of reference. She also explained that one of the trusts the group had investigated had also managed other areas such as theatres and museum on behalf of local authorities and this was therefore also an option that the Council could potentially explore in the future.

The Committee thanked the Abbey Stadium Task Group Members for the presentation and the detailed and informative report.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council should explore the option for the Abbey Stadium to be managed by a leisure trust;**
- 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;**
- 3) the provision of therapeutic services should be considered under any new trust arrangements put in place in future at the Abbey Stadium;**
- 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;**
- 5) Officers should identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years and over; and**
- 6) there should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retain provision at the Abbey Stadium.**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING - FEEDBACK

The Chair reminded Members that the training session on 10th June had been cut short due to some needing to attend another meeting. The second part of the training had consisted of two separate exercises that were designed to assist work planning for the coming municipal year. It was suggested that these could take place prior to the next meeting of the Committee. However, as a number of Members had other commitments that evening it was agreed that Officers would look at alternative dates.

RESOLVED that

Officers canvas alternative dates in order for the training exercises to be completed.

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

For the benefit of new Members to the Committee, Officers explained the Executive Committee minutes and Work Programme were standing items on the agenda and provided them with the opportunity to select any reports which could be pre-scrutinised in order for the Committee's views to contribute to the Executive's decision making process. Officers highlighted that due to the timing of the Executive meetings, which were the week following the Scrutiny Committee's meetings, Members should ensure that sufficient time was available for such pre-scrutiny to take place.

The minutes also enabled the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to track whether any recommendations it had made had been agreed by the Executive Committee. Officers highlighted that in the attached minutes a number of recommendations made by the Landscaping Task Group and the Football Task Group had been accepted together with a recommendation made by the Committee on the subject of Member Development. However, two recommendations pertaining to the sale of Threadneedle House had been rejected on the basis that the Executive Committee had already agreed an alternative decision on the subject.

In respect of the Executive Committee Work Programme, Members discussed the impact of the Local Development Scheme 2014 and Community Infrastructure Levy item and although the timescale did not permit the opportunity for pre-scrutiny it was felt information on this subject would be useful for the Committee to receive.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Officers be asked to provide a summary report in respect of the Local Development Scheme 2014 and Community Infrastructure Levy; and**
- 2) **that minutes of the Executive Committee held on 8th April and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.**

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers invited Members to consider the Committee's own Work Programme. Whilst there were a number of standing items on this, it was explained that there was flexibility for Members to both add and remove items from it if they so wished.

Councillor David Bush explained, that in his role as the previous Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee he had recently received a letter from a local resident which referenced a charitable donation made to the Council for the purpose of providing a number of defibrillator units. Questions had been raised as to whether all of these defibrillators had been installed. As this was a charitable donation Councillor Bush asked that this matter be investigated and a response provided for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the relevant Officers be asked to provide an update on the provision of defibrillators purchased through this charitable donation.

9. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Officers explained that at each meeting the Chair of each Task Group was asked to provide a verbal update to inform Members of the progress of the investigation. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to ensure that the terms of reference were being adhered to and that the deadline for the review remained realistic. It also provided the Chair of the Task Group with an opportunity to highlight any particular areas or to ask for an extension if deemed necessary.

- a) Football Task Group – Chair, Councillor David Bush

Councillor Bush reminded Members that an interim report had been brought to the April meeting and unfortunately since that

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

date, due to the elections and other commitments, the Task Group had not held any further meetings. It was anticipated that a meeting would be arranged following the by election on 17th July and the second part of the report would be brought to the October meeting.

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

Councillor Witherspoon explained that the Task Group's investigations were completed, with only one further meeting planned. The final report would therefore be presented as expected at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

1) the Football Task Group complete their review by October 2014; and

2) the update reports be noted.

10. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

For the benefit of new Members, Officers explained that in a two tier local government system health scrutiny powers rested with the county council. In Worcestershire the county's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) included a representative from each District and the Redditch representative was Councillor Pat Witherspoon. Councillor Witherspoon provided a verbal update on the work of the HOSC at each meeting of the Committee and this also provided an opportunity for the Members of the Committee to discuss any particular issues which they wanted to see raised at HOSC on their behalf.

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that the latest meeting of HOSC had been held on 17th June and the bulk of the meeting had been taken up with a presentation on the development of the Integrated Community Team Hubs around the county. The aim of these was to encourage people to go to the clinics, which were closer to home, rather than the acute hospitals. There would eventually be five Community Treatment Centres across the county providing a variety of services. A further update on these new facilities would be provided in the autumn.

The HOSC had also been informed that the Acute Hospitals Trust Review would be holding a further formal public consultation from

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

the beginning of September and the HOSC would receive a presentation on the process at its next meeting.

Concerns had also been raised at the meeting in respect of charges being made for the provision of incontinence pads. Councillor Witherspoon had been particularly concerned about what appeared to be a very large variation in the amount charged by different GPs for the provision of a written assessment for those with a disability. It was understood that HOSC or the Health and Wellbeing Board would investigate the inconsistency of these charges, which ranged from £18.50 to £125.00.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.18 pm



Overview & Scrutiny

Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group

CONTENTS

	Page Number
Chair's Foreword	2
Summary of Recommendations	3
Introduction/Background Information	9
Chapter 1: The Council's Grants' Programme	12
Chapter 2: Working Differently Together	23
Chapter 3: Volunteering	28
Chapter 4: Marketing and Communications	34
Conclusion	37
Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference	38
Appendix 2 - Witnesses	42
Appendix 3 - Timeline of Activities	43
Appendix 4 – Declarations of Interest	45

Membership of the Task Group

Councillors Pat Witherspoon (Chair) and Andrew Brazier and former Councillor Roger Hill.

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Completed

July 2014

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FOREWORD

This review of the Voluntary and Community Sector has taken almost a year and although the group fulfilled their objectives it was impossible to look at all groups who have received either grants or other support from Redditch Borough Council over the years. We were aware of the sensitivity that any scrutiny may arouse but we all agreed that Redditch Borough Council must have a robust, transparent grants process fair to all recipients.

Needless to say we as a very small Task Group, relied heavily on the two officers who have been stretched to the limit (with other Task Groups running at the same time) compiling our research and supporting us. Both Jessica and Amanda have our gratitude.



**Councillor Pat Witherspoon,
Chair of the Voluntary and
Community Sector Task
Group**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**CHAPTER 1: THE COUNCIL'S GRANTS PROGRAMME****Recommendation 1**

The following should be addressed in relation to the Council's grants programme:

- a) the timescales for the Council's grants process should be reviewed to ensure that decisions are made in sufficient time to enable Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to plan constructively for the year ahead;
- b) the geographical spread of the client base for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations should be taken into account by the Grants Panel as part of the scoring process when considering applications for grants;
- c) the template for the Council's application form for Council grants should be reviewed; and
- d) formal minutes should be taken at meetings of the Council's Grants Panel.

Financial Implications: Additional time would be required from Democratic Services Officers to minute meetings of the Grants Panel. However, the financial implications are likely to be minimal as attendance at evening meetings is already a consistent part of their jobs and can be covered by existing budgets.

Legal implications: There are no specific legal implications.

Recommendation 2

The following actions should be taken in respect of the members of the Grants Panel:

- a) formal training should be provided to Members of the Grants Panel;
- b) wherever possible members of the Grants Panel should visit Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that have been awarded larger project grants as part of the monitoring process. These visits should take place before the second instalment of funding is provided to the organisations.

Financial Implications: There will be a minimal cost associated with Members visiting organisations, however, it is anticipated this will be met from existing budgets.

Legal implications: There are no specific legal implications.

Recommendation 3

The implications of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 should be considered by Officers to ensure that the Council's grants process is amended as and when required. Officers should ensure that any changes that are made to the process in response to these requirements take account of local needs.

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications as a result of this recommendation.

Legal implications: There are no specific legal implications.

CHAPTER 2: WORKING DIFFERENTLY TOGETHER**Recommendation 4**

The Council should employ an apprentice to support the work of the Grants Officer. Consideration should be given to sharing this apprentice with a Voluntary and Community Sector organisation.

Financial Implications: There are costs associated with an apprentice, however, there is a current budget allocation to support the recruitment of an apprentice. This could be considered should Members agree this recommendation.

Legal implications: There are no specific legal implications.

Recommendation 5

***The Framework Agreement for the Provision of Debt and Budgeting Advice to be Delivered Within the Locality areas in Redditch* should continue to be supported by the Council for the foreseeable future.**

Financial Implications: As the framework is already in place there are no additional financial implications to this recommendation.

Legal implications: As this framework is already in place there are no additional legal implications.

Recommendation 6

An informal working group of Council Officers should be formed to discuss and share knowledge about current joint working with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. These informal meetings would also provide an opportunity for different teams to identify further opportunities to work with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and highlight any duplication of work.

- a) Dedicated space should be introduced on the Council's intranet to allow Officers working with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and / or volunteers to share information.**

Financial Implications: There should be limited financial implications to this recommendation. Relevant Officers would need to spend a small amount of time meeting during the year, though the group is not envisaging that these meetings would be onerous or too time consuming. There is the potential that if opportunities to work together are identified as well as any potential risks of duplication then these meetings could help the Council to achieve financial savings in the long-term.

Whilst some time would be required to add information to the Council's intranet the group is not anticipating that this task would be too onerous or costly.

Legal Implications: There may be a need for information sharing protocols to be put in place.

CHAPTER 3: VOLUNTEERING**Recommendation 7**

The following actions should be taken in relation to the Staff Volunteering Policy:

- a) **the policy should be refreshed and promoted; and**
- b) **a taster list of local volunteering opportunities should be advertised on the “Briefcase” section of the Council’s intranet for the consideration of staff. In particular, consideration should be given to advertising volunteering opportunities that would help to address the Council’s strategic purposes.**

Financial Implications: Officer time would be required to review the Staff Volunteering Policy. However, the policy is already scheduled to be refreshed so this action would not add any extra workload for Officers. There would also be a small amount of time required to upload volunteering opportunities onto the Briefcase. However, the group is only suggesting that a “taster” sample of opportunities should be displayed on the intranet which should help to limit the workload.

Legal Implications: A disclaimer to protect the Council in respect of staff participating in volunteering activity is required. However, as the policy has been in place since 2011 the group is working on the basis that the Council has gained some practice in addressing this legal requirement.

Recommendation 8

A Staff Award should be created to recognise the voluntary work carried out by members of staff.

Financial Implications: In previous years employees who have won a staff award have received a small payment in recognition of their achievement. If this is set to continue in future a similar payment would need to be offered to any member of staff who wins this award.

Legal Implications: There are no specific legal implications.

CHAPTER 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**Recommendation 9**

The Council should work with local businesses and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to introduce a “Redditch Hour” on twitter and other social networks.

Financial Implications: There would not be any significant financial implications in relation to this recommendation for the Council.

Legal Implications: There are no specific legal implications.

Recommendation 10

A Voluntary Sector Event should be held on a regular basis to help promote

- a) **the work of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to each other as well as potential customers; and**
- b) **volunteering opportunities to local residents.**

This event could potentially be aligned to existing events that are already take place.

Financial Implications: Financial investment would be required to organise and host this type of event. The level of financial investment required would depend on the scale of the event and regularity of these events. The costs associated with this recommendation would have to be clearly identified.

Legal Implications: There are no specific legal implications.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Councillor Pat Witherspoon suggested that the Voluntary and Community Sector would be a suitable topic to scrutinise in August 2013. This exercise was considered to be timely because it provided a useful opportunity to assess the impact of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group's recommendations on the Council's grants programme five years after the previous review concluded. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also agreed that in the current climate of financial austerity a review of this subject would enable the Council to assess both the value for money accrued from supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations as well as provide an opportunity to assess whether these organisations required additional support.

There were a number of key objectives to this review.

- 1) To review the Council's grants programme and the work of the Grants Panel.
- 2) To assess the support provided by other Council departments to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- 3) To receive an overview of the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy and to assess the implications for local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- 4) To consult with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector about the support they receive from the public and private sectors.
- 5) To assess and clarify whether any additional support could be provided by the Council, if needed, to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- 6) To identify actions that could be taken to improve communications regarding the work of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

A variety of approaches to gathering evidence were adopted by the group. This included reviewing relevant documentation such as the Council's Grants Policy and Concessionary Rents Policy as well as statistical data relating to the Council's grants process since 2010/11. Interviews were held with key relevant Officers and the Chair of the Grants Panel as well as with a number of representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector. The group also used a survey to consult with a wider number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. A questionnaire was similarly developed to enable the group to consult with Council employees about staff volunteering opportunities.

Third Sector Task and Finish Review

At an early stage in the review Members revisited the final report that had been produced by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group in 2008. Members were keen to find out what impact the group's recommendations had had on the Council's grants process as well as to ensure that their exercise did not duplicate work undertaken by the previous scrutiny group.

Members found that there had been a number of key achievements arising from the previous exercise:

- A Voluntary Sector Grants Policy had been introduced for the Council at the instigation of the group. No policy had existed prior to that review.
- The Shopping, Investing and Giving (SIG) funding framework had initially been adopted by the Council. Under this framework the Council had signed up to “Shopping”, for an organisation to deliver a service on the Council’s behalf funded by a large grant or contract; “Investing”, involving the Council providing funding to develop capacity in the sector; and “Giving”, in terms of providing funding to Voluntary and Community Sector groups. The Shopping element of this policy had been withdrawn from the Council’s funding framework at a later date.
- A Grants Officer had been employed to facilitate the process and had remained in post for a significant amount of time. This ensured that local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations had a continuous point of contact.
- The criteria for grant applications had been consistently linked to local priorities since the completion of the review. This compared favourably to previous years when there had been inconsistent links made between the process and local priorities.
- The application forms used by the Council had been designed to be very similar to the forms used by Worcestershire County Council. Whilst Members felt that these forms were relatively complex the Task Group recognised that the similarities between the two sets of forms would help some groups as they could devote scarce resources to becoming familiar with local application requirements.
- The Council had signed up to the Worcestershire Compact, an agreement between the Statutory and Voluntary Sector relating to how both sectors could work together. By 2013/14 the compact had become less prominent locally though was being reviewed by Worcestershire Voices, a countywide group which aimed to support an independent and influential Voluntary Sector. Members were pleased to learn that a representative of the Council had been involved with the work of this group.

Concessionary Rents Policy

In line with the group’s terms of reference Members scrutinised the content of the Concessionary Rents Policy during the review. As part of this process the group noted that a Short, Sharp Scrutiny review of the policy, conducted in 2012, had focused on an initial draft of the policy. This policy had subsequently been significantly redrafted in July 2013.

The group found that the Council’s Concessionary Rents Policy applied to the lease of Council owned properties by Voluntary and Community Sector Groups. Under the terms of the policy organisations based in Council properties can apply for Rent Relief Grants. There are three different tiers of reduction available; a 25

per cent reduction, a further 20 per cent reduction and the final tier where an additional 25 per cent reduction can be made on rent due to the Council. Eligibility for each tier is determined by a specific set of criteria.

The group considered the content of the policy in detail. They concluded that no further revisions of the policy were necessary at this stage. They were particularly pleased to note, however, that the policy had helped to make rent arrangements available to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations much more open and transparent than it had been in previous years.

Membership

Early in the review it became clear that Members would be investigating the subject in more detail than had been anticipated at the start of the exercise. In November 2013 Councillor Baker, who had originally been appointed to the review, became concerned that continued participation in the exercise could create a conflict of interest for him. In particular he advised the group that as the owner of Omega Therapies, an organisation that was eligible to apply for grant funding from the Council, he would have a potential conflict of interest if he became involved in more detailed discussions of the grants process. He therefore resigned from the group and took no further part in any of the subsequent meetings or in agreeing any of the recommendations that are detailed in this report.

The review was originally due to end in April 2014. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to extend the deadline to enable the group to consult with a larger number of representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector than had hitherto engaged with the review. Former Councillor Roger Hill subsequently stood down at the local elections in May 2014, though remained keen to participate in the Task Group exercise until the end of the review due to the expertise that he had gathered on this subject in the preceding months. For this reason Mr Hill was co-opted back onto the review in June 2014.

CHAPTER 1: THE COUNCIL'S GRANTS PROGRAMME

Recommendation 1	<p>The following should be addressed in relation to the Council's grants programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the timescales for the Council's grants process should be reviewed to ensure that decisions are made in sufficient time to enable Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to plan constructively for the year ahead; b) the geographical spread of the client base for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations should be taken into account by the Grants Panel as part of the scoring process when considering applications for grants; c) the template for the Council's application form for Council grants should be reviewed and d) formal minutes should be taken at meetings of the Council's Grants Panel.
Financial Implications	<p>Additional time would be required from Democratic Services Officers to minute meetings of the Grants Panel. However, the financial implications are likely to be minimal as attendance at evening meetings is already a consistent part of their jobs and can be covered by existing budgets.</p>
Legal Implications	<p>There are no specific legal implications.</p>

Council Grants Programme – Basic Overview

Consideration of the Council's grants programme formed a significant part of the review. In 2014/15 two types of grant are due to be provided to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations by the Council. This includes:

- 1) The main project grants, whereby grants are awarded to organisations to undertake project work. These grants are aligned with specific themes that correspond with with the Council's strategic purposes.
- 2) Smaller grants worth up to £500, also known as Stronger Communities Grants. There are three rounds of these smaller grants during the year which are provided to support the work of local Voluntary and Community Sector groups within the community.

The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2014 /15 was £241,000.

In Redditch the Grants Panel considers every application for funding that is received by the Council and determines whether the organisation should be awarded funding. The Panel makes recommendations to the Executive Committee which makes a final decision about the grants that will be awarded.

At present applications are assessed by the Grants Panel in relation to specific scoring criteria where points are awarded out of a total of 59. There is usually only enough funding to support a certain number of projects under each theme and grants are awarded to groups that have received the highest scores. In March 2014 it was agreed that a threshold should be introduced in the scoring system. This was designed to address concerns that under the previous scheme, in cases where there were limited numbers of applicants or a number of poor quality applications had been received, groups that had received low scores had a chance to secure funding. There had been suggestions that this would lead to a risk that Council funding would not necessarily be used in the most appropriate manner to the benefit of the local community. From this year, as a result of the introduction of this threshold, any funding that is not allocated to groups in any given round of grant funding will be returned to the main grants budget.

Groups can submit up to two applications per theme. In cases where more than one application is submitted under each theme an organisation must demonstrate that the funding would be used for different projects. There is no limit to the number of grants that a single group can be awarded in a year. However, if two applications are made from the same applicant for the same project under different themes, only one of the applications will be funded if successful. The process for scoring the applications does allow for the panel to determine viability of the group to successfully deliver a multitude of projects and ensure that they are the appropriate group to deliver the proposed project.

During the course of the review Members considered historic data relating to the provision of grants to Voluntary and Community Sector groups in the period 2011/12 – 2013/14. When scrutinising this data the Task Group identified the following issues:

- There were a number of local Voluntary and Community Sector groups that applied for funding from the Council on a regular basis.
- By 2013/14 53.5 per cent of applicants who had applied for larger project grants were repeat applicants (i.e. they had submitted an application in two or three of the years for which data was available).
- In 2013/14 53 per cent of applicants who were successfully awarded larger project grants were repeat applicants.
- For the Sustainable Communities Grants whilst 52 per cent of applicants were repeat applicants only 32 per cent of the groups that were successfully awarded a grant were repeat applicants.

- Members noted that there were a number of repeat applicants who applied for funding in each year though on some occasions they would apply for a project grant and on other occasions they would apply for a Sustainable Communities Grant. The figures provided above may not therefore reflect the true frequency with which particular groups repeatedly applied for and were awarded funding by the Council.
- In some cases the groups that had successfully applied for funding on multiple occasions were the same groups that the Third Sector Task and Finish Group had found to be in receipt of funding on a regular basis in 2008.
- A number of groups had been awarded a grant despite the fact that they had received a low score in the scoring process due to a limited number of applicants for that theme. Members are aware that the introduction of a threshold in the grants scoring process should help to address this situation.
- Some of the groups had submitted multiple applications in different grant categories and had successfully been awarded more than one grant in some of these years.
- A number of the applicants delivered services outside Redditch Borough and in some cases the group was based in another part of the country. In particular, groups based in Bromsgrove were found to have submitted applications for funding.

Members developed concerns about the extent to which some groups were relying on Council sources of funding to deliver services. They recognised that in order to become sustainable many of these groups needed to be able to secure alternative sources of funding. They also felt that the Council needed to be able to support new groups as and when required to address emerging issues within the local community.

In this context the value of promoting match funding was identified by the group as a constructive method that could be adopted to encourage Voluntary and Community Sector groups to become less reliant on the Council for funding. Members learned during their review that at Wychavon District Council, which also manages a community funding programme, groups were not allowed to apply for funding that would cover up to 100 per cent of the project costs and had to identify alternative sources of match funding from other providers. Furthermore, Wychavon District Council did not permit Voluntary and Community Sector Groups that had successfully secured a grant to reapply for funding in the following three years, obliging those groups to identify further alternative sources of funding in order to remain sustainable.

Towards the end of their review Members were advised that in Redditch match funding is always encouraged in any applications submitted. Groups are also signposted to external funding opportunities. However, match funding is not an explicit requirement in order for a group to secure funding as it is at Wychavon District Council. The group would suggest that whenever possible more action should be taken to promote match funding to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in order to encourage these groups to become more sustainable.

Members recognise that there are potentially other issues impacting on Voluntary and Community Sector organisations which may influence how they apply for funding and the sources of support that they require within the local community. They concluded that to ascertain the needs of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations it was important to consult with representatives of the sector.

Consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations:

During the review Members arranged to consult with local representatives of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The group was keen to consult with a range of small, medium and large Voluntary and Community Sector groups. This included holding interviews with the Director of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN), an infrastructure organisation that supports a network of Voluntary and Community and statutory organisations that provide services in Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove district, and with the Director of the Sandycroft Wellbeing Centre. In both cases Members were keen to consult directly with representatives of these groups as they recognised that they were established members of the local Voluntary and Community Sector with significant links to other local groups.

A survey was also produced and circulated in order to obtain feedback from a wider cross-section of the sector. Unfortunately some problems were experienced with the ICT support for this survey and for this reason the deadline for receipt of completed surveys was extended by a month.

In total nine completed surveys were received from local representatives of the sector. Whilst Members were disappointed with the low number of responses there were a number of key themes that were identified in the feedback, both in these surveys and from the interviews, that they felt should be highlighted in this report:

- Alternative sources of funding could be obtained from a range of funding providers, such as the lottery and other public sector organisations. Many groups were also actively involved in fund raising activities.
- However, in the current financial climate some groups had found that competition for resources had increased.
- A number of groups had been in receipt of Supporting People and Future Lives funding provided by Worcestershire County Council. Members concluded that the removal of this funding would therefore have an impact on the finances of many Voluntary and Community Sector groups.
- Some groups had commented that they relied predominantly on Redditch Borough Council for funding and had thanked the Council for the support that it had provided to date.
- A number of groups that were not in direct receipt of funding had benefitted from Council support in other ways. In particular some of the groups leased Council properties and had applied for concessionary rents.

- Some groups delivered very similar services, though Members concluded that this was not necessarily leading to duplication in service delivery as they often had different target audiences.

The Task Group were concerned to find that some groups, which had been in receipt of Council funding through the grants programme in previous years, had suggested that they did not receive support from any public sector organisations. Instead, these groups, which were in a minority, referred to the community funding provided by the Council as a separate source of funding. Members felt that this potentially demonstrated a need for greater emphasis to be placed on the fact that the Council's grants process was a discretionary service that was supported using general sources of Council funding.

The Task Group did ask Voluntary and Community Sector groups to identify any additional support that would assist the sector. The following suggestions were recorded for Members' consideration:

- More opportunities be provided for Voluntary and Community Sector groups to apply for contracts to deliver services on behalf of the Council and support be provided to groups applying for these contracts. (Members are aware that any support that is provided for this purpose would need to be delivered in line with the Council's procurement rules).
- Additional funding be provided to support on-going services (rather than just for specific projects).
- To concentrate on providing funding to groups that could provide tangible evidence that the services they have provided have resulted in qualitative and quantitative outcomes that have benefited the local community.
- To consult with the local community to find out what projects and services delivered by Voluntary and Community Sector organisations would benefit them. (The group is aware that the current grants programme is linked to the Council's strategic purposes which were developed following consultation with the public. To ensure that Voluntary and Community Sector groups are aware of this situation Members would suggest that this point may need to be emphasised in future rounds of the Council's grants programme).
- Council Officers and elected Members were urged to visit Voluntary and Community Sector groups to observe the services they provide (further information in relation to this point is provided below under Recommendation Two).
- Improved communications from various Council departments when contacted by Voluntary and Community Sector organisations was requested. In particular timely responses and provision of alternative contact details in the absence of lead Officers was considered to be important.
- Opportunities should be provided (or supported) to enable groups to develop new technologies that would help groups to deliver services to younger people who are more likely to be familiar with social media and other forms of online communications.

- Continuing support with applications for concessionary rent was requested. (The group is aware that this type of support would need to be assessed fairly and in line with the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy).

Potential Changes to the Process

Based on the feedback that the group received from both Officers, other Councillors and representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector Members concluded that there were a number of improvements that could be made to the Council's grants programme.

a) Timescales:

The Task Group exercise coincided with a round of the grants programme dedicated to the larger grants. The Grants Panel's recommendations at the end of this process were reported to the Executive Committee on 11th March 2014. These timescales largely mirrored the dates on which the findings of the Grants Panel had been considered in previous years (for example a decision was taken on this subject by the Executive Committee on 12th March 2013). As part of the standard process the Grants Officer advises both groups that have been awarded funding and those groups that have not been successful of the outcome of the process.

However, during the course of the review representatives of the sector approached some members of the group to express concerns about the timing of the decisions about the grants process. In particular, some representatives of the sector raised concerns that due to the fact that decisions were made late in the financial year it could be difficult for Voluntary and Community Sector groups to plan their work for the following financial year effectively as they were often uncertain until early March as to whether they would be receiving any funding.

The group concluded that in this context there was a clear need for the timescales applied to the Council's grants process to be reviewed. Whilst they accept that this may not now be possible for the grants process this financial year, as dates will have already been set for meetings of the Grants Panel, the group would contend that the timeframes could be reviewed for following years.

b) Geographical Service Remit

As part of the review the group considered the geographical areas in which Voluntary and Community Sector groups delivered services to customers. Members recognised that in many cases the need for services would cross geographical boundaries and that groups might therefore deliver services to meet the needs of customers living outside Redditch Borough. Based on the historic data that had been provided for the consideration of the Task Group

Members found that funding had been awarded in the past to some groups that delivered services in other parts of the county and / or which operated from bases outside the Borough.

Officers have reported that the scoring matrix does allow Members to a degree to ensure that appropriate groups are awarded funding. They indicated that they would be happy to map the spread of applications and Members would urge Officers to undertake this task as soon as possible to ensure that wherever possible an emphasis is placed on awarding funding to groups that deliver services to residents living in the Borough. Indeed, it is for this reason that the group is suggesting that the geographical remit of a group or the project for which they are applying for funding should be taken into account as part of the Grants Panel's scoring process to ensure that the needs of Redditch residents are prioritised.

c) Application Form Template

As part of the scrutiny exercise Members viewed a blank copy of the Council's current grants application form. A small number of groups consulted by Members suggested that completing these application forms could be time consuming due to their length. In some cases Members were advised that some groups, particularly smaller community groups, were struggling to complete the application forms. The group also compared the Council's application form to forms used by Wychavon District Council and agreed that the version used by Redditch Borough Council was more complicated.

Members are aware that every effort is made by Officers to provide support and advice to groups when completing applications for grants. This has included specific workshop sessions in previous years. However the group felt that in order to encourage smaller groups to apply for funding it would be useful for Officers to review the template for the application forms for both the larger project grants and the Sustainable Communities Grants.

d) Formal Minutes

During the review Members learned that formal minutes were not taken consistently during meetings of the Grants Panel. The group were concerned that from an audit perspective this was not appropriate. Whilst meetings of the Grants Panel are held in private these minutes would help to demonstrate to an auditor that decisions had been taken in line with the Constitution and procedural rules. Furthermore, Members were advised that minute taking at Grant Panel meetings was considered to be best practice with, for example, minutes being taken at Wychavon District Council.

Formal minutes are particularly useful to ensure that a record is maintained of all declarations of interest made by both Councillors and Officers in relation to applications that have been received. A record of these declarations and of the fact that Members were absent from the meeting during discussion of any applications in which they have an interest would help to reassure Voluntary and Community Sector groups that decisions have not been influenced by personal interests. It would also protect both Members and Officers against any accusations of impropriety in the decision making process. In the interests of transparency the group feels that these declarations should be reiterated in the report that is presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

Recommendation 2	<p>The following actions should be taken in respect of the members of the Grants Panel:</p> <p>a) formal training should be provided to Members of the Grants Panel;</p> <p>b) wherever possible members of the Grants Panel should visit Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that have been awarded larger project grants as part of the monitoring process. These visits should take place before the second instalment of funding is provided to the organisations.</p>
Financial Implications	There will be a minimal cost associated with Members visiting organisations however it is anticipated this will be met from existing budgets.
Legal Implications	There are no specific legal implications.

The group also considered the role of members of the Grants Panel during the course of the review and concluded that a number of changes could be made to enhance their position.

Member Training

At an early stage Members discussed the training that was provided to members of the Grants Panel. Indeed, the group was advised that informal “on-the-job” training was provided to members of the panel prior to their first meeting in the grants programme for that year. However, towards the end of the review Members were advised that formal training is provided to Members of the Grants Panel. The group has learned that this training has never formed part of the Council’s formal Member Development programme nor has a central record of

this training been maintained for Members' records in line with the corporate approach to Member Development training.

Members had some concerns about the conflicting evidence that had been provided on this subject. The Task Group concurred that formal training was necessary due to the significant amount of funding that the panel is awarding to Voluntary and Community Sector groups. Members feel that formal training should help to inspire confidence within the local community that Council sources of funding are being utilised appropriately. If formal training is already taking place Members are suggesting that this should be recorded in line with all other training for elected Councillors as part of the Council's official Member Development programme.

Monitoring Process

There is an established monitoring process for the Council's grants programme. Groups in receipt of project grants are required to complete a monitoring form by a set deadline which must be returned to the Council's Grants Officer. The Grants Officer also visits groups in receipt of funding throughout the length of the project to ensure that work remains on target and any problems can be identified at an early stage. In cases where concerns are identified the second installment of project funding can be withheld and support provided to that group if required to resolve those problems.

The group was advised during the review that members of the Grants Panel were encouraged to visit Voluntary and Community Sector organisations throughout the year in order to gain a clearer understanding of the services they provide. Unfortunately, based on the evidence gathered by the group it appeared that this was not occurring frequently. Indeed, one of the groups that responded to the Task Group's survey, which Members were aware had been in receipt of funding in previous years, suggested that visits should occur indicating that this was not happening consistently:

"Council Officers and Councillors should visit the voluntary sector organisations to see first-hand the success of the services provided by them to the community, possibly as part of the bidding process".

Members of the Task Group concluded that visits would be particularly useful as part of the monitoring process. This would provide Members with an opportunity to observe how funding that they had allocated had been used and the impact that this is having in the community.

The group recognises that some Members will struggle to visit Voluntary and Community Sector groups during the day due to work commitments. However, it may be possible to arrange for Members to visit some groups outside of working hours, as some Voluntary and Community Sector groups deliver services at irregular hours in order to meet the needs of their customers. Members therefore do not feel that this should be provided as a reason for members of the Grants Panel not to visit groups in receipt of funding.

Recommendation 3	The implications of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 should be considered by Officers to ensure that the Council’s grants process is amended as and when required. Officers should ensure that any changes that are made to the process in response to these requirements take account of local needs.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications as a result of this recommendation.
Legal Implications	There are no specific legal implications.

The *Local Government Transparency Code 2014* was published in May. The code has been developed in order “...to meet the Government’s desire to place more power into citizens’ hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services.” Underpinning the code is the basic principle that data held by local authorities should be made available to local people unless the information should legitimately remain confidential in line with previous legislation.

The code makes specific reference to local authority grants programmes. Members agreed that the following key points with implications for Council grants programmes should be highlighted in this report:

- Local authorities are required to publish details of individual items of expenditure that exceed £500 including grant payments.
- Grants to Voluntary, Community and social enterprise organisations must be published on an annual basis. However, the code’s authors go further and recommend that local authorities consider publishing this information on a monthly basis in cases where payments are made more frequently than on an annual basis.
- It is also recommended in the code that local authorities could do more than the minimum requirement to publish the required information. This could include publishing details “...disaggregated by voluntary and community sector category (e.g. whether it is registered with Companies House, charity or charitable incorporated organisation, community interest company, industrial and provident society, housing association etc.)”
- For each grant as a minimum the following details must be provided:
 - The date the grant was awarded.
 - The length of time the grant will be provided to cover.
 - The local authority department that awarded the grant.
 - The recipient of the grant.

- the recipient's registration number.
- A summary of the purpose of the expenditure, and
- The amount of funding provided.
- Specific details must also be provided about "...any contract, commissioned activity, purchase order, framework agreement and any other legally enforceable agreement with a value that exceeds £5,000". The Task Group recognises that this could include details relating to any Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that enter into such agreements with the Council.

The Task Group is aware that the Council already publishes a significant amount of information about the groups in receipt of funding through the Council's grants programme. There are specific web pages on the Council's website that are dedicated to the grants process which lists the groups that received funding the previous year. Unfortunately, in early July 2014 Members were concerned to find that due to an IT error information about the list of organisations in receipt of grant funding was no longer accessible from the Council's website. Instead, the following message appeared when attempts were made to access this web page: "This page is no longer available." Whilst this problem had been rectified by the time that the group's report was published Members agreed that this situation should be highlighted as they were aware that if this problem recurs in future the Council could be in breach of the code.

With this in mind the group feels it is important that relevant Officers assess the requirements outlined in this code to ensure that the grants process is conforming with legal requirements. In cases where difficulties arise due to ICT technical problems attempts should be made to direct interested persons to alternative locations where the information could be obtained. For example, a certain amount of information will have been published in the report regarding the grants programme that was presented to the Executive Committee in March 2014 which has been published on the Committee pages of the website. Wherever possible, however, the group would contend that full details required under the code should be published on dedicated web pages.

CHAPTER 2: WORKING DIFFERENTLY TOGETHER

Recommendation 4	The Council should employ an apprentice to support the work of the Grants Officer. Consideration should be given to sharing this apprentice with a Voluntary and Community Sector organisation.
Financial Implications	The Council would need to invest in employing an apprentice to support the Grants Officer.
Legal Implications	There are no specific legal implications.

During the course of the review the Task Group considered the support available to the Voluntary and Community Sector in terms of Officer support. Currently the Grants Officer provides the majority of support to the sector, both in terms of acting as a lead point of contact and in facilitating the Council's grants programme.

The group recognises that there will be occasions when the Grants Officer may be absent from work, for example whilst on annual leave. Members have concluded that due to the significant role that Voluntary and Community Sector organisations have in the local community it is important for another Officer to be available for groups to contact in the Grants Officer's absence. The group feels that an apprentice could fill this role effectively.

In recent years the Council has invested in employing more apprentices in a range of service areas, though no apprentices are currently employed to support the grants process. The group recognises that employment of an apprentice would require additional financial expenditure which could be difficult in a time of austerity. However, when Members discussed the potential for an apprentice to support the grants process with senior Officers at the Council they responded positively to the group's suggestion.

Members were keen to suggest that the potential for this apprentice to be shared with a Voluntary or Community Sector organisation should be explored further. There could be a number of benefits to sharing this apprentice with a Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation:

- The apprentice would gain broader work experience in both local government and the Voluntary and Community Sector. This would also help the apprentice to explore a potentially greater range of employment options when their apprenticeship has finished.

- The apprentice could develop useful transferable skills working in a different environment that could benefit Council services as well as Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- The apprentice could help to maintain positive relationships between the Council and Voluntary and Community Sector and to address any misunderstandings between the two as and when they arise.

Recommendation 5	<i>The Framework Agreement for the Provision of Debt and Budgeting Advice to be Delivered Within the Locality areas in Redditch should continue to be supported by the Council for the foreseeable future.</i>
Financial Implications	As the framework is already in place there are no additional financial implications to this recommendation.
Legal Implications	As this framework is already in place there are no additional legal implications.

In this period of financial austerity many local residents are increasingly seeking support to manage their finances. The potential for the Council to support residents who are struggling to manage their finances has been recognised and is reflected in two of the Council's strategic purposes: "help me to be financially independent" and "help me live my life independently". The group is aware that local demand for support with managing finances and for debt advice may further increase following the introduction of Universal Credit.

Members learned during the review that in previous years a number of grants have been provided by public agencies to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to deliver financial management and debt advice. In 2013/14 this included grants provided by the Council as part of the Grants process under the Independent Living theme as well as grants provided to organisations as part of the Area of Highest Needs project in Winyates. There are also a number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that specialise in providing this advice to customers in an independent and confidential manner.

However, during the course of the review concerns were brought to the attention of the group regarding the impact of this approach to funding financial management and debt advice. In particular concerns were raised that because funding was allocated on an annual basis, with the decision on funding generally being taken towards the end of a financial year, groups in receipt of this funding did not always feel assured that they would have the finances available to continue to provide the same level of support in the following financial year. As a consequence Council Officers were finding that sometimes organisations did not feel able to accept referrals in the first few months of the calendar year because

they could not guarantee that they would be able to continue to provide support into the following financial year. This was despite the fact that vulnerable residents could find themselves in need of help managing their finances at any time of the year.

The group is aware that a *Framework Agreement for the Provision of Debt and Budgeting Advice to be Delivered within the Three Locality Areas within Redditch* has been produced to try to address these concerns. The aim of this framework is to enable the Council "...to procure money advice, debt counseling and budgeting training to support teams working in the locality..." The framework was recently approved and is supported by a separate source of funding to the Council's Grants Programme.

Members welcome this framework because they believe that it could help to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable people within society. However, they wish it to be noted that the Council should not become complacent over this subject and would urge the Executive Committee and senior Officers to continue to provide the financial support necessary to ensure that this advice remains available to residents for the foreseeable future.

<p>Recommendation 6</p>	<p>An informal working group of Council Officers should be formed to discuss and share knowledge about current joint working with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. These informal meetings would also provide an opportunity for different teams to identify further opportunities to work with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and highlight any duplication of work.</p> <p>a) Dedicated space should be introduced on the Council's intranet to allow Officers working with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and / or volunteers to share information.</p>
<p>Financial Implications</p>	<p>There should be limited financial implications to this recommendation. Relevant Officers would need to spend a small amount of time meeting during the year, though the group is not envisaging that these meetings would be onerous or too time consuming. There is the potential that if opportunities to work together are identified as well as any potential risks of duplication then these meetings could help the Council to achieve financial savings in the long-term.</p>

Legal Implications	<p>Whilst some time would be required to add information to the Council's intranet the group is not anticipating that this task would be too onerous or costly.</p> <p>There may be a need for information sharing protocols to be put in place.</p>
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During the course of the review it became clear that there were a number of Council Officers and teams who were working with the Voluntary and Community Sector. The group found that the following Council services had worked or were currently working with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector:

- The Grants Officer and the Grants Programme.
- The Community Safety team, worked with representatives of the sector on specific projects. In particular the team focused on working with groups that supported victims and witnesses of crime as well as groups that provide support to offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending.
- The Leisure Services team worked with a consortium of Voluntary Sector groups as part of the Positive Activities programme (youth service provision).
- The Arts and Events team worked with various community groups to deliver the Holocaust Memorial Event and Armed Forces Day. Collaboration had also occurred in the past when organising and delivering Morton Stoney Festival.
- The arts team worked closely with the Arts in Redditch Network.
- Various teams were working with the Big Lottery project in Church Hill.
- Housing Options worked with various groups, in particular to provide financial management and debt advice.
- The BRAVO volunteering scheme had been developed by Leisure Services to enhance the skills and employability of participants.
- The Council's Sports Development team worked closely with local community and amateur sports clubs
- There were working links between the Council and a number of community allotment societies.
- The Early Help team (formerly Sure Start) had worked with groups to provide counseling to families with young children.
- Environmental Services teams had worked with community conservation groups consisting of local volunteers.
- Environmental Services operatives had also worked with the Save the Alex Campaign to undertake bulb planting in certain parts of the Borough.
- Environmental Services operatives had worked within the community to promote recycling of furniture and used goods with local Voluntary and Community Sector groups as part of the bulky waste collection service.
- The Area of Highest Needs Project had involved Officers working directly with both Voluntary and Community Sector groups to deliver services that would meet the needs of the community.

- The Policy team had developed strong links with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector through the Redditch Community Forum.
- The Redditch Partnership had developed links with Voluntary and Community Sector groups appointed to the main partnership board as well as those groups which were involved in sub-groups. Representatives of the partnership were also involved with Worcestershire Voices.
- The civic team had developed links with the Voluntary and Community Sector through the attendance of the Mayor at events across the Borough at the invitation of local groups. The Mayor also provided direct financial support to groups by supporting particular nominated charities during his or her mayoral year.

It became clear as the review progressed that often Officers in one department were not aware of the work that staff in another service were doing with volunteers and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The group agreed that this should be addressed because they felt there was a risk that otherwise duplication could arise whilst opportunities for Council services to work together with the Voluntary and Community Sector would potentially be missed.

The purpose of this recommendation is to encourage Officers to communicate more effectively with each other about the work they have been doing with the Voluntary and Community Sector and to address what the group found to be an existing lack of common knowledge within the Council about the extent to which Council services already interact with the sector. A number of informal working groups have previously been established at the Council focusing on subjects such as equalities. The group feels that relevant Officers should consider Officer capacity when determining how regularly these meetings should take place. However, due to the potential for new opportunities to be identified and duplication to be reduced during these meetings the group believes that use of Officer time at these meetings would be justifiable.

Members are also suggesting that greater use could be made of the Council's intranet by Officers to share information about their work with Voluntary and Community Sector groups. A dedicated section of the intranet could be created to enable Officers to share this information as well as to publicise the dates of forthcoming meetings of the Officers' group. Members recognise that it would take a small amount of time for Officers to upload this information though they are not anticipating that this task would be onerous.

CHAPTER 3 – VOLUNTEERING

The Contribution of Volunteers to Redditch Borough Council

During the course of the review Members learned about the valuable contribution that volunteers make to the delivery of Council services. The group was informed that volunteers assisted the following services (there is the possibility that the Council receives support from other volunteers that have not been brought to the attention of the Task Group):

- Redditch Palace Theatre.
- The Palace Youth Theatre.
- Forge Mill Needle Museum.
- Arts and Events.
- Sports Development (including volunteers registered as BRAVO volunteers).
- 'Friends of Parks' volunteer groups who assist with the management, maintenance and cleansing of the parks.
- Approximately 150 litter pickers, who are provided with a sack and litter picker and help to keep the Borough clean.
- There are also local groups who occasionally volunteer for a specific period of time to undertake litter picking duties in the local community. (For example local church groups).
- Volunteer groups assist with the management of local woodland areas.
- In line with the principles of the place intervention (in Environmental Services) staff are working more closely with local residents who take pride in their local environment and are willing to maintain areas of Council land in their neighbourhoods.

The Leisure Services team, which has particularly benefitted from the support of volunteers, was able to quantify the value of most of these voluntary hours to the Council in the period April – November 2013. (Unfortunately, the value of the contribution made to the parks service could not be confirmed). Officers have advised Members that during this period the monetary value of the voluntary hours across leisure services in this period was £126,362.60. At the time of writing figures were not available for the other services that benefitted from volunteering, however, the group concluded that the final figure for the whole of the financial year would be significantly higher.

In the current financial climate for local government Members feel that the value of volunteering to Council services as well as the local community cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the group concluded that the value of the contribution made by volunteers to the Council should be given proper recognition and promoted within this report.

<p>Recommendation 7</p>	<p>The following actions should be taken in relation to the Staff Volunteering Policy:</p> <p>a) the policy should be refreshed and promoted; and</p> <p>b) a taster list of local volunteering opportunities should be advertised on the “Briefcase” section of the Council’s intranet for the consideration of staff. In particular, consideration should be given to advertising volunteering opportunities that would help to address the Council’s strategic purposes.</p>
<p>Financial Implications</p>	<p>Officer time would be required to review the Staff Volunteering Policy. However, the policy is already scheduled to be refreshed so this action would not add any extra workload for Officers. There would also be a small amount of time required to upload volunteering opportunities onto the Briefcase. However, the group is only suggesting that a “taster” sample of opportunities should be displayed on the intranet which should help to limit the workload.</p>
<p>Legal Implications</p>	<p>A disclaimer to protect the Council in respect of staff participating in volunteering activity is required. However, as the policy has been in place since 2011 the group is working on the basis that the Council has gained some practice in addressing this legal requirement.</p>

Staff Volunteering Policy

During the investigation Members discovered that there was an opportunity available for staff to volunteer within the local community during working hours. The framework for this volunteering is outlined in the Council’s Staff Volunteering Policy. The key requirements of this policy are:

- The Council can grant a maximum of 16 volunteering hours in a 12 month period. (For part-time workers this is granted on a pro-rata basis).
- The time used as volunteering hours must be agreed by the employee’s line manager in advance with reasonable notice provided. Line managers are not obliged to approve the request for volunteering hours.
- The volunteering hours can be taken in a single block or over a period of time.

- The volunteering work should not lead to the potential for a conflict of interest to arise for that employee at work.
- Staff are urged to provide feedback once a volunteering experience has been completed for monitoring purposes.

The Council recognises that there are a number of benefits to be obtained from staff undertaking volunteering work. This includes:

- Helping the local community.
- Improving the local reputation of the Council.
- Building important relationships with local Voluntary and Community Sector representatives.
- Enhancing the skills of employees.
- Improving levels of recruitment and retention.
- Providing the Voluntary and Community Sector with access to skills and resources that they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- Volunteers having a chance to meet new people.
- Boosting the confidence of volunteers.
- Providing opportunities for staff to feel they are making a difference.

Unfortunately the group was disappointed to learn that only five employees had volunteered under the scheme since the policy was introduced in June 2011. Members were surprised to learn that this figure was so low particularly as they were advised that the feedback that had been provided by both the staff who had volunteered and their managers had been positive. In particular it had been reported that staff who had undertaken voluntary work had felt inspired and this had helped to boost their morale at work.

Staff Consultation:

To identify the reasons for this low uptake of volunteering opportunities under the policy the group produced a survey which was designed to enable Members to consult with staff about this subject. The survey was promoted on the Council's intranet and in the Oracle newsletter, a copy of which is sent to all staff on a monthly basis.

A total of 25 completed surveys were received. Whilst the group was disappointed in the low response rate Members did identify a number of key issues which they felt should be highlighted:

- 52% of the respondents (13/25) had been aware that the Council had a Staff Volunteering Policy. However, five of these respondents admitted that they were not familiar with the content of the policy and would not know how to arrange to volunteer during work time.
- A number of staff who had not previously been aware of the policy were interested to learn of its existence. In some cases this was reported in the employee's written response. However, some members of staff approached

the Chair of the Task Group and a Democratic Services Officer respectively to request further information about the policy after the survey had been issued.

- A significant number of staff who were not familiar with the policy were undertaking voluntary work in their own time. The types of volunteering that staff were engaged in varied widely from acting as a special constable, to volunteering for youth groups, acting as volunteer litter pickers and volunteering with the Palace Theatre.
- A number of staff who currently volunteer under the policy responded to the group's survey. Some of the roles they used their volunteer hours for were very similar to voluntary work undertaken by staff who were not familiar with the policy. For example, a number of respondents volunteered as school governors but only a small number had applied to volunteer in line with the Council's Staff Volunteering Policy.
- A range of reasons had been provided for not applying to volunteer. This included family and caring commitments, health restrictions and lack of time.
- There had been one respondent who had provided a negative assessment of the policy. In particular this respondent had suggested that more hours should be made available and that there was a risk that managers would only release staff to work on "pet projects". As all the other respondents had been largely positive about the policy (or had not been familiar with the policy) the group agreed that it was difficult to reach any conclusions about how representative this feedback was, though it was conceded that this respondent may have had a negative experience.

The group was concerned to find that some employees appeared to be anxious about volunteering because they were worried about the impact this might have on the service they provided and the impact that their absence might have on their colleagues. In particular Members were concerned about the following feedback that was received:

"(I have) too much work to do and there is no-one to cover for me if I am not in. My work just builds up and waits for me to come back in which makes it more stressful for me."

"Staff are under tremendous pressure to perform the day job and this will only get worse. This can and will restrict people from being able to volunteer and make managers reluctant to free staff up for volunteering as someone else will have to pick up the work."

The group agreed that it was unacceptable for any member of staff to feel stressed at work. Members would therefore urge senior managers to ensure that appropriate support is in place to make sure that workloads are manageable across the organisation and that staff continue to be made aware of the support networks that are already available. The group would also suggest that the positive feedback that has already been received from staff and managers who have volunteered in line with the scheme should be promoted in order to demonstrate to both staff and managers the potential benefits.

Refreshing and Promoting the Staff Volunteering Policy

Based on the overall feedback received to their survey the group concluded that there are many more members of staff who would be interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to volunteer in the local community in line with the Council's policy than are presently doing so. The group is therefore proposing that the policy should be refreshed and promoted to staff and managers.

It should be noted that within the policy it is stated that the terms of the scheme would be promoted using the following mechanisms:

- The intranet with appropriate links being provided to external web sites about volunteering.
- Notice Boards.
- Employee Induction.
- PDR's and Development.
- Cascaded through team talks, team briefings and one-to-ones.

The group recognises that some of these methods may have already been used. However, the lack of familiarity with this policy amongst staff would seem to suggest that further action to promote the policy would be useful.

Taster List of Volunteering Opportunities

The group feels that one of the ways to raise the profile of the Staff Volunteering Policy would be to promote specific local volunteering opportunities to staff. These opportunities could be promoted on the 'Briefcase' section of the staff intranet, which currently is used to list all job vacancies. Members recognise that the Council does not maintain a list of volunteering opportunities. For this reason the group would suggest that the Human Resources team, which updates the contents of the 'Briefcase', should liaise with a local Voluntary and Community Sector organisation that maintains a list of local volunteering opportunities that could be promoted to staff.

Members understand that staff can choose what area they wish to volunteer in and would not want to restrict this choice. The group are aware, however, that it would not be feasible to advertise every local volunteering opportunity on the intranet due to the time and resources that would be required to upload this information. For this reason Members are suggesting that a small taster list of volunteering opportunities should be advertised on the intranet. In order to meet the community's needs the group are suggesting that these taster sessions should be selected on the basis of their links to the Council's strategic purposes.

Recommendation 8	A staff award should be created to recognise the voluntary work carried out by members of staff.
Financial Implications	In previous years employees who have won a staff award have received a small payment in recognition of their achievement. If this is set to continue in future a similar payment would need to be offered to any member of staff who wins this award.
Legal Implications	There are no specific legal implications.

The Council's Making a Difference Awards (for staff) are presented on an annual basis. The awards are open to anyone who is employed to provide a service for Redditch Borough Council, whether they are employed by Redditch directly or through shared service arrangements. All nominations - from colleagues, customers and Councillors - are considered by a panel of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, and political group leaders.

The group feels that the value of volunteering work could also be promoted further if a staff award was to be introduced recognising the achievements of staff who have participated in voluntary work during the year. There are already a number of established award categories, though new categories are added from time to time. For example the Apprentice of the Year category was introduced in 2013/14.

This staff award, if it was to be introduced, would demonstrate the Council's commitment to the Staff Volunteering Policy and employees who volunteer. Members feel that it would also help to demonstrate to both staff and managers that requests to volunteer in line with the policy should be taken seriously. As written nominations would need to be submitted for the recipients of this award there would be a further opportunity to promote volunteering to staff during the awards ceremony as the submissions for category winners are read out during the awards ceremony.

CHAPTER 4 – MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation 9	The Council should work with local businesses and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to introduce a “Redditch Hour” on twitter and other social networks.
Financial Implications	There would not be any significant financial implications in relation to this recommendation for the Council.
Legal Implications	There are no specific legal implications.

As part of the review Members considered current opportunities available for Voluntary and Community Sector groups to communicate and network with each other. Members are aware that there are local infrastructure groups such as the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network which can help to facilitate communications between groups and to provide networking opportunities. Furthermore, the Council’s Grants Officer does help to signpost groups to other organisations within the community when opportunities arise.

Worcestershire Voices has also been established to work with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations of all sizes, to help those groups network within the county and to enable groups to work effectively in partnership within the Voluntary and Community Sector. Members welcomed the fact that Worcestershire Voices would be using its influence to make sure that the voice of the sector is heard in the county and recognised that the Worcestershire Voices twitter account could become a useful device for networking at the sub-regional level.

However, Members felt that further use could be made of social media, particularly at a local level, to market the work of local groups as well as to provide them with an opportunity to network. The group learned at an early stage that in some parts of the country Twitter and other social media platforms are being utilised at specific times to facilitate networking. For example, a “Worcester Hour” has been created on Twitter which provides Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, public sector organisations and private companies with an opportunity to network during a specific time in the city. Similar networking hours have been developed for smaller towns such as Droitwich Spa. Unfortunately, there is not currently a Redditch Hour on twitter and Members feel that this should be addressed to the benefit of the local community.

Officers consulted about this suggestion have been largely positive in their feedback and have suggested that there are a number of ways in which this

could be developed. Officers are suggesting that a Redditch Hour should be developed in conjunction with other local agencies, including local media representatives which have a larger following than the Council and more influence in the Borough on social media. Alternatively the Council could work with a local infrastructure organisation, such as BARN, or a consortium of local organisations and groups that might be interested in launching and using a Redditch Hour. Whilst the group have no preferences regarding the final arrangements for the co-ordination of a Redditch Hour on social media they believe that every effort should be made to involve representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the process.

The Council could provide invaluable support with the Redditch Hour. This could include promoting the launch of Redditch Hour, such as through the involvement of the Mayor in a civic capacity. However, Officers have suggested that there could be a potential for conflicts of interest to arise if the Council was to run this Twitter feed and it is unlikely that the Council would have capacity to manage a Redditch Hour.

Recommendation 10	<p>A Voluntary Sector Event should be held on a regular basis to help promote</p> <p>c) the work of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to each other as well as potential customers; and</p> <p>d) volunteering opportunities to local residents.</p> <p>This event could potentially be aligned to existing events that are already take place.</p>
Financial Implications	<p>Financial investment would be required to organise and host this type of event. The level of financial investment required would depend on the scale of the event and regularity of these events. The costs associated with this recommendation would have to be clearly identified.</p>
Legal Implications	<p>There are no specific legal implications.</p>

Members are acutely aware that there are some groups that do not have access to the internet. These groups, which may serve a variety of customers, could still benefit from opportunities to network and the group feels this could best be achieved during a local event dedicated to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. Members agree that this type of event would also provide groups within the local community with an opportunity to promote their services to potential customers as well as to individuals who might be interested in volunteering to assist their organisation.

The suggestion that it would be useful to convene a Voluntary and Community Sector event was first raised at an early stage in the review. The group received some positive feedback regarding this suggestion, particularly from the Chair of the Grants Panel who commented that a local awards ceremony could also be organised to coincide with this event.

It has been brought to the attention of Members that a number of opportunities are already provided for Voluntary and Community Sector groups to network in the Borough. This includes bimonthly networking meetings organised by BARN and quarterly Community Workers' Group meetings. BARN also already promotes a range of volunteering opportunities in the Borough.

Members feel that attempts could be made to work with these existing groups to develop a high profile event dedicated to the Voluntary and Community Sector. The Council could assist with this process by providing a venue and helping to market the event.

CONCLUSION

The Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group, despite being a small group of Councillors, have completed a lengthy and detailed review. Their investigations have built on the findings of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group, which they concluded had had a positive impact on the Council's grants programme.

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations of all sizes have a history of providing essential services to some of the most vulnerable residents living in the local community. The value of these services, particularly during a period of financial austerity, should not be underestimated and the Council should continue to do all it can to support the sector for the foreseeable future.

The group's recommendations are designed to make improvements that will benefit local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. Members also hope that their proposals, once implemented, will have a positive impact on the Council's working relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector. The group would therefore urge the Executive Committee to approve their recommendations.

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 Pat Witherspoon	Date of referral	13/08/13
Proposed topic title	Voluntary Sector Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	Redditch Borough Council Strategic Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help me run a successful business; and • help me be financially independent. 		
Background to the issue	<p>Redditch Borough Council, like many public sector organisations, provides support to voluntary sector organisations that deliver services to local residents. This support can take a variety of forms including financial support, material support and advice.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously reviewed the Council's third sector funding policy in 2009. The intention of this review would not be to duplicate this work. However, there have been many changes at both the local and national level since this review was completed. There remains room to adapt and improve the support that the Council and relevant partner organisations provide to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. A review would help to ensure that the Council's process remains transparent whilst at the same time meets the changing needs of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.</p> <p>The Council has appointed a Grants Panel to award grants to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. In order to receive funding organisations must submit an application to the Council</p>		

	<p>demonstrating how the application fits with the Council's funding criteria. The Panel also monitors implementation of projects for which funding has been awarded and can withhold funding instalments in cases where specific funding criteria have not been met.</p> <p>The Grants Panel will start to review applications for grants for the 2014/15 round of funding in September 2013. The work of the Panel is organised in accordance with timeframes for the grants process which are set in advance. Any findings from this review could not be implemented mid-year but instead would need to be applied to the 2015/16 funding round.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is advised to appoint a maximum of five Members to each Task Group in line with best practice. Members of the Council's Grants Panel would be advised not to participate in this exercise due to the potential for a conflict of interest to arise during the review.</p>
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To review the Council's grants programme and the work of the Grants Panel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing the Council's Voluntary Sector Grants' Co-ordinator. • Interviewing the relevant Portfolio Holder (for Community Leadership and Partnership). 2) To assess the support provided by other departments at Redditch Borough Council to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing the relevant Portfolio Holder (for Community Leadership and Partnership). • Interviewing representatives of the Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Team. • Interviewing representatives of the Council's Environmental Services Team. 3) To receive an overview of the Council's Concessionary Rents process and the implications of this process for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

	<p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing the Council's Voluntary Sector Grants' Co-ordinator. <p>4) To consult with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector about support they receive from the public sector.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulating a survey to all Voluntary Sector organisations based in the Borough. • Interviewing the Voluntary and Community representative appointed to the Redditch Local Strategic Partnership. • Consulting with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector. <p>5) To investigate and clarify the additional support that Voluntary and Community Sector organisations require from Redditch Borough Council and partner organisations.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing survey feedback received from Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. • Interviewing the relevant Portfolio Holder (for Community Leadership and Partnership). • Consulting with the Voluntary and Community Sector representative appointed to the Redditch Local Strategic Partnership. • Consulting with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector. <p>6) To identify actions that could be taken to improve</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) internal communications about the support Council departments provide to the Voluntary and Community Sector; and b) the Council's approach to communicating with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector.
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and</p>	<p>This review should take eight months to complete. If the Task Group was launched in September 2013 it would need to be completed by the 1st April 2014.</p>

meetings required)	
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Email: jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk / a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2
Witnesses

The Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group would like to thank the following people for providing evidence during the course of the review:

Helen Broughton (Redditch Partnership Manager)
 Councillor David Bush (Chair of the Grants Panel)
 Ray Cooke (Leisure Services Manager)
 Clare Flanagan (Principal Solicitor)
 John Godwin (Head of Leisure and Cultural Services)
 Joanne Hall (Parks and Green Space Development and Allotments Assistant)
 Donna Hancox (Grants Officer)
 Sue Hanley (Deputy Chief Executive)
 Anne-Marie Harley (Communications Manager)
 Councillor Bill Hartnett (Portfolio Holder for Leadership and Partnership – including the Voluntary Sector and Health).
 Elise Hopkins (Housing Options Manager)
 Bev Houghton (Community Safety Manager)
 Michael Hunter (Chairman, Worcestershire Voices)
 Lee McKenzie (Sandycroft Well-being Centre)
 Paul McLaughlin (Estates Team Manager)
 Jayne Pickering (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources)
 Guy Revans (Head of Environmental Services)
 David Riley (Revenue Services Manager)
 Ann Sowton (Bromsgrove and Redditch Network – BARN)
 Becky Talbot (Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager)
 Susan Tasker (PA to the Chief Executive and Office Services Manager)
 Christopher Thomas (Neighbourhood Development Assistant)
 Amanda De Warr (Head of Customer Access and Financial Support)
 Dave Wheeler (Leisure Services Manager)
 Liz Williams (Neighbourhood Development Manager)
 Judith Willis (Acting Head of Community Services)
 The 25 members of staff who responded to the group's staff volunteering survey.

Members would also like to thank the following Voluntary and Community Sector Groups for submitting evidence during the review:

Inspire Community Training and Development (CIC) Ltd
 NewStarts
 North Worcestershire Basement Project
 Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA
 Redditch Citizens Advice Bureau
 Redditch Talking Newspaper
 RYCE
 Where Next Association
 Worcestershire YMCA

APPENDIX 3
Timeline of Activities

Date	Task Group Activity
1st October 2013	Scoping discussion and interview with the Grants Officer
15 th October	Discussion of approach to the review and identification of expert witnesses.
1 st November	Consideration of Third Sector Task and Finish Group's report and outcomes, and reviewing relevant pages on the Council's website and the Concessionary Rents Policy.
22 nd November	Interview with the Deputy Chief Executive and Acting Head of Community Services.
25 th November	Interview with Councillor Bush, Chair of the Grants Panel.
5 th December	Interviews with the Head of Environmental Services, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Redditch Partnership Manager.
10 th December	Consideration of the Council's Staff Volunteering Policy and reviewing the Grants Programme in place at Wychavon District Council.
19 th December	Interview with the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support, the Revenue Services Manager, the Estates Team Manager and the Grants Officer.
10 th January 2014	Interview with the Neighbourhood Development Manager and visit to The Space and Winyates Hub.
24 th January	Interview with the Housing Options Manager.
3 rd February	Considering the work of volunteers for the Council, support for allotments and the links between the Mayor and the Voluntary Sector.

7 th March	Interview with Ms Ann Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN)
14 th March	Interview with Mr Michael Hunter, Worcestershire Voices.
18 th March	Interview with Ms Lee McKenzie, Sandycroft Well-being Centre.
28 th March	Consideration of Progress with the review and next steps.
4 th April	Reviewing grants statistics and consideration of feedback received in writing from the Leader of the Council.
1 st May	Considering feedback from staff regarding the Council's Staff Volunteering Policy.
9 th June	Consideration of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 and agreeing an initial draft of recommendations. The co-option of former Councillor Roger Hill was also confirmed at this meeting.
17 th June	Finalisation of the group's recommendations.
8 th July	Consideration of feedback from Officers about the draft list of recommendations and finalisation of the group's report.

Total: 20 meetings.

APPENDIX 4
Declarations of interest

Councillor Brazier: Councillor Brazier declared an other disclosable interest throughout the review as an employee of the British Heart Foundation.

Councillor Witherspoon: At every meeting of the group Councillor Witherspoon declared an other disclosable interest as a member of the Redditch Older Peoples' Forum and Age UK. She also declared that her husband, Councillor J Witherspoon, was a member of the Board for the local branch of the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB).

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 Joe Baker	Date of referral	22nd July 2014
Proposed topic title	Provision of Support Networks for LGBT Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>This review proposal links to the following Council Strategic Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me live my life independently (including health and activity) • Keep my place safe and looking good. • Provide good things for me to do, see and visit. 		
Background to the issue	<p>The rights and needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people living within Redditch Borough has recently been the focus of some discussion. To demonstrate solidarity with the LGBT community a gathering took place outside the Town Hall prior to full Council on 9th June, which I organised and attended. Following this gathering I was approached by a number of local residents from within the LGBT community who expressed some concerns about the support available to them and who sought reassurance about the action being taken locally to address homophobia.</p> <p>There are a small number of groups and initiatives, at the local and regional level, which work to address the needs of the local LGBT community. This includes the Bromsgrove and Redditch LGBT History Month. However, I am concerned that these groups are not necessarily engaging effectively with the local LGBT community and in some instances there may be limited awareness that these groups exist. I am also concerned that there are limited social groups locally that specifically address the needs of people from the LGBT community.</p> <p>In 2012 Stonewall published the <i>School Report</i>, research focusing on the experiences of young gay peoples in British schools. This research found that 55% of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people experienced homophobic bullying in school and one in four (23%) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people had tried to take their lives at some point. I am concerned about how</p>		

	<p>these experiences are manifested at the local level and the extent to which local public agencies are currently providing sufficient support to young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people living in Redditch Borough.</p> <p>I think a review of this subject matter would be useful as it would demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting the LGBT community and would respond to concerns raised directly with me by some local residents. I would hope that at the end of a review of this subject Redditch Borough Councillors would have an understanding of the needs of the local LGBT community and what action the Council and other public sector agencies can do to support the community more effectively.</p>
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To explore the work currently undertaken by Redditch Borough Council and Redditch Local Strategic Partnership to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. 2) To investigate the support available from the NHS and Mental Health Services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. 3) To review the support available from public agencies to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people who have or are continuing to experience homophobic bullying and harassment (including hate crime). <p>(This should involve considering the findings of the recent <i>Reducing Crime Against People at Risk</i> scrutiny report undertaken by Worcestershire County Council).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) To assess the support available to young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people locally. 5) To investigate existing social opportunities available to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people locally and the potential to make additional social opportunities available. 6) To determine the financial implications of any actions proposed by a Task Group to meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people locally.
<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 believe that a Task Group should be provided with six months to complete this review effectively. In the event that the review is launched by the beginning of August I would anticipate that it would conclude by January 2015.</p>

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a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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 Jane Potter	Date of referral	22/07/14
Proposed topic title	Obesity Levels Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>Council Strategic Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me live my life independently (including health and activity). • Provide me with good things to do, see and visit. <p>Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health inequalities – with particular focus on smoking, obesity and alcohol. 		
Background to the issue	<p>The health of the people of Redditch has been an issue of concern at the local level for a number of years. In 2010 the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) identified health inequalities as an issue impacting on the population of Redditch. These inequalities were particularly noticeable when compared to the rest of Worcestershire.</p> <p>Whilst the CAA was subsequently discontinued those health inequalities remained. This was recognised by the Redditch Partnership and tackling health inequalities was incorporated as one of the key priorities in the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). In the year in which this strategy is due to be refreshed (2014) it would seem timely to undertake a scrutiny review to investigate the progress that has been made at the local level by partner organisations in addressing health inequalities.</p> <p>There is the potential for Members to investigate every aspect of health inequalities. However, it is likely that by focusing on such a wide remit a Task Group would take a significant amount of time to complete their exercise and might only be able to identify broad solutions that would not necessarily address specific problems. With this in mind I am proposing that this particular review should focus on action that can, is and has been taken to address obesity levels within the Borough.</p>		

Obesity can be a contributory factor to a number of medical conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. These conditions can have a significant impact on the quality of an individual's life and can lead to them needing to access specific health care services for the rest of their lives. However, there is the potential, through lifestyle changes, for obesity levels to be addressed and potentially to prevent those health conditions from developing. A scrutiny group could help to identify actions that could be taken to address this problem.

I am particularly keen to identify support that can be provided to people from deprived communities. Individuals from deprived backgrounds may struggle to access some forms of support that are currently available, especially if they are required to pay to participate or need to be able to access transport to reach the support that is available. I am also concerned about childhood obesity levels because children and young people are the future for Redditch and it is important that they have a healthy start in life so that they can go on to achieve their potential.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), a national body with expertise in the field of Overview and Scrutiny, has led efforts in recent years to tackle health inequalities through scrutiny. As part of this process the CfPS has been working with various local authorities on a Health Inequalities Programme since 2009. Using funding provided by the Department of Health, the Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme "*...was created to develop innovative solutions to long-standing inequalities...*" including obesity. A Redditch review of obesity could make use of this knowledge and potentially identify whether solutions applied at other local authorities as a result of scrutiny could equally be applied in Redditch.

I am aware that traditionally scrutiny of health matters is led by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Worcestershire. However, this issue has such significance at the local level for the people of Redditch that I believe a scrutiny review could justifiably be undertaken by a Redditch Borough Council scrutiny group.

There are some key outcomes that a scrutiny review of this subject could help to address if constructive proposals are brought forward and accepted:

- A reduction in the number of people living within the local community who are classified as obese.
- A reduction in the levels of health conditions associated with obesity amongst the local population, particularly obesity.

Key Objectives
Please keep to SMART
objectives (Specific,

- 1) To investigate the action taken by the Redditch Partnership to tackle obesity levels in the Borough. (This should include reviewing the work of the Area of Highest Need project).

<p>Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) To assess the contribution made by Redditch Borough Council to tackling obesity levels amongst local residents. 3) To consult with relevant local representatives of the NHS (including the Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group) regarding the action that already have and could in future be taken to address obesity levels locally. 4) To review relevant outcomes from the CfPS Health Inequalities Programme and to identify any solutions arising from this programme (including from scrutiny reviews conducted by other local authorities as part of the programme) that could be applied in Redditch. 5) To investigate other actions taken in the country or internationally to tackle obesity levels and the potential for similar action to be taken in Redditch. 6) To consult with local residents about the barriers to losing weight and actions that could be taken to motivate weight loss. 7) To identify any legal and financial implications to proposals brought forward by the group at the end of the review.
<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 a review of this subject, if it is to lead to constructive outcomes, would take some time to complete. If the review starts in the summer of 2014 I would anticipate that it could be completed by March 2015.</p>

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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 Pat Witherspoon	Date of referral	22/07/14
Proposed topic title	Proposals for change by Tudor Grange Academy		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>Council Strategic Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me to be financially independent (including skills and education) 		
Background to the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tudor Grange Academy in Redditch is part of a Trust which provides education at various sites across the country. In Redditch the Trust currently runs Tudor Grange high school for children aged between 13 and 18. • Earlier in the year the school governors ran a consultation about changing the age range of the school to 11 – 18 years from September 2015. This would mean a reduced admission number for the school for years 7-11 and in the sixth form. Details are available on the school's website: http://www.redditch.tgacademy.org.uk/parents/change-of-age-range-consultation/ • The proposals were subject to consultation between 19th May – 20th June 2014 and a meeting was held at the Academy to explain the proposals. • A considerable number of members of the public contacted Borough Councillors expressing their concerns at the proposals and the timescales involved. • Education in Redditch is currently arranged as 3-tier – primary; middle and high schools. Members of the public were concerned that, if implemented, the proposals to change one school in the Borough would have an adverse impact on the other schools, as two systems would be running side by side. They were also concerned at the proposed timescale and the impact this would have on admission arrangements for all schools across the Borough. • These proposed changes undertaken in isolation of a wider review of the education system in Redditch might contribute to a significant reduction in educational attainment and significant challenges to the other schools in the area and thus children in the Borough, which will eventually have an 		

	<p>extremely detrimental impact on our economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst this is not a matter for which the Borough Council is directly responsible we take our role as community leaders very seriously; there may be an opportunity to engage with the Borough Council, the County Council and the Redditch Partnership, school governors and parents on a wider review of the education system that operates within the Borough in order to ensure it is the best solution for the people of the Town.
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To understand the proposals by Tudor Grange Academy to extend the age range of pupils; 2) To assess the potential impact on schooling arrangements in the Borough if the proposals were to be implemented; 3) Through investigation of this proposal and the basis on which Academy schools operate, to support Ward Councillors and residents in understanding how they can best contribute most effectively to the debate and decision on this issue.
<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>Initial presentation to an O&S Committee meeting? With consultation documents from the school as background?</i></p>

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

22nd July 2014

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING EVENT – REPORT TO COMMITTEE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The attached report details the feedback received from Members who participated in the reconvened Overview and Scrutiny training session on 2nd July 2014. During the course of this event a significant number of topics were proposed as being suitable for further scrutiny.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether any of the topics suggested should be pursued this year.. As part of this process Members are asked to consider the evidence basis for each of the proposed topics as well as the resource implications.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) which topics would be suitable to review as Task Group exercises;
- 2) which topics would be suitable for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider during the year;
- 3) which of the proposed topics require no further action or could be dealt with in another way; and
- 4) that the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny training was delivered to 11 Members on 10th June. During this training Members were provided with an overview of the powers of scrutiny and received information about the current strategic considerations for Council services. Members had also been due to participate in a number of interactive sessions. However, due to the fact another key meeting was taking place in the local community that evening these exercises were postponed until later in the year.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**22nd July 2014

- 3.2 The training was subsequently scheduled to take place on 2nd July and all non-executive Members were invited to participate. In the event six councillors attended this session.
- 3.3 As part of the training Members participated in two exercises. For the first exercise Members highlighted the five key issues that had been brought to their attention in the previous six months (or, in the case of new Members, whilst canvassing). These issues were then linked to the Council's strategic purposes. The aim of the exercise was to enable Members to reflect on the main topics that were of interest to the local community and to ensure that these were brought to the attention of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 3.4 In the second exercise the Councillors worked in two groups. The groups discussed each of the topics that had been recorded in the first exercise and attempted to determine the following:
- Whether the topic was suitable for further scrutiny.
 - What issues would need to be addressed as part of a review of this subject.
 - Whether the review would be suitable for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or by a Task Group.
- 3.5 A record was provided of both group's conclusions which is detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 3.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes collective decisions about which topics should be subject to further scrutiny and there is the possibility that the Committee will disagree with the conclusions reached by Members during the training event. Any items that Members feel would be suitable for the Committee to scrutinise at a single meeting will be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. However, Members are asked to note that at Redditch Borough Council there is a constitutional requirement for a scoping document, detailing the terms of reference for a review, to be completed for any Task Group exercises. Whilst topics potentially suitable for Task Group exercises may be identified from the list of subjects detailed in Appendix 1, no final decision will be made about any Task Group until a scoping document has been submitted for the consideration of the Committee.
- 3.7 Members are also asked to note that three scoping documents are due to be considered during this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Only two of these reviews could be launched immediately. If two Task Groups are approved during this meeting of the Committee Members would need to postpone any additional scrutiny exercises until later in the year.

Financial Implications

- 3.8 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, in line with constitutional requirements any Overview and Scrutiny reports

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**22nd July 2014

completed during the year, including Task Group reports, will need to address the financial implications of recommendations made to the Executive Committee or other bodies.

Legal Implications

- 3.9 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, in line with constitutional requirements any Overview and Scrutiny reports completed during the year, including Task Group reports, will need to address the legal implications of recommendations made to the Executive Committee or other bodies.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 Members have previously agreed that this year only two Task Group exercises will take place at any one time in line with Officer capacity. Where necessary, this could be accompanied by a Short, Sharp Review.
- 3.11 At present the Football Task Group is the only review that remains following completion of all the other scrutiny exercises launched in 2013/14. This exercise has not been supported by the lead Democratic Services Officer with responsibility for supporting scrutiny exercises at the Council because it was launched at a time of a heavy workload for scrutiny. There is no intention for this Officer to become involved in this exercise to ensure that the review retains consistent Officer support. For this reason there is currently capacity for the Officer to support two Task Group exercises as detailed in paragraph 3.9 above.
- 3.12 Consideration should also be given to the Committee's Work Programme when deciding appropriate dates to receive reports or presentations on topics that the Committee feels would be suitable for further scrutiny.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 The Committee should note that focusing on issues of importance to the local community, in line with customers' priorities, is considered to be best practice. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is therefore asked to consider the extent to which each of the proposed topics reflects the needs and priorities of local residents when deciding whether to look at these items.
- 3.14 A number of the subjects identified by Members during the event do not relate to services delivered by Redditch Borough Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is entitled to scrutinise any issues that may impact on the local community, including services provided by external partner organisations. Members should not therefore feel constrained to focus on Council services alone.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**22nd July 2014

- 3.15 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications to this report. However, in line with best practice Members may want to consider the potential impact of a review on particular groups within society when deciding whether or not a subject would be suitable for further scrutiny.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Suggested topics for scrutiny

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel.: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3268

Overview and Scrutiny Training Session: 2nd July 2014

Subjects for Scrutiny

During the course of the Overview and Scrutiny training session on 2nd July Members participated in two exercises. The first exercise was designed to enable Member to highlight the five key issues brought to their attention in the previous six months (or whilst canvassing in the case of new Members). Each of these issues was linked to one of the Council's six strategic purposes. During the second exercise Members were divided into two groups. In these groups they discussed each of the issues in turn to determine whether the subject would be suitable for further scrutiny. The findings from these group discussions are detailed below in line with the strategic purpose to which each subject was linked.

Keep my place safe and looking good

Subject 1: The state of grass verges and parking restrictions

- A number of Councillors reported that residents had approached them about the state of grass verges, generally arising from the use of these verges for parking in the absence of adequate parking facilities.
- Some residents were also likely to raise questions about the frequency of grass cutting.
- Members expressed the view that the Police and Traffic Wardens had limited capacity to address problems with parking on grass verges. Their focus inevitably needed to be criminal activities.
- Whilst some grass verges were the responsibility of Redditch Borough Council other grass verges were the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council. The exact division of responsibilities between the two authorities would take time to clarify.

Conclusions:

- a) An Officer could be invited to speak to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the extent of the problem with cars parking on grass verges. However, Members felt that the subject would not really be suitable for further scrutiny as there were limited options available to address the problem.
- b) Grass cutting formed part of the focus of the Landscaping Task Group review in 2013/14. Interested Councillors could revisit this report and / or arrange to meet with representatives of the Landscaping and Place teams.

Subject 2: We don't want more powerful mobile phone masts

- Some Councillors had received enquiries from concerned residents about the installation and location of phone masts in the Borough.
- Some residents' concerns focused on the appearance of the phone masts. The Council had already explored different designs.

- However, the number of complaints about phone masts had decreased over the past 10 years alongside a growth in use of mobile phones.
- A review of this subject could only focus on planning policy and not on specific planning applications.

Conclusion: Members were not convinced that this subject would be suitable for further scrutiny.

Subject 3: Rats in adjoining properties

- Complaints had been received by some Councillors about rats as pests in particular neighbourhoods.
- The problem was often exacerbated for residents by the condition of adjacent properties. This could be difficult for the Council to address, particularly in instances involving private properties.
- A pest control service is available to eligible residents free of charge (further details provided on the Council's website).

Conclusions:

- a) This subject would not be suitable for further scrutiny.
- b) Councillors interested in finding out more about the pest control service could contact Officers from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) directly for further information and / or signpost residents accordingly.

Subject 4: Dog Fouling

- Residents have persistently complained about dog fouling in the local community.
- There has been the high profile Mucky Pup campaign in recent years designed to encourage residents to clean up after their pets.
- Members were particularly interested to learn more about the enforcement action that is being taken to address dog fouling and the level of fines that have been issued to owners.
- There is the potential to combine consideration of dog fouling with discussion of street cleansing arrangements.

Conclusions:

- a) This subject would be suitable for discussion at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- b) A Short, Sharp Review would only be suitable if the initial presentation to the Committee identifies areas of concern that Members feel should be subject to further scrutiny.

Provide good things for me to do, see and visitSubject 5: More things for the youth to do in youth clubs

- Some Councillors have been approached about young people gathering in parts of the Borough.
- Concerns have been raised that there are limited activities available to young people and those activities that are available are not necessarily promoted effectively to the young people who might be most interested in participating.
- Worcestershire County Council commissions “positive activities” from two consortiums of voluntary, community and public sector organisations in the Borough.
- An update on the outcomes of the positive activities programme in Redditch is due to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd September. Members suggested that the following questions could be raised during the delivery of this update:
 - At what times of the day/evening are youth activities delivered to young people in Redditch?
 - How are these activities advertised to young people?
 - Is there a particular target audience for these youth activities? If so how do groups monitor whether they are attracting these groups?
 - What activities are offered to young people who do not want to attend a youth club and how are these activities advertised?

Conclusions:

- a) Consideration should be given to inviting all Members to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd September so that interested Councillors can also receive the update on the positive activities programme.
- b) The Youth Service Provision Task Group’s final report (published in 2012) should be sent to any new Members who request a copy for information.

Help me to be financially independent (including education and skills)Subject 6: Is Transformation working?

- Service transformation has been underway at the Council for a number of years.
- Given the significance of service transformation to the Council it is important, particularly for new Members, to learn what transformation means and the difference it is making in terms of:
 - financial savings; and
 - Improvements to services.

Conclusions: The Chief Executive should be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide further information on this subject.

Subject 7: Provide sources of support to those who struggle to manage their money.

- Prior to launching a review Members would need to clarify the level of demand for this advice.
- There are other indicators to take into account, including the demand for food banks in the area.
- There is a need to clarify where earlier intervention might prevent demand from arising at a later stage.
- Schools have a role to play in educating people about how to manage their finances.
- Consideration should be given to the ways in which the Council becomes aware of problems (e.g. through housing services, rent collection etc.)
- Exploration is needed regarding the support that is already available and how this is promoted to residents.
- The purpose of investigating this subject would be:
 - Establish the level of the problem and need for advice at the local level.
 - To identify existing sources of support and advice.
 - To increase awareness of existing sources of support and advice.
- Any review of this subject should consider need across the whole Borough, not just in one ward.

Conclusions: This subject would be suitable for further scrutiny, either for discussion at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or as part of a Short, Sharp Review exercise. It may also be appropriate to visit the locality work where team members are dealing with this issue.

Subject 8: Free Swimming – is it worth it? / Concessionary Bus Passes - are they worth it?

- There is a need to ensure that the Council is achieving best value for money in its use of resources.
- Members need to consider whether the use of resources is benefitting the maximum number of people.
- A review could focus on the following:
 - Obtaining information from relevant Officers about usage and costs.
 - Consulting with representatives of the bus company to find out how they account for the charges and the demand for use of services before 9.30am.

Conclusion:

- a) Relevant Officers and the relevant Portfolio Holder should be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss free swimming further.
- b) Relevant Officer, the relevant Portfolio Holder and (possibly) representatives of the bus company should be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss Concessionary Bus Passes further.

Help me run a successful businessSubject 9: Make more advice available locally for small business people (e.g. at the One Stop Shop)

- This subject matter raises a number of questions:
 - What support is already provided to small businesses?
 - How is this communicated to elected Members?
 - How can elected Members report issues on behalf of businesses located in their wards?
- Members did not feel that this subject was suitable for further scrutiny.

Conclusion: Interested Members should approach the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit to discuss this matter further. Alternatively, if a number of Councillors consider that they would like to find out more information, the Member Support Steering Group could be asked to arrange a briefing session for Councillors

Help me to find somewhere to live in my localitySubject 10: Void Properties

- This subject has implications for both Housing Services and Legal Services.
- To assess the scale of the problem locally it might be useful to benchmark local void levels against levels for housing associations.
- The number of void properties and how voids are managed would need to be considered.
- Questions were raised as to whether there had been any changes in terms of the time taken to turn around void properties when compared to previous years.
- There would be a number of potential benefits to be gained from reviewing this subject including:
 - Identifying potential actions that could be taken to reduce the number of void properties.
 - Reducing the length for which these properties remain vacant.
 - Maintaining rental income.
 - Reducing costs (to the Council).

Conclusion: Officers should attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deliver a presentation/report on this subject.

Subject 11: More good standard social housing

- The group that discussed this suggestion were uncertain about the intentions of the Councillor who had raised the issue.
- Social housing could refer to housing provided by the Council or by other housing providers.

- Questions were raised as to whether there was poor quality housing in some parts of the Borough.

Conclusions: A Member Briefing should be delivered to all Councillors focusing on the quality of social housing available and addressing any current problems with poor quality social housing.

Subject 12: Housing in parts of Batchley

- Concerns were raised about the condition of residential properties located in parts of Batchley, particularly Salters Lane and Hewell Road.
- Members felt that there was a need to explore further the support available to people living in these areas to help improve the condition of housing in the area.
- There is the potential to consider the outcomes of the recent estate enhancements work and lessons that could be applied in Batchley.
- The outcomes of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review (completed in 2010) and the implications for other parts of the Borough could be considered by Members.
- The potential for capital investment to be made in the Council's housing stock at a time of financial austerity would need to be considered carefully.
- A cost / benefit analysis could be included as part of any review of this subject.

Conclusions:

- a) The lessons from the previous Short, Sharp Review and Estate Enhancement programme could be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- b) Members may want to consider the content of the *Delivering New Affordable Housing Report*, which was presented for the Executive Committee's consideration in October 2013.
- c) Planned action to provide better quality housing to residents over forthcoming years could be provided in the form of a Member Briefing.
- d) This could also be a suitable subject for a Short, Sharp Review. However any findings would need to be related to other parts of the Borough.

Help me to live my life independently (including health and activity)

Subject 13: Tackling Obesity

- Obesity levels in Redditch have been identified as a significant form of health inequality impacting on the town.
- Some action has already been taken to tackle obesity levels (e.g. led by the Redditch Partnership). This should be taken into account as part of any review of the subject.
- Consideration should be given to action taken by the following to address obesity levels:
 - Redditch Borough Council (e.g. at the Arrow Valley Park).

- Worcestershire County Council – Choose How You Move.
- Health organisations, including Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- Voluntary and Community Sector groups.
- Local schools.
- It would be important to determine what action can be taken to inspire people to change their lifestyles.
- Consideration should be given to what other local authorities have done to tackle the subject.
- There would be some key outcomes to a review of this subject:
 - Reduce obesity levels amongst local residents.
 - Reduce obesity related health conditions (such as diabetes).

Conclusion: This would be a suitable subject for a Task Group review.

Subject 14: Improving awareness of contraception

- If this subject was to be scrutinised there would be a need to establish public awareness of the various contraceptive methods available for people to use.
- Members also felt it would be useful to identify the extent to which unplanned pregnancies are arising due to limited awareness of the different forms of contraceptive that are available.
- The support and advice available to some of the most vulnerable members of society experiencing unplanned pregnancies should be considered, including support for people with addictions and drug dependency issues.
- Concerns have been raised about the need to keep children in a loving family environment wherever possible and that the focus should be on the needs of the child.
- However, in some cases Members recognise that children do need to go into care because they are living in chaotic environments. This can have an impact on the child as well as on local authority resources.
- This is a sensitive subject and any discussions through scrutiny would need to be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Conclusion: This topic would be suitable for further scrutiny as a Task Group exercise.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

22nd July 2014

QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities, and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides an update on the action that has been taken to implement recommendations made through the scrutiny process. Information is provided both about recommendations that have been implemented and recommendations where action remains to be taken.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that
the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Background**

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th June 2013 Members considered the Committee's current approach to monitoring the implementation of recommendations that have been made through the scrutiny process. Rather than receive monitoring update reports every six months on recommendations made by the Committee and updates every 12 months on the action taken to implement recommendations made by Task Groups Members agreed to receive updates on action taken to implement all recommendations on a quarterly basis.
- 3.2 The Committee requested that the details of all recommendations already acted upon should be published on the Overview and Scrutiny section of the Borough Council's website to highlight the positive difference that the Committee was making. Information about implemented recommendations is now only reported back to the Committee once to ensure that Members can focus on encouraging action to be taken in cases where recommendations have not yet been implemented.
- 3.3 In accordance with this approach, Appendix 1 lists recommendations made through the scrutiny process that have already been implemented. Appendix 2 lists those recommendations that remain to be implemented.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**22nd July 2014

- 3.4 Wherever possible, as requested by Members, an estimated date for the final implementation of outstanding recommendations has been provided.
- 3.5 The Committee will be aware that there are some recommendations where it would be reasonable for Officers to require further time to implement. For example, Officers would require some time to implement recommendations made at a recent meeting of the Committee. Where possible an explanation has been provided for the delay to implementation.
- 3.6 Members are invited to consider the updates provided regarding these recommendations and to identify whether any further action is required to facilitate the implementation of any of these recommendations.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 There are no direct financial implications directly relating to this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 There are no direct service or operational implications that have been identified for this report.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 No direct customer or equality and diversity implications have been identified for this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Recommendations that have been implemented.

Appendix 2 – Recommendations that remain to be implemented.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker
Recommendations that have been implemented

Promoting Sporting Participation Task and Finish Group

(considered by Executive Committee on 26/6/12)

<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> That the Council look to maximise the benefits of parks and green spaces in Redditch by introducing more informal games areas and additional equipment to help increase sporting participation and physical activity in the local area</p>	<p>A detailed update was provided on the action that was being taken to implement this recommendation the last time the Committee received a tracking update report on 1st April 2014. The recommendation was fully implemented by the end of that month.</p>
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Arts and Culture Centre Task Group

(considered by the Executive Committee on 9th April 2013)

All nine of the group's recommendations were ENDORSED by the Executive Committee. However, the Committee could not decide on all of the recommendations as it is not the decision making body for outside organisations.

The following conclusions have been reached: Recommendation 2a, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 were APPROVED. Recommendations 1, 2, 4a, and 7 were recommendations to the Arts in Redditch Network. The Arts in Redditch Network has considered the Task Group's recommendations. The network has reserved the right to submit a more detailed response at a later date and may adapt their response accordingly at this stage. A final decision on these recommendations therefore remains PENDING.

<p><u>Recommendation 4 a:</u> The Arts in Redditch Network should promote opportunities to display local artists' work.</p>	<p>The Arts in Redditch Network (AIR) in partnership with the Council ran a 'pop up' gallery in a redundant shop in the Kingfisher Centre from the 10th to 19th May 2014 exhibiting local artists. During this period the gallery had over 4,000 visitors. The AIR network is now planning another 'pop up' gallery for November and wishes to organise 'pop up' galleries on an ongoing basis as a priority.</p>
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Local Strategic Partnership Monitoring Update Report
 (Considered by the Executive Committee 2nd September 2013)
The Executive Committee APPROVED this recommendation, subject to a slight amendment to the wording.

Recommendation: the Council identify suitable sources of funding, including from external partner organisations such as Worcestershire County Council, that could be used to fund the installation of adult exercise equipment in Morton Stanley Park.

The Executive Committee agreed the following: “**Officers be requested to try and identify** suitable sources of funding, including from external partner organisations such as Worcestershire County Council, that could be used to fund the installation of adult exercise equipment in Morton Stanley Park”.

Officers have reviewed this situation and at present no such opportunities exist. The situation will be monitored and applications made to suitable funding streams if and when they become available.

Football Task Group: Interim Report
 (Considered by the Executive Committee on 8th April 2014)

Recommendation 1: The interim report of the Football Task Group be received and noted.

The report was received and noted on 8th April 2014.

Landscaping Task Group
(consider by the Executive Committee on 8th April 2014)

Recommendation 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.

This should now be happening as a matter of course, all managers and team leaders have been instructed to ensure that Members are informed regarding outcomes of issues that Members refer to them.

This recommendation will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 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.

This has been added as a supporting measure under the measures that relate to landscape maintenance. Performance in relation to this measure will be tracked within the strategic measures monitoring process.

Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker
Recommendations that remain to be implemented

<p>Access for Disabled People Task Group (Considered by the Executive Committee on 21st August 2012 and subsequently reiterated on the 11th June 2013 and on 1st April 2014)</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 6</u>: a disability awareness session should be delivered as part of the Member Development Programme at Redditch Borough Council.</p> <p>(The Overview and Scrutiny recommended on 1st April that the Member Development Support Steering Group consider extending the invitations to attend this session to all Members rather than confining to just new Members. This was approved on 8th April 2014 by the Executive Committee).</p>	<p>An equalities training session, to which all Members have been invited, is due to be delivered on Thursday 24th July at Redditch Town Hall. This will include disability awareness training.</p>
<p>Sickness Policy Short, Sharp Review (considered by Executive Committee on 20th November 2012)</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 3</u>: an A5 laminated guide to the Council's Sickness Absence Policy should be provided for the use of managers and staff.</p>	<p>Officers have investigated the potential for an A5 laminated guide to the Council's Sickness Absence Policy to be provided. They reported at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st April that Officers had found that it</p>

was not possible to fit sufficient information about the process onto a single card. However, the Committee reiterated the point that they were simply asking for some key bullet points to be included on guides to the process. At the request of Members Officers have been asked to draft a version of this guide and to present it for the consideration of the Committee in due course. This draft guide is now due to be considered at a meeting of the Committee on 2nd September 2014.

Redditch Market Review

(considered by Executive Committee on 12th March 2013)
(There were seventeen recommendations in total)

All of the recommendations were all APPROVED subject to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport taking the lead on working on the detail of proposals and on the adoption of a bold and radical approach to recommendations 1 and 2 in particular, including a full assessment of the options for delivering a vibrant and viable market.

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members expressed concerns about the slow progression of action that had been taken to implement the group's recommendations on this subject, as nine recommendations remained to be implemented over 12 months after the review had been completed. The Committee therefore requested that a bespoke monitoring update report on this subject be presented for Members' consideration in 2014/15. Officers have arranged to deliver this update on 21st October 2014. Therefore no additional information has been provided on this subject in this report.

Arts and Culture Centre Task Group
(considered by the Executive Committee on 9th April 2013)

All nine of the group’s recommendations were ENDORSED by the Executive Committee. However, the Committee could not decide on all of the recommendations as it is not the decision making body for outside organisations.

The following conclusions have been reached: Recommendation 2a, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 were APPROVED. Recommendations 1, 2, 4a, and 7 were recommendations to the Arts in Redditch Network. The Arts in Redditch Network has considered the Task Group’s recommendations. The network has reserved the right to submit a more detailed response at a later date and may adapt their response accordingly at this stage. A final decision on these recommendations therefore remains PENDING.

<p><u>Recommendation 4</u>: art exhibition space, where local artists can display their work, should be introduced at the Palace Theatre and the Abbey Stadium:</p>	<p>The Abbey Stadium art exhibition space has been developed and completed.</p> <p>The Place Theatre exhibition space remains a viable option to develop if the budget is available the AIR network wish to proceed with it. At this time the AIR network are concentrating on the ‘pop up’ galleries.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 7</u>: in an ideal world an arts centre would be established in Redditch by a community group. However, in order for this objective to be achieved the community group needs to be aware of and to address the following barriers:</p>	<p>The establishment of an Arts Centre remains the clearly stated long-term objective of the Arts in Redditch network. This commitment is featured in the ‘About Us’ pages of the website, and was re-stated at the launch event on the 22nd October 2013.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the extent to which local arts groups would make use of an arts centre; b) the financial costs involved in establishing and maintaining an arts centre; c) funding application requirements; d) creating a sustainable business case; e) legal liability and accountability issues; f) availability of volunteers to operate the centre; and g) management arrangements for the centre. 	<p>To further promote the profile of the arts community in Redditch, the Arts in Redditch network organised a ‘pop-up gallery’ at the Kingfisher Centre, over the period 10th - 19th May. This helped to showcase the visual arts scene in the town, help bring participants together and also encourage greater participation in arts activities with over 4000 visitors.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 9</u>: the ‘Creative Redditch’ artwork should be prioritised for use on the next bus shelter that is installed in Redditch town centre.</p>	<p>The Engineering and Design team of the Council has worked with Choose How You Move to install a covered cycle shelter in the town centre. Following damage to the panels (consisting of scratched “tags”) the clear panels were replaced with the Choose How You Move artwork ahead of the Tour Series (at Worcestershire County Council’s expense). In the current financial climate there are no plans to replace these panels due to the costs of doing so.</p> <p>However, action has been requested to deal with the longstanding damage to the shop front at the former Poundstretcher’s unit. In view of its prominence and importance to the town centre Officers would be keen to see that this is progressed as soon as is reasonably possible. It is possible this could involve use of artwork.</p>

Access for Disabled People Task Group – Monitoring Update Report

(considered by the Executive Committee on 11th June 2013)

The recommendations were endorsed, subject to changes to the wording of both recommendations.

Recommendation 2: an in year bid, to be paid for from balances, should be made to fund the installation of a canopy over the ramp access to Shopmobility.

The Executive Committee recommended on 11th June that a canopy should be installed at this location. However, the Committee proposed that the installation of this canopy should be paid for using funds from the Shopmobility donated reserves.

Previously Members have been advised that approval will be required from the Kingfisher Centre due to the land being in their ownership. Following this planning permission would also be required.

Since the last update was received on this matter Officers have reported that a planning application has been submitted for an amendment to access for Car Park 3 and an additional access point to Car Park 1. Officers are therefore currently unable to take any further action on this recommendation until planning has been either accepted or refused as they will need to assess how any outcomes of this planning process will affect the erection of the canopy.

Medium Term Financial Plan
The recommendation was endorsed by the Executive Committee
(Considered by the Executive Committee 11th February 2014)

Recommendation: the current position for 2014/15-2016/17 be noted and Officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget.

Officers are working to review potential savings. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is due to receive the Future Financial Plan report in September / October which will contain further information on this subject.

Football Task Group: Interim Report
(Considered by the Executive Committee on 8th April 2014)

Recommendation 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.

Officers have met twice with representatives of the club and offered further advice and guidance on the Club's options at the current ground. Conversations are ongoing and additional support will be provided as required.

Landscaping Task Group: Final Report
(Considered by the Executive Committee on 8th April 2014)

<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u> 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.</p>	<p>Officers will be contacting new members during July to offer them the opportunity to visit either a place team and or the tree team to look at how these teams work.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 1a:</u> 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.</p>	<p>A suitable date is being sought for the presentation prior to a Council meeting during the latter half of 2014.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> 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.</p>	<p>A list of key Officer contact details was provided to Members as part of the induction process in May 2014. This list of contact details will continue to be provided as part of the Member Induction process in years to come.</p> <p>Officers are in the process of pulling a list together for Environmental Services. However, given that the Council is trialling a number of different ways of working it is likely to change a number of times over the rest of this financial year.</p>

<p><u>Recommendation 4:</u> 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.</p>	<p>The team have developed a report to allow this to happen and all members will be sent the information that is relevant to their wards at the end of the financial year.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6:</u> 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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; and h) the potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council. 	<p>The Forestry Commission Woodland Creation grant funding scheme is currently closed until further notice. There are currently no other known grant funding bodies which offer similar grant funding opportunities to assist landowners to develop new woodlands.</p> <p>The cost / benefit for the authority to carry out such a project independently is not particularly attractive. Whilst the costs of buying the stock, etc. required to establish a woodland would be reasonably low any potential revenue from its proactive management would take many tens of years to materialise.</p> <p>Officers feel that until grant funding is available, there is little merit in identifying sites, as this would need to be done in accordance with the type of grant funding received as this will determine land size and type as well as what is planted – which ultimately determines the potential yield and timescales. The potential income from such a project would again need to be assessed at this time to ascertain its viability.</p>

Recommendation 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.

Loose firewood timber that arise from the Council's in-house arboricultural operations is currently priced at £30.00 per cubic metre + vat. This is for unconverted timber and we have a regular demand.

We are still looking at the potential to increase the value of this timber by split processing it in batches, which would also potentially open up the available market and customer base for us. However, we are aware that there are local suppliers as well as national suppliers that can provide logs at very competitive prices.

Abbey Stadium Task Group

Considered by the Executive Committee on 24th June 2014

(Decisions on Recommendations 3 and 4 from the group were deferred by the Executive Committee)

Recommendation 1: The Council should explore the option for the Abbey Stadium to be managed by a leisure trust.

The recommendation was largely APPROVED, though in the following reworded form:

“the Council should explore the options for a leisure trust to manage some or all of its facilities, including the Abbey Stadium”.

As this recommendation was only approved at the end of June 2014 and it is likely that significant time will be required to address this proposal there is no update available at this stage for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Updates will be provided for future tracking documents.

<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> 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.</p> <p>The recommendation was largely APPROVED, though in the following reworded form:</p> <p><i>“The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of some or all of the Council’s leisure facilities, including the Abbey Stadium, prior to its submission to the Executive Committee.”</i></p>	<p>Consideration of the business case has been added to the Committee’s Work Programme. However, it is not currently possible to confirm when this business case will be available for Members to scrutinise (if such a business case is produced).</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 5:</u> Officers identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years and over.</p>	<p>Officers are looking to launch a new health and wellbeing activity programme at the Abbey Stadium for the over 50s this autumn and will be starting the advertising campaign for this over the summer period. This will include a wrap around advert in the local paper as well as working in partnership with a number of agencies who cater for this age group as well as with the stadium’s cafe. At the moment details remain to be finalised but this programme should include health sessions in the gym, swimming lessons, Racketball and tai chi. One of the exit routes for this is to signpost people to join the Abbey Stadium gym.</p>

Recommendation 6: there should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retail provision at the Abbey Stadium.

The more visual display for secondary spend and an increased range will be installed no later than the end of August 2014. The size of the display will be around three times the current size with a much bigger variety of stock to purchase.



Executive Committee

24th June 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:

Carole Gandy, Alan Mason and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Emma Baker, Jess Bayley, Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Lynn Jones, David Riley and Amanda de Warr

Committee Services Officer:

Ivor Westmore

1. APOLOGIES

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bill Hartnett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 7 (Non-Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy) as detailed separately at Minute 7 below.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the minute extract from the most recent meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee contained within the Additional Papers 1 pack should be read in conjunction with the report relating to item 5 on the agenda (Abbey Stadium Task Group – Final Report) for this evening's meeting.

.....
Chair

Executive Committee

24th June 2014

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. ABBEY STADIUM TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillors Carole Gandy and Alan Mason, representing the Abbey Stadium Task Group, presented the report prepared by their Group to the Executive Committee.

It was reported that the focus of the review was on exploring the options to extend the offer at the Abbey Stadium at minimum cost to the Council. The Group had been made aware early on in its review that a business case for expansion of the gym was in preparation and so had amended its scoping document to explore alternative options for making the Stadium a success.

The context of the review was a proliferation of other health and fitness centres in the town which was contributing to a gradual decline in membership numbers at the Abbey Stadium. The major recommendation of the Group was that alternative models for management of the Abbey Stadium and other leisure facilities within the Borough be explored. The Group had visited leisure centres in Evesham and Stratford and had determined that management by an external trust, such as was the case at these two centres, might lead to a reduction in costs whilst maintaining or improving the quality of services at the Abbey Stadium. In brief, the recommendations were as follows:

- That the option of the Abbey Stadium being managed by a leisure trust be explored;
- That, should the initial recommendation be agreed, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of the Abbey Stadium;
- That the provision of therapeutic services be considered;
- That the provision of a sauna/steam room be considered;
- That membership of Abbey Stadium should be promoted to those aged 55 or over; and
- That retail provision of leisure goods at Abbey Stadium be expanded.

A number of other matters, such as provision of car washing and the employment of apprentices, had also been considered during the course of the review.

The Executive welcomed the report and commended the Group on a fine piece of work. There was a general agreement that the Task Group, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, other Executive Members and Officers were of a like mind as regards the future management of the Abbey Stadium and the Council's leisure facilities more generally. The Committee was happy to accept the principle of the main recommendation, as expressed in an amended resolution which widened the scope to encompass leisure facilities more generally. Given that the third and fourth recommendations were dependant on the outcome of the exploration of various management options it was agreed that these be deferred. The Committee was content to agree the fifth and sixth recommendations as these could be enacted under the current management regime and were considered to be prudent measures which would assist in maintaining membership levels.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Council should explore the options for a leisure trust to manage some or all of its facilities, including the Abbey Stadium;**
- 2) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of some or all of the Council's leisure facilities, including the Abbey Stadium, prior to its submission to the Executive Committee;**
- 3) consideration of the provision of therapeutic services be deferred pending the exploration of options for the future management of the Council's leisure facilities;**
- 4) consideration of the provision of a sauna/steam room be deferred pending the exploration of options for the future management of the Council's leisure facilities;**
- 5) Officers identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years and over; and**
- 6) there should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retail provision at the Abbey Stadium.**

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2014 AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Committee considered a report which contained a revised Local Development Scheme and a proposal that Officers be instructed to begin preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy and Allocations Plan for the Council.

Officers explained that forthcoming meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel would be set aside to consider the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Members were informed that it was currently the intention of the Council to operate both Section 106 agreements and the new Community Infrastructure Levy alongside each other. The Committee was also reassured that the involvement of the Planning Advisory Panel would be in the preparation of the overall Community Infrastructure Levy Policy rather than in determining the levels of developer contributions from specific developments.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the contents of the report and the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme timetables be noted;**
- 2) Officers be formally instructed to begin preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy and Allocations Plan for Redditch Borough Council; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) Appendix A to the report, which includes the Council's forthcoming programme for planning policy documents from July 2014, be approved by Members.**

7. NON-DOMESTIC RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

The Committee received a report setting out a new Policy to apply to Non-Domestic Rates discretionary relief awarded under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and subsequent amending regulations.

The new Policy was aiming to bring consistency and fairness to the system of discretionary relief but there was an acknowledgement that it would have a financial impact on a number of organisations. Those organisations concerned had been given 12 months notice of the change and there was transitional relief available to ameliorate any adverse financial impact. The criteria by which

organisations eligibility for relief was discussed. With regard to Paragraph 15.6 of the proposed Policy it was suggested that consideration of any appeal against a decision to refuse relief or against the level of the relief should be taken in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Opposition. However, the general view was that this was a matter upon which the Portfolio Holder alone should be consulted as part of their role and, therefore, this proposal was not supported.

With respect to Paragraph 7 of the proposed Policy and the criteria of State Aid Declaration, Officers confirmed that the threshold of 200,000 euros was required to be expressed in euros.

RECOMMENDED that

the Non Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Guidance attached as an appendix to the report submitted be adopted.

(Prior to consideration of this item Councillor Bill Hartnett, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, in view of his position as Chair of Redditch Cooperative Homes and as a Board Member of Accord Housing group , and withdrew from the meeting. Councillor Greg Chance assumed the Chair during consideration of this item.)

8. LAND TO THE REAR OF MIDDLE HOUSE LANE

A report was considered which proposed amendment of a decision taken in relation to the disposal of a piece of land to the rear of Middle House Lane, Redditch.

In 2005 this piece of land had been declared surplus by the Council and it had been agreed to dispose of it in conjunction with a site belonging to Worcestershire County Council which sits adjacent and provides access to it. At the time the Council had specified that the land should be disposed of to a social landlord of the Council's choosing for the development of social housing.

The County Council was now seeking to dispose of its land at market value and, should the Borough Council not openly market its own site, would do so in isolation, leaving the Borough Council with the possibility of having to pay a premium or ransom to access its own site. Members noted that the description of the site was not entirely accurate as it was not bordered by Birmingham Road as specified in paragraph 3.12.

RECOMMENDED that

the land to the rear of Middle House Lane, Redditch be disposed of at market value.

9. REVIEW OF TOWN HALL CONCESSIONARY USE

Officers explained that the report submitted to the Executive Committee attempted to bring consistency and clarity to the system of providing concessionary use of the Civic Suite in Redditch Town Hall.

Members welcomed the clarity which the new Policy would bring. There was a suggestion that, in the event of disputes over the granting of concessionary use, the final decision be taken by the Leader in conjunction with the Leader of the Opposition, but this proposal was not supported.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the proposed booking and administration procedure (Appendix 1 to the report submitted) for Civic Suite Concessionary Room Bookings be approved and adopted; and**
- 2) Officers be directed to commence with the new procedure from Monday 30th June 2014.**

10. MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 4, 2013/14

The Committee received the report detailing customer feedback data for the fourth quarter of 2013/14, along with transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

It was stated that the numbers of complaints had fallen significantly in comparison to previous quarters which was seen as evidence of the benefits of the introduction of a systems thinking approach to the provision of services. The time for the resolution of complaints was also falling in line with this reduction in overall numbers of complaints.

Officers provided a brief update on the Worcestershire Hub, noting that the work the Borough Council now did for the County Council was minimal and that the Hub had essentially ceased to exist in a meaningful form. The County Council now relied on online contact with its customers. One impact of this was a reduction in the financial subsidy provided to the Borough Council.

Executive Committee

24th June 2014

Finally, it was proposed that future Customer Service feedback and transactional data be provided to Members via the Members' Newsletter rather than in a quarterly report to the Executive Committee. Some Members were concerned that this would result in good news about improving customer performance not reaching the public. In support of the proposal, it was noted that Members would receive more regular updates on Customer Services performance and the relevant Portfolio Holder and Officers would ensure that good news was made public as and when appropriate. Officers also undertook to confirm for Councillor Brunner following the meeting the means by which the Members' Newsletter was circulated.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the information contained within the report in future be provided via the Members' Newsletter.**

11. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE-OFFS - QUARTER 4 2013/14

The Committee considered a report which detailed action taken by Officers with respect to the write-off of debts during the financial year 2013/14 and the profile and level of the Council's outstanding debt.

Officers noted that the total amount of irrecoverable debt written off by Officers during the year was well within the current bad debt provision. The Committee was also requested to use its discretionary powers to write-off three debts considered irrecoverable but for which the present Write-off Policy did not provide the necessary authority for Officers so to do.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the debt owing in relation to the three cases of debt detailed at Appendix 1 to the report submitted be written off as irrecoverable under the Executive Committee's discretionary powers.**

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2014.

Executive Committee

24th June 2014

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2014 be received and noted.

13. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The update on the activity of the Council's Advisory Panels and similar bodies was considered by the Committee. Officers undertook to advise Councillor Brandon Clayton of the date of the last meeting of the Housing Advisory Panel following the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

14. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee's Action Monitoring Report was considered by Members. Officers explained that, although key Members had been updated on the ongoing expenditure for securing the Hewell Road Swimming Baths site, a briefing had not been provided to all Committee Members. Officers also undertook to once again follow up the progress on the cost of holding the November meeting of the Executive Committee for Councillor Brunner.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.48 pm

.....
Chair

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 August to 30 November 2014

(published as at 1 July 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

Councillor Bill Hartnett	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership & Partnership
Councillor Greg 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	Council 14 Jul 2014		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
Land to rear of Middle House Lane - Disposal Key: Yes	Council 14 Jul 2014	An appendix to this report is exempt.	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
Local Development Scheme 2014 and Community Infrastructure Levy Key: Yes	Council 14 Jul 2014		Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Stacey Green, Development Plans Officer Tel: 01527 881342

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
Consolidated Revenue and Capital Outturn Key: No	Executive 29 Jul 2014		Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Sam Morgan, Financial Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3790
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
Response to Stratford upon Avon's Proposed Submission Core Strategy Key: No	Executive 29 Jul 2014 Council 15 Sep 2014		Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Stacey Green, Development Plans Officer Tel: 01527 881342
Covered Market Area - Proposal for Play Barn Key: Yes	Executive 29 Jul 2014		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
Finance Monitoring Report 2014/15 - April - June 2014 (Quarter 1) Key: No	Executive 8 Sep 2014		Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Sam Morgan, Financial Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3790

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
Recovery Policy Key: Yes	Executive 28 Oct 2014		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
Job Evaluation Key: Yes	Executive		Report of the Head of Business Development 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
Housing Allocations Policy - Review Key: No	Executive Council			Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3304

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

22nd July 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 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

22nd July 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		
22nd July 2014	Community Infrastructure Levy - Review	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker – First Quarter Update	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Training – Feedback from 2nd July Event	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd July 2014	Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy - Submission of Scoping Document	Councillor Pat Witherspoon
22nd July 2014	Provision of Support Networks for LGBT Community – Submission of Scoping Document	Councillor Baker
22nd July 2014	Tackling Obesity – Submission of Scoping Document	Councillor Potter
22nd July 2014	Voluntary Sector Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Pat Witherspoon

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

22nd July 2014

2nd September 2014	Leisure Services Fees and Charges Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
2nd September 2014	Positive Activities - Update 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
21st October 2014	Future Years Financial Plan – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
21st October 2014	Football Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Bush
21st October 2014	Market Task Group – Monitoring Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
24th November 2014	Fees and Charges Report – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
13th January 2015	Special Budget Scrutiny Meeting	Relevant Lead Head of Service
13th January 2015	Housing Revenue Account – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

22nd July 2014

17th February 2015	Budget Saving Proposals – Review of Executive committee’s proposals and agreement of any suggestions for Council	Relevant Lead Head of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		
	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	
	Leisure Services Trust Business Case – Pre-Scrutiny (to be undertaken if and when a business case is produced on this subject)	Relevant Lead Head of Service