



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 1 Mar
2018
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Ext. 3268) or 881443
e.mail: jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk /
a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk**

Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 1st March, 2018

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:

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

Gareth Prosser
Paul Swansborough
Jennifer Wheeler
Nina Wood-Ford

1. Apologies and named substitutes

2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and / or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests, and any Party Whip.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)

4. Safeguarding and Early Help - Presentation

5. Civil Contingencies Short, Sharp Review - Final Report (Pages 11 - 30)

6. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (Pages 31 - 50)

7. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 19th February will follow.

The next edition of the Executive Work Programme will be published on 1st March 2018. Consequently copies of the work programme will be tabled at the meeting.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 51 - 54)

9. Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups - Update Reports

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jane Potter
- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer
- c) Transition of Young People Leaving Care in Redditch Short Sharp Review – Chair, Councillor Dormer

Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 1st March, 2018

10. External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports (Councillor Nina Wood-Ford)

- a) West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- b) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

“That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act”.

This paragraph is as follows:

Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:

- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;

and may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.

12. Leisure and Cultural Services Business Case - Pre-Scrutiny (to follow)

13. One Public Estate - Pre-Scrutiny (to follow)



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Michael Chalk, Matthew Dormer, Andrew Fry, Paul Swansborough, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Jayne Pickering and Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley

69. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Pattie Hill and Gareth Prosser. Members were advised that Councillor Michael Chalk was attending as a substitute for Councillor Prosser.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

71. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

72. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 TO 2020/21 - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018/19 to 2021/22. During the presentation of this report the following points were raised for Members' consideration:

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

- There was limited certainty in respect of funding over the following four years. The Government's four-year funding settlement, agreed a few years ago, related to the Revenue Support Grant only.
- The Council would receive only £35,000 in Revenue Support Grant in 2018/19.
- Like many local authorities the Council was scheduled to pay the Government a negative grant subsidy from 2019/20 onwards.
- A number of Councils had approached the Government expressing concerns about the negative grant payments and this was under review, the outcomes of which would be the subject of consultation later in the year.
- The Government was also scheduled to undertake a fair funding review focusing on how local government was funded. This would have financial implications for the Council moving forward.
- Two years previously the government had reduced the number of years for which New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments could be made from six to four years.
- Some years previously the Government had suggested that local authorities would not receive NHB funding for any applications that were turned down by the Planning Committee but were subsequently approved at appeal. This could have significant financial implications for the Council.
- The Council had not been able to meet the deadweight threshold set by the Government in order to receive the NHB funding that had been anticipated for 2018/19.
- The deadweight was calculated based on the proportion of Band D equivalent properties that had been built in Redditch.
- The authority had been advised that it would be receiving £22,000 in NHB funding for 2018/19.
- The Government had announced that all Councils could increase Council Tax by up to 3 per cent before a referendum would need to be triggered in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- Officers had built an assumption into the MFTP that Council Tax would increase by 2.99 per cent in 2018/19 and 2019/20. In subsequent years it was proposed that Council Tax increase by £5 as it was uncertain at what level Councils would be permitted to increase Council Tax after 2019/20.
- The Council collected Council Tax on behalf of a range of partner organisations and only kept 13 per cent of the funds that were collected. The greatest proportion of Council Tax was allocated to Worcestershire County Council.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

- Improvements had been made in 2017/18 in respect of the Collection Fund, which related to the difference between the amount of Council Tax that the local authority expected to collect and the amount that was actually collected.
- The Worcestershire Business Rates Pilot bid had been unsuccessful. Worcestershire County Council had requested clarification about the reasons why the bid had not been approved and had been advised that the proposal was robust but had been unsuccessful due to the volume of bids that had been submitted to the Government.
- Councils were able to keep any growth over the baseline for business rates collection.
- The government had indicated that the baseline for business rates would be reset in 2021/22, which could have significant implications for the Council's finances.
- There were some unavoidable pressures in the first year of the MTFP. Members were advised that Officers would not expect to see such pressures for subsequent years as these were generally financial pressures that arose unexpectedly during the year.
- The unavoidable pressures included a figure in respect of Leisure and Cultural Services as the Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) that had been approved would not be established until October 2018 and so the anticipated savings would not occur until later in the four year cycle.
- The Council had balances of £1.8 million and reserves of £1.8 million. The fact that these figures were the same was purely coincidental.
- The Council's lower limit for balances was £750,000 at the recommendation of the S151 Officer.
- Balances were savings and underspends that had been achieved.
- Reserves were funds that had been reserved for expenditure on particular projects or initiatives.
- In order to achieve a balanced budget in 2018/19 £85,000 had been drawn down from balances.
- The MTFP did not currently contain balanced budgets for the subsequent three years covered by the plan.

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

- The location of the developments that might impact in the following year on NHB funds. Officers agreed to clarify this and to notify Members accordingly.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

- The extent to which the calculation in respect of Band D properties took into account local variances in property valuations. A similar point had been raised at the latest meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and Officers undertook to clarify the position accordingly.
- The reasons for the improvement in terms of the returns recorded for the Collection Fund. Officers advised that the service had worked really hard to address this which had had a positive impact.
- The need for the Council to work in different ways, particularly in a more commercial manner, in order to achieve greater savings and to receive additional income. Officers advised that Heads of Service were working on a number of business cases which would potentially help the authority to address this moving forward.
- The potential for projects to be launched in accordance with the Council's Acquisition and Investment Strategy and the positive impact that this could have on the Council's finances. Officers advised that there were no projects currently planned in accordance with this strategy and all initiatives would need to be accompanied by a robust business case.
- The ongoing work of the Council's Commercialism Board and its three sub-groups focusing on income generation, contracts and assets respectively.
- The potential for the authority to utilise Council land to generate income and the work that the assets group was undertaking to investigate available opportunities.
- The Housing Growth Programme, which was in receipt of funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and the need to use some land to help develop more housing for the use of local residents.
- The savings that would be achieved in 2017/18 and the reasons why officers had been unable to achieve this level of savings in previous years.
- The potential for savings to be listed for the final three years of the MTFP and the difficulties this could create.
- The approach adopted by other Councils to listing savings for later years. Members were advised that some local authorities approved a high level MTFP in the autumn and an MTFP containing potential savings which was considered in February.
- The different approach that was being adopted by Heads of Service in terms of undertaking detailed reviews of the budgets within their remit. In many cases this had led Heads of Service to reset the baseline for their budgets in future years resulting in savings.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

- The potential for the Government's review of the negative grant settlement to result in the Council no longer needing to pay this money in the long-term.
- The financial difficulties that many local authorities across the country were experiencing.
- The extensive work that had been undertaken by officers in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2018/19. Members thanked officers for their hard work.
- The reasons for the significant savings that had been achieved in respect of IT. Members were advised that a review of software had been undertaken and contracts had been cancelled where this was found to be no longer required. Further savings had been achieved through re-negotiating contracts.
- The savings in respect of fuel and vehicle costs. The Head of Environmental Services had reviewed all vehicle costs and route optimisation had helped to reduce fuel costs to the Council.
- The costs listed for the replacement of waste bins. Officers advised that the £79,000 listed equated to 2,000 bins per year.
- The capital bids for Environmental Services and the reason £400,000 was proposed for Locality Improvement Programme. Members were advised this would involve combining two existing funds; a fund for car parking improvements and another for locality improvements.
- The extent to which the Council could afford to fund the Locality Improvement Programme. Members were advised that this would be funded from borrowing.
- The reason for including the decision not to progress with car parking charges in parks as an unavoidable pressure in the MTFP. Officers advised that this had been included in the previous MTFP and to ensure transparency it had been felt appropriate to include this in the current MTFP.
- The progress that had been made with rolling out the garden waste collection service to customers and the amount of income that had already been received for this service. Officers undertook to clarify this and to report back to Members in due course.

Officers advised that some years previously Members had requested that the figures within the table detailing the summary of the financial position for the Council be presented as in-year figures to help demonstrate the distinct costs for those years. This differed to the traditional approach that had been adopted by the Council whereby the figures were presented on a cumulative basis. Members discussed the new presentation format and noted that this was rather confusing. To make the figures easier for all Members to understand, and to ensure informed decision making in respect

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

of the Council's budget, Members agreed that it would be helpful if future MTFP reports could be presented using cumulative figures.

RECOMMENDED that

the format of Medium Term Financial Plans be amended in future years to reflect cumulative savings and pressures over the four year period.

73. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2018/19

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2018/19 and highlighted the following for Members' consideration:

- The government had required the Council to reduce rents for Council properties by 1 per cent per year over a four year period.
- The Council was in the third of the four years affected by these requirements in respect of rents for Council properties. Members were advised that it was unclear what requirements, if any, would be placed on Council in respect of rent increases once this four year period had ended.
- If the Council had been able to increase rents by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1 per cent, as originally intended, the Council would have had access to an extra £900,000 in the HRA over the period.
- Repairs and maintenance costs had increased due to a rise in costs associated with void properties.
- Some additional staffing costs had arisen during the year, which had been recorded as supervision and management costs.
- The Council's HRA balances had reduced to £600,000, which was the minimum level of balances permitted.
- Officers were proposing that there should be a stock condition survey undertaken. No such survey had been undertaken for a number of years and it was important to ensure there was a general understanding of the condition of the Council's properties.
- There were lots of improvements that could be made to the Council's Housing Services and Officers were working hard to address this.

After the report had been presented Members discussed a number of points in detail:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

- The action that could be taken to ensure that the Council did not go over the limit in respect of balances.
- The savings that could be achieved in respect of supervision and management costs.
- The IT software that was utilised by the Housing Department and the benefits of upgrading this software in order to make efficiency savings.
- The extent to which the Council was on track to ensure that funding received under Right to Buy was reinvested in new properties. Officers explained that there was a plan in place to ensure that both new properties as well as properties already on the market were purchased as part of the Housing Growth Programme.
- The size of the Council's Housing Capital budget which helped to support the Housing Growth Programme.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

74. REFERRAL FROM COUNCIL - PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report outlining a referral that had been received from Council to consider launching a review of transition arrangements for young people leaving care in Redditch. This referral had been made following agreement of a notice of motion in respect of young people leaving care at the meeting of full Council that took place on 29th January 2018. As part of that notice Members had agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should carry out a full investigation of the subject.

As the referral had been made by Council to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee no scoping document, which was usually used to present proposed terms of reference to the Committee, had been drafted. However, the notice of motion did propose a number of key objectives for a review and these would need to be addressed during a scrutiny exercise. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could choose to review the subject in a number of different ways but would need to ensure that the investigation was completed within six months of the Motion having been adopted; this would mean that a review would need to end by July 2018.

Members discussed the review and noted that ideally this exercise would be completed before July 2018. There was general consensus that the investigation should be undertaken as a Short

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

Sharp Review and Members agreed that Councillor Dormer should Chair this review.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a short sharp review be launched to investigate the transition of young people leaving care in Redditch; and**
- 2) **Councillor Dormer be appointed to Chair this review.**

75. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Members considered the minutes from meetings of the Executive Committee held on 16th January and 6th February 2018 respectively. The Committee also considered the content of the latest version of the Executive Committee Work Programme for the period 1st March to 30th June 2018.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 16th January and 6th February 2018 be noted; and**
- 2) **the content of the Executive Work Programme for the period 1st March to 30th June 2018 be noted.**

76. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme and noted that there would be a relatively lengthy agenda at the following meeting of the Committee, due to take place on 1st March 2018.

77. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jane Potter

The Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, Councillor Jane Potter, advised that the group had held two meetings since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. During these meetings the group had pre-scrutinised the content of the HRA and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2021/22. There were no further

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

meetings scheduled to take place in the 2017/18 municipal year.

b) Civil Contingencies Short, Sharp Review – Chair, Councillor Gareth Prosser

In the absence of the Chair of the Group Councillor Matthew Dormer provided an update in respect of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review. Members were advised that the group had interviewed the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager in January. The group had subsequently agreed a small number of recommendations and would be finalising their report at their last meeting on 19th February 2018.

c) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

The Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group, Councillor Matthew Dormer, advised that the group had held their latest meeting earlier in February. During the meeting Officers had been interviewed about rent arrears and the action that was taken by the Council to address this. Members had welcomed news that the Council tried to identify the reasons why people fell into debt as well as the work undertaken by officers to help tenants manage their finances and cover their debts. The group had made some suggestions about the measures for this and had urged officers to add commentary that would help to explain debt levels.

The group had been scheduled to hold a further meeting on 6th March 2018. However, due to other work pressures the Chair was proposing that this meeting should be cancelled and no further meetings of the group would take place until the new municipal year.

**78. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS
(COUNCILLOR NINA WOOD-FORD)**

a) West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford, the Council's representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee, confirmed that there had been no

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018

meetings since the last meeting of the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

b) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Councillor Wood-Ford, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire HOSC, advised that at the latest meeting of HOSC a presentation had been delivered in respect of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.

HOSC had also considered information about the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT). This review had identified a number of improvements, though the trust was still rated as inadequate and in need of improvement. Questions had been raised about the demand for hospital beds over the winter period and senior representatives from WAHT had suggested that they would be encouraging residents to take up the flu vaccination in order to help reduce demand during the period in future.

During the latest HOSC meeting attendees had been advised that there were 158 nursing vacancies within WAHT. Questions remained about the number of agency nurses used by WAHT and the costs involved.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm



Overview & Scrutiny

Civil Contingencies Short, Sharp Review - Final Report

March 2018



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

	Page Number
Chair's Foreword	2
Summary of Recommendations	3
Introduction/Background Information	4
Chapter 1: Recommendations	8
Chapter 2: Overview and Scrutiny – Points to Note	10
Conclusion	11
Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference	12
Appendix 2 - Witnesses	14
Appendix 3 - Timeline of Activities	15
Appendix 4 - Declarations of Interest	16
Appendix 5 – Glossary	17

Membership of the Task Group

Councillors Gareth Prosser (Chair), Matthew Dormer and Yvonne Smith.

Support Officer

Jess Bayley, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch), Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3268

Email: jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Completed

March 2018

Contact

Further copies of this report are available on request from:

Address: Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

Email: scrutiny@redditchbc.gov.uk

FOREWORD

I am very pleased to present the final report of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review group.

This report provides an account of the work that the group has undertaken to review Redditch Borough Council's emergency planning arrangements. We have consulted with a number of Category 1 responder organisations during the review. I would like to thank them all for taking the time to provide us with evidence.

Overall the group was satisfied that the Council is well prepared to respond to any emergency situations that might unfortunately occur. We have identified a couple of recommendations that we hope will improve the Council's emergency planning arrangements in the future. We have also made suggestions that we think will enhance the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

I would like to thank Councillors Matt Dormer and Yvonne Smith for their hard work along with my star player, Jess Bayley, for her support.



Councillor Gareth Prosser
Chair of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1
We recommend that the content of the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis.
Financial Implications: The cost of Officer time. Legal implications: No legal implications have been identified.

Recommendation 2
We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements.
Financial Implications: The cost of Officer time. Legal implications: No legal implications have been identified.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATIONIntroduction

A request to scrutinise civil contingencies and emergency planning was received and endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2017. In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's agreement to hold only one Task Group or Short, Sharp Review at any one time the review did not start until September 2017, following the completion of another exercise.

The terms of reference for the review detailed a number of objectives for the group to address as follows:

- 1) To review how the Council complied with legislative requirements and the Council's procedures to keep relevant risks under review.
- 2) To scrutinise the plan(s) used by the Council in discharging its duty and to assess whether the Council ensures they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.
- 3) To ensure the Council is prepared and able to provide emergency advice.
- 4) To invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the Council's emergency plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.
- 5) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.

The group gathered evidence from a variety of sources. Prior to the start of the review letters were sent out to senior representatives of partner organisations at the request of Members. The organisations that were selected for contact were all Category 1 responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The written correspondence advised partner organisations about the review and invited them to either attend a meeting of the group or to submit information in writing about the Council's Emergency Plan and approach to managing civil contingencies. Members were pleased to receive feedback from representatives of the following organisations; Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council.

A number of Council officers were also invited to submitted evidence for the consideration of the group, either in person or in writing. This included the Deputy Chief Executive, who is the strategic led for emergency planning, the Head of Planning and Regeneration, is the senior Head of Service lead, the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Head of Community Services, who is the lead for Rest Centres, and the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager.

Members obtained evidence from a number of relevant documents. This included the last edition of the Council's emergency plan, the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA) report, the Duty Incident Officer Contact Directory for Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Council; the Worcestershire Local Risk Register, the Bellwin Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to Local Authorities; Shared Service Agreement relating to the provision of emergency planning and business

continuity service, and the National Ambulance Service Guidance for Preparing an Emergency Plan.

National Context

The review was proposed a month after the fire that occurred at Grenfell Tower in London, which unfortunately resulted in a significant loss of life. The fire, and the approach adopted by organisations in the aftermath of the fire, had significant implications from an emergency planning perspective, including for Kensington and Chelsea Council, the local authority in the area. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, was formally opened in September 2017 and is investigating a range of issues. At the time of writing this the Inquiry had not yet concluded. However, Members have been advised that it is likely that the findings will have significant implications for emergency planning arrangements in the future.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is the key legislation in relation to emergency planning. The act went through parliament following the fuel crisis and severe flooding in 2000, and the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. The act defines an Emergency as:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- War, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

The Cabinet Office produces and biannually updates a National Risk Register. Access to this register is restricted due to the sensitive nature of the information but the content helps to inform Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and local risk registers which in turn shape approaches locally to planning for and managing risks. LRF registers take into account issues from the national register that are relevant at the local level. (For example the risk of coastal erosion occurring in the land-locked counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire is negligible).

At the national level internet based emergency planning sharing and incident management platform, Resilience Direct, has been developed for the use of organisations that would be involved in planning for and responding to an emergency. This system can be accessed by organisations in Worcestershire, including relevant staff from Redditch Borough Council. During the course of the review Members were provided with a demonstration of this system, which provides users with access to key documentation and exercises. Access is restricted in line with data protection.

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) was developed at a national level to encourage emergency services to work in partnership in relation to preparing for and responding to emergencies. The group has been advised that initially that although this was developed for the “blue light” emergency services, though in recent years this has become integrated in broader multi-agency response to inform a decision making model. Members were advised that Council staff are aware of JESIP and where relevant principles arising from this can be applied at the local level.

Local Context

Redditch Borough Council entered into a shared service with Bromsgrove District Council and Wyre Forest District Council for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity in 2012. Wyre Forest District Council hosts this shared service and the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager works across all three districts.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 there is a requirement for there to be the establishment of an LRF for each Police Force area. An LRF brings category 1 and 2 responders (as detailed in the CCA (2004)) together to consult, collaborate and share information in relation to planning against risks. In the West Mercia Region there is the West Mercia LRF. The North Worcestershire Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service is represented on the LRF and many of its sub-groups, including the Worcestershire Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) which reviews local risks and emergency planning arrangements. The LRF and many of its sub-groups have produced multi-agency documentation, such as the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA) report, which help to inform emergency planning arrangements. Throughout the review Members were advised about the interdependency of organisations and how different bodies need to work together to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

One form of multi-agency response using Resilience Direct within Worcestershire is participation in Exercise Telstar. This involves partners utilising the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) activation and Resilience Direct Response Function to discuss a hypothetical incident in the LRF. Lessons are learnt from these and other exercises which are used to inform changes to emergency planning at a local level. Staff from Redditch Borough Council take part in these exercises on an ongoing basis.

At Redditch Borough Council senior officers take it in turns to act as the Duty Officer for the authority. The Duty Officer is on call for a defined period and responds to any incidents that may be reported during the period in which they serve as Duty Officer. There is a rota for the Duty Officers, all of whom have received relevant training. During the course of the review Members were provided with a log of the calls that had been received by the Duty Officers in 2016 and 2017 and were pleased to learn that all reported incidents were reviewed to ensure that lessons were learned for the future.

There is also a Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory, which provides contact details for lead officers per department who should be contacted, where relevant, in an emergency situation. Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the contact details provided for their departments remains up to date.

The Council has an Emergency Plan which is currently reviewed every three years. There is a separate plan relating to the Council's Rest Centres, which details how these should be managed and where supplies could be accessed should rest centres be needed in an emergency situation. Business Continuity plans have also been developed for every service and these are updated on an annual basis.

Funding for Use in Emergencies

The Council can access emergency financial assistance from the Government through the Bellwin Scheme for costs incurred on or connection with their immediate actions to safeguard life and property or prevent suffering and severe inconvenience as a result of an emergency. In order to access funding via the Bellwin Scheme the Council has to first demonstrate that it has spent 0.2% of the local authority's own budget first before seeking further financial help from the Government. The Government then provides cover for 100% of the remaining financial support required, with the Council paying for any immediate needs and reclaiming the funds. Members have been advised that to date Redditch Borough Council has not had to access funding for an emergency under the Bellwin Scheme.

Under the shared service arrangement the Council has access to a Contingency Fund that is held by the host authority on behalf of all partners. This can be used “...for the purchase of *Emergency Supplies as well as other costs identified such as the satellite telephone contact costs and the procurement of additional support where needed.*” (shared service agreement 2nd March 2017, page 3).

CHAPTER 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1	We recommend that the content of the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis.
Financial Implications	The cost of Officer time.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications.

Prior to the launch of the review Members requested a copy of the Council's Emergency Plan. The plan was subsequently updated, with the agreement of CMT, as some of the content was found to be out of date. On the return of the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager Members learned that the original version of the plan had been archived, which explained why some of the content was out of date. When the emergency plan was reviewed and updated this replaced the outdated previous plan held on Resilience Direct.

The group noted that changing circumstances, particularly in light of the Grenfell Tower fire, highlighted the need for emergency plans to be reviewed more regularly than every three years. This three year timetable was set in accordance with national emergency planning guidance for plan reviews, with a caveat that following an incident locally or nationally any learning arising from a debrief or inquiry would be incorporated into an organisation's emergency planning arrangements. A number of the expert witnesses that the group consulted from Category 1 organisations suggested that emergency plans should be reviewed on at least an annual basis. The group therefore concluded that the content of the Council's Emergency Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, though Members would expect further reviews of the plan's content to take place mid-year if an emergency occurred to ensure that lessons could be learned.

Members were also provided with a copy of the Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory. The first version of this directory provided to Members was updated in 2016, though Members learned that this had subsequently been updated on a number of occasions in 2017 (the latest update brought to Members' attention was undertaken on 24th January 2018). Due to the turnover of staff at the Council, which is not dissimilar from other local authorities in the country, Members concluded that the content could potentially become out of date relatively quickly. The group would therefore be keen to ensure that the Council continues to review the content of the Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory on a regular basis.

Recommendation 2	We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements.
Financial Implications	The cost of Officer time.
Legal Implications	No legal implications have been identified.

The Councillors appointed to this review had some prior knowledge about emergency planning arrangements. Councillors Prosser and Dormer had both had careers in the emergency services, as a retired Police Inspector and serving firefighter respectively, whilst Councillor Smith had some knowledge of relevant issues derived from her time serving as the Council's Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services. However, Members had not previously explored emergency planning arrangements at the Council in detail and the group was aware that no training had been delivered to Members for some time in respect of emergency planning arrangements.

The group had been considering proposing that emergency planning training should be provided to all elected Members. However, during the course of the group's interview with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager Members learned that Officers were planning to provide this training to elected Members in due course. For this reason they concluded that a recommendation on this subject was not necessary. Members would expect that once this training is available it should be delivered to newly elected Members in their first year of service and thereafter once every two years. This should ensure that elected Members retain familiarity with emergency planning arrangements and are aware of any changes that may occur over time due to legislative amendments or in response to local and national emergencies.

The group concluded that due to the importance of emergency planning to the wider community it was important to ensure that information was provided in respect of this matter for Members' consideration at a public meeting. As the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can investigate matters of interest to the public the group felt that this would be the most appropriate body to receive an annual update. A report on this subject to the Committee, meetings of which are open to the public, would also help to place information about these arrangements in the public domain. Following on from the fire at Grenfell Tower Members concluded that such an arrangement would help to provide reassurance to Redditch residents that the Council takes emergency planning seriously and has appropriate arrangements in place to manage any incidents should they occur.

Members are asked to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to determine the content of its work programme. Consequently a decision can be taken on this recommendation by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – POINTS TO NOTE

The Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review was proposed in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire. This incident focused national attention on how local authorities, among other organisations, planned for and could protect the public during emergencies. In this context the Overview and Scrutiny Committee concluded that it would be appropriate to launch a review of this subject.

When the review was launched, in September 2017, this occurred at a time when the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager was on maternity leave. Cover arrangements were in place to ensure that the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service was represented at all relevant partnership meetings and Wyre Forest District Council continued to co-ordinate the shared service. However, the group found, upon interviewing the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager towards the end of their review, that many of their questions about the subject would have been answered and the review could have been completed within a couple of meetings if they had waited until she returned before launching the review. Her significant understanding of the subject and ability to demonstrate effective forward planning on behalf of the shared service reassured the group that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to enable the authority to plan for and manage an emergency situation.

The group understands that prior to the launch of the review senior officers had formally requested that the exercise should be postponed until the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager had returned from maternity leave, but this request was declined. In light of the Grenfell Tower fire scrutiny Members had felt that this review was too important to delay and the exercise had therefore been launched.

The group recognises that local authorities cannot be complacent and there is always the potential to make improvements to any policies and working practices. However, the group are mindful of the fact that, as requested by Members, various Category 1 responders were invited to comment on the Council's emergency planning arrangements. Whilst all of the feedback received from these witnesses was appreciated, the group is concerned that potentially this could have distracted them from their own work perhaps unnecessarily, given that the group subsequently concluded when they interviewed the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager that the Council had sound arrangements in place.

To ensure that something similar does not happen again the group is suggesting that in future the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take into account the availability of (a) key expert witness(es) when determining when to launch a review.

CONCLUSION

The Civil Contingencies Short, Sharp Review has been undertaken at a time when Councils' emergency planning arrangements are in the public eye.

This small scrutiny group has undertaken a detailed investigation of the Council's approach to emergency planning. Whilst Members have identified some areas where improvements could be made the group was relieved to find that the Council has appropriate plans and procedures in place to enable the authority to operate effectively in the event of an emergency. Members of the group were united in their hope that a serious event should never occur in the Borough of Redditch. However, unfortunately there is always a risk, regardless of location in the country, that an emergency might occur and Members feel assured that the Council would be able to operate effectively in such a scenario.

The small number of recommendations proposed by the group are designed to enhance both the Council's emergency planning arrangement and the Overview and Scrutiny process. Members therefore commend their report to the Executive Committee and call for their recommendations to be approved.

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	Cllr. Tom Baker-Price Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date of referral	04/07/17
Proposed topic title	Civil protection and emergency capability short sharp review.		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>The civil contingencies act 2004 (The act) requires this council as a category 1 responder to assess, plan and advise the public in the event of emergencies. The act defines an emergency in section 1 of the act which includes a diverse range of events such as the disruption to food supplies, the substantial loss of life and homelessness.</p> <p>Although these types of emergencies are highly unlikely to occur if they do happen the response of Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is vital to the protection of life and the public at large. RBC has a moral and legal duty to have credible well thought out plans and capability to protect the population with partners in an event of an emergency.</p>		
Background to the issue	<p>Grenfell tower fire in London has focused national attention on how local authorities plan and protect the public during emergencies. Kensington and Chelsea Borough council became responsible for providing emergency relief for hundreds of families. The authorities' difficulty in responding to this crisis has led to social unrest, continued difficulty for the victims and has led to further human security risks.</p> <p>This council must be mindful it may have a legal duty to provide significant additional services resourced from existing budgets and staff without notice.</p> <p>The protection of the public from harm during an emergency could be the most important task this council ever undertakes in terms of direct impact upon residents. Scrutiny of the plans RBC has to protect the public and its capability to deliver is in the public interest to ensure the council is prepared.</p>		

<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<p>6) To review how RBC has made assessments under the act of relevant emergencies and the procedures designed to keep the assessment of relevant risks under review.</p> <p>7) To scrutinise the plan(s) RBC has made in discharging its duty under the act ensuring they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.</p> <p>8) To ensure RBC is prepared and able to provide emergency advice in line with the act.</p> <p>9) Invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.</p> <p>10) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.</p>
<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>It is anticipated that this review should take approximately three months and Members will aim to complete the investigation by January 2018.</p>

Please return this form to: Jess Bayley or Amanda Scarce, Senior Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

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

APPENDIX 2
Acknowledgements

The group would like to thank the following people for providing evidence during the course of their review:

Stuart Allen, EPRR Manager, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Station Commander James Banks, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Rachel Bennett, PA and Team Leader for the Post Room
Steve Brant, Operational Services Manager, Wyre Forest District Council
James Brodwick, Emergency Planning Manager, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police
Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive
Dr. Frances Howie, Director of Public Health, Worcestershire County Council
Rebecca Pritchett, North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager
Nick Riding, Emergency Planning Manager, Worcestershire County Council
Robert Stevens, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
Judith Willis, Head of Community Services

APPENDIX 3
Timeline of Activities

Date	Task Group Activity
20/09/17	Scoping meeting.
02/10/17	Considering key documentation, including the Council's Emergency Plan and Rest Centres Plan.
12/10/17	Interview with the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and consideration of information about the Bellwin Scheme.
07/11/17	Interview with Mr Stuart Allen, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.
14/11/17	Consideration of the written responses to questions from Council officers. Also consideration of the content of the Review of Persistent Lessons Identified Relating to Interoperability from Emergencies and Major Incidents since 1986.
22/11/17	Consideration of the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA).
01/12/17	Meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive and Demonstration of Resilience Direct.
07/12/17	Interview with Station Commander Banks, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. Also consideration of written feedback received from Mr Robert Stevens, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and analysis of call logs for Duty Officers at the Council in 2016 and 2017.
17/01/18	Interview with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager and consideration of written feedback received from Mr James Brodwick, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, and Dr. Frances Howie and Mr Nick Riding, from Worcestershire County Council. The group proposed an initial list of draft recommendations during this meeting.
19/02/18	Finalising the content of the group's report.

APPENDIX 4
Declarations of Interest

At every meeting of the group Councillor Yvonne Smith declared that she was the former Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, the remit for which includes emergency planning. In line with paragraph 5 of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules she recognised that she could not take part in scrutinising any decisions in which she had been directly involved. However, the group did not scrutinise any decisions that she had taken part in making when serving on the Executive Committee.

APPENDIX 5: GLOSSARY

CCA 2004 – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

CMT – Corporate Management Team

JERA – joint Emergency Response Arrangements

JESIP – Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme

LRF – Local Resilience Forum

TCG – Tactical Co-ordinating Group

This page is intentionally left blank



Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report

2017/18

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

	Page Number
Foreword by the Chair	2
Introduction and Key Principles of Scrutiny	3
Membership	4
A Snapshot of Reports Received Throughout the Year	5
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	8
Health Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups	8
West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9
Working Groups	10
Task Group Investigations	12
Joint Overview and Scrutiny Investigations	15
Overview and Scrutiny Contact Details	17

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

I am very pleased to present the annual report for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I would also like to thank Councillor Tom Baker-Price for his work in chairing the Committee at the start of the municipal year. This report provides an account of the work that the Committee has undertaken during the last twelve months and highlights progress that has been made.

We received a number of informative presentations this year including on Economic Development, the Place Partnership and several updates from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation team.

The Committee has continued to scrutinise the Council's budget through the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to examine and understand better the finances of the Council. The Performance Scrutiny Working Group has also carried out some valuable work. Both of these working groups have proved particularly useful in helping members to understand the council and its workings better and in so doing to make recommendations to Council which have proved helpful.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has worked to ensure that Council services are fit for purpose and enhance the wellbeing of our residents. It has also embarked on a number of Task Group and Short Sharp reviews. These have included one on civil contingencies and another on homelessness.

Our first joint scrutiny group with Bromsgrove on the Staff Survey was a successful project which all members felt was a worthwhile exercise in joint working between the two sets of councillors.

We have been kept updated on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Cllr Nina Wood-Ford, who has also reported back to the Committee on developments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny panel at the County Council.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all my fellow Committee Members for the hard work, support and enthusiasm that they have shown. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Gay Hopkins for her contributions and support over the years as Vice Chair of the Committee. I am also very appreciative of the hard work of Officers who support the work of the Committee, and would like to thank our lead support officers, Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce, for the excellent work they have produced.



**Councillor Jane Potter,
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Redditch Borough Council**

INTRODUCTION

There is an annual requirement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce a report outlining its work and achievements during the previous year. The report contains information about the reviews that have been undertaken by Task Groups, Short Sharp Review Groups, and the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. The report also provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of joint scrutiny Committees to which Redditch Members have been appointed.

This year scrutiny Members have continued to undertake more detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget and service performance through the work of the Budget Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups. The outcomes of these groups' work are detailed in the report below.

This report has been produced by Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch) with help from the Democratic Services Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the remaining eight Members.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SCRUTINY

Members at Redditch Borough Council aim to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny process complies with the four key principles of scrutiny identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the organisation set up to promote effective scrutiny in local government. The four key principles of effective scrutiny are:

- to provide a critical friend challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- to enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard;
- for scrutiny to be carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
- to drive improvement in public services.

MEMBERSHIP GALLERY

The following Councillors have served as members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this year.



Councillor Jane Potter
Chair of the Committee



Councillor Gay Hopkins
Vice Chair



Councillor
Matthew Dormer



Councillor
Andy Fry



Councillor
Pattie Hill



Councillor
Gareth Prosser



Councillor
Paul Swansborough



Councillor
Jenny Wheeler



Councillor
Nina Wood-Ford

A SNAPSHOT OF REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

During the course of the year the Committee received a number of reports and presentations on a variety of subjects. Further details about the reasons why issues were selected for scrutiny and the outcomes of the scrutiny process are detailed below.

Seasonal Garden Waste Collection

In September the Head of Environmental Services presented a report outlining the Council's plans to introduce a garden waste collection service and Members were able to consider the proposals carrying out their pre-scrutiny function. The report set out details of the operation of the proposed new service including costs and projected revenue. Officers reported that Redditch had the lowest rate for composting in the county at 2.18% and that the introduction of a garden waste service should divert some waste away from the normal domestic collection. Provision of this service without significant capital outlay would be achieved by entering into an agreement with Bromsgrove District Council for their existing garden waste collection service covering Bromsgrove properties to be extended to Redditch.

Members explored a number of issues relating to the new service including likely levels of take up, options for extra brown bins to be provided, the proposed charging rates and other methods that could be used to counter the very low composting rates. At the end of the pre-scrutiny process Members endorsed the proposals in respect of this matter from officers, which were subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Economic Development

In December the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) gave a presentation on the economic outlook for Redditch and the various options to promote growth and economic prosperity that were being pursued by NWEDR on behalf of the Council. Members learnt that the economy in Redditch is linked to that of Birmingham and challenges include providing more job opportunities in the Borough for skilled workers, improving the image of Redditch as an employment area and being able to re-develop existing industrial sites to attract new employers.

Members were interested to hear more about the links of the Council with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS - Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Worcestershire) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and what could be done through membership of these organisations to enhance the economic offer either through grant funding or opportunities to promote the area. Two projects being actively pursued were the option for Redditch to become a Business Improvement District and use funds raised from this for local projects, and the One Public Estate project, which would see the Council collaborate with other local public sector land owners to improve the town centre.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan

In 2017/18 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued to receive updates in respect of progress with the delivery of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). This had first been identified as a suitable topic for scrutiny at an Overview and Scrutiny training session in 2016 and

representatives of Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) had attended meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide Members with an update on the requirements for the plans and areas of local interest.

In July 2017 the Committee received an update on the STP which highlighted the progress that had been made with completing the plan and consulting with local stakeholders about implementation. A further update was subsequently provided in January 2018 when Members learned that the STP had now formed the basis of a formal partnership in the local area. Key staff had been recruited to co-ordinate communications as well as project delivery. Specific initiatives had also been established, including work on a Local Maternity Systems Plan.

Members learned that Neighbourhood Teams had been appointed across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to help address local health issues in line with the STP's objectives. This includes two Neighbourhood Teams in Redditch and Members are keen to invite representatives of these local teams to attend future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the impact of the STP.

Due to the significance of health services to all residents the Committee extended an invitation to every Member to attend meetings when these presentations were delivered. A further update on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP is scheduled for the consideration of the Committee later in 2018.

Committee level Budget Scrutiny

Despite the work of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group Members agreed that, to ensure transparency, a number of key budget items should continue to be considered at meetings of the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Primarily this was conducted via the pre-scrutiny process, whereby Members considered reports on various aspects of the Council's budget prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Committee. The following items were considered in this manner:

- Fees and Charges 2018/19
- Housing Revenue Account 2018/19
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22
- Local Discretionary Relief Scheme

A number of recommendations were proposed through the pre-scrutiny process and the majority of these were approved.

Place Partnership

During the year the Committee received a presentation from the Managing Director of the Place Partnership. This presentation focused on the work of the partnership and the services that it provided on behalf of the Council. Members learned about the origins of the Place Partnership and the progress that had been achieved in delivering services in recent years. The Committee was also advised that the partnership had started to achieve savings for partners in the second full year of its operation.

Members were informed about a number of high profile projects that the partnership had been involved in delivering in the local area. This included Hindlip Park and Evesham

Fire Station. Members were interested to note that the partnership had been involved in work on the One Public Estate initiative, which will have implications for regeneration in Redditch town centre. It should be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to pre-scrutinise a report in respect of the One Public Estate at a meeting on 1st March after this report will have been published.

Redditch Local Strategic Partnership

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an annual update in respect of the work of the Redditch Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in June 2017. Members learned that the Redditch Partnership Executive Group (RPEG) was supported by the work of various theme groups; the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust, the Positive Activities Sub-Group and the Economic Development Theme Group. The Committee was also informed that the partnership had four key priorities; health inequalities, education attainment, the Redditch economy and leading transformational change of public services in the local area.

Members welcomed news that a local directory of services was in the process of being developed which would help to signpost interested parties to appropriate service providers in the local area. This directory would be accessible through the Council's website and available for external organisations to utilise.

Leisure Service Provision – Pre-Scrutiny

Following scrutiny of leisure services by a short sharp review group in 2015 and pre-scrutiny of the Council Plan and Leisure intervention work earlier in 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to pre-scrutinise proposals in respect of the future delivery of Leisure and Cultural Services in October 2017. A presentation, setting out the background to an independent review of the Council's leisure and cultural services, was delivered for Members' consideration. As much of the information was commercially sensitive the Committee did need to consider many details in exempt session.

Various different options were discussed in respect of the most appropriate approach for the Council to adopt in future to deliver Leisure and Cultural Services. This included considering the potential for services to continue to be delivered in house, to be delivered by an external trust, which had been the option favoured by the scrutiny short sharp review group in 2015, to be outsourced to a private company or to be delivered by a new local authority trading company (LATC). Based on the information provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Council should progress with the LATC model. This model was endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2017. It should be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to pre-scrutinise the business case for the Leisure and Cultural Services LATC at a meeting on 1st March 2018 after this report will have been published.

Recommendation Tracking

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on progress that had been received in respect of scrutiny recommendations in June 2017. It is anticipated that a further update monitoring progress with implementation of approved scrutiny recommendations will be presented for Members' consideration at the first meeting of the Committee in 2018/19.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY

Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair), Pattie Hill, Gareth Prosser, Paul Swansborough and Nina Wood-Ford.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 required every local authority in England and Wales from April 2009 to have a designated Committee with responsibility for scrutinising the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP), often referred to as a Community Safety Partnership. Under this legislation Scrutiny Committees are only permitted to hold the partnership as a whole to account not individual partner organisations. The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, established in 2010 as a Sub-Committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has been allocated responsibility for scrutinising the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, which covers the Redditch area.

The first meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel in 2017/18 took place on 27th September 2017. During this meeting Members received an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in the preceding six months. Particular attention was given to issues surrounding anti-social behavior (ASB) in the Borough and an analysis of the areas where this was the most prevalent. Members also received a presentation about preventing violent extremism and the duties placed on local authorities in this regard under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

The Panel is due to meet again in March 2018.

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford was the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in 2017/18. District and Borough Councils are invited to appoint representatives to the HOSC to ensure that the interests of the district in relation to health are taken into account. Councillor Wood-Ford provides regular updates on the work of HOSC for the consideration of the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She can also report any items suggested for the consideration of HOSC on behalf of Redditch Members.

During the year Councillor Wood-Ford has advised the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the outcomes of discussions of the following topics at meetings of HOSC:

- Access to primary care including treatment from GPs and alternative options such use of pharmacists and upskilling of nursing staff.
- Changes to commissioning policies affecting hip and knee replacement surgery across Worcestershire.
- The Care Quality Commission rating of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust as being inadequate (July 2017) and the subsequent review by the Care Quality Commission in January 2018;
- Discussions with the newly appointed Chairman and Chief Executive of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Transport issues and the provision of bus services between Worcester Royal Infirmary and Redditch;

- Additional funding of £29m to be spent improving Worcester Royal Infirmary and some of the specific projects that this would fund; and
- The rate of nursing vacancies affecting health services in Worcestershire.

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

For the municipal year 2017/18 Councillor Nina Wood-Ford was appointed as the Redditch Borough Council representative on the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been established in 2016/17.

Councillor Wood-Ford has reported that the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee has discussed the following topics at recent meetings:

- A report on data from the authority's performance dashboard and performance trends. Subjects such as air quality in the region and the new data protection regulations due to come into force in 2018 had also been discussed alongside issues relating to economic growth.
- Plans to increase the number of apprenticeships within the region from approximately 42,000 at present to 84,000 by 2030.
- That the WMCA had been given permission to recruit new staff to support the authority's Committees and that it was anticipated that this would have a positive impact on the capacity of bodies such as the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- That the Mental Health Task and Finish review, to which Councillor Wood-Ford had been appointed, was progressing well and investigating the potential for Housing First to be introduced across parts of the region. Officers assured Members that the Council was working closely with the WMCA in respect of Housing First as it was recognised that this had been highlighted in both the Mental Health Task Group and Homelessness Short Sharp Review Group's findings.
- That the Land Commission Task and Finish Group had identified challenges with meeting housing targets and had been investigating the potential for alternative providers to help supply social housing in the region. Modular homes had been raised as a possible option as part of these discussions.
- That the Skills and Productivity Task and Finish Group had been investigating skills pathways as well as how the region compared to other parts of the country.

WORKING GROUPS

This year working groups, informal sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, have continued to review the Council's budget and service performance (as detailed on the Council's measures dashboard) respectively.

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Membership: Councillors Jane Potter (Chair), Matthew Dormer, David Thain, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler.

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group was established in June 2016 to provide scrutiny Members with an opportunity to investigate budgetary matters in greater detail. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had taken a decision to introduce the working group in light of the challenging financial circumstances facing local government.

Meetings of the group were held every month in 2017/18. During these meetings Members considered a range of subjects including the following:

- The Council's Efficiency Statement and progress with the implementation of the aspirations detailed within this.
- Budget pressures for the Council and the action planned to achieve savings and / or generate further income for the Council.
- The Medium Term Financial plan. The group pre-scrutinised the content of the plan and raised a number of questions which helped to ensure that key details were addressed.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Again the group had pre-scrutinised the content of the HRA and had been keen to ensure that funding received by the Council through Right to Buy was reinvested in new properties.
- The Fees and Charges 2018/19. Members had pre-scrutinised the fees and charges and had raised a number of questions which addressed key issues that had been addressed before a final decision was taken by the Council.
- Council contracts, including the Council's contract procedure rules. These rules changed during the course of the year and Members welcomed amendments that strengthened these rules given the challenging financial circumstances facing local authorities.
- Quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports. The group scrutinised the figures provided in these reports and the trends these revealed in relation to the Council achieving savings.
- The Council's Housing Growth Programme and the potential benefits arising from this programme both in terms of housing provision to local residents and in respect of the Council's finances.

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair from September 2017), Natalie Brookes, David Thain, and Nina Wood-Ford. (Councillor Baker-Price was the Chair of this group up to September 2017).

Performance monitoring is a key aspect of good practice in the scrutiny process nationally. Redditch as the Council, in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, has developed a bespoke approach to managing service performance. This involves focusing on performance measures for services, rather than targets, and progress in respect of these measures is logged on a corporate dashboard. The working group was established to monitor performance in relation to these measures on the dashboard as well as to identify any areas missing from the dashboard.

The group adopted a new approach to reviewing the dashboard this year. Members agreed to focus on the measures listed for each strategic purpose in turn and to identify any areas where further information might be helpful. In some cases Members identified examples of measures where the data had not been updated for some time and therefore the content was out of date. More commonly Officers were working to deadline to update the measures but there was a lag in the availability of data (for example in some cases the data is only available on a quarterly or an annual basis). The group has advised Officers on a number of occasions that where possible commentary should be provided to help clarify for the benefit of elected Members both trends for a particular measure as well as the reasons for any delays in providing further data

During the year Members considered a number of specific issues including the following:

- Provision of housing for care leavers and the extent to which measures could be introduced on the Council's dashboard to monitor provision of support to care leavers.
- Action that could be taken in relation to abandoned shopping trolleys and the extent to which that could be monitored through introducing relevant measures on the dashboard.
- The work of the Place teams and the measures adopted for these teams.
- Measures relating to rates of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime. Members learned that this data was obtained from partner organisations and there could be a lag in obtaining new information.
- Difficulties experienced by Members accessing the dashboard on their iPads. Members learned that visitor Wifi services had caused some difficulties, though there was also a password issue which was identified and resolved mid-year.
- The speed with which Members could navigate the dashboard on their iPads. A new tab was introduced during the year which enabled Members to negotiate the dashboard more quickly.
- Rent arrears and the action taken by the Council to improve collection rates.
- Measures relating to management of the Council's business centres and action that is being taken to encourage businesses to utilise available units.

In October 2017 the Member Support Steering Group noted that all Members would find the content of the measures dashboard helpful. However, many Members have not had the same experience accessing the dashboard as members of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. For this reason members of the working group have been nominated to act as Member Champions in respect of the dashboard.

TASK GROUPS AND SHORT, SHARP REVIEWS

The final reports of all completed investigations can be found on the Council's website within the Overview and Scrutiny section.

HOMELESSNESS SHORT SHARP REVIEW

Membership: Councillors Nina Wood-Ford (Chair), Natalie Brookes, Anita Clayton, Pattie Hill and Antonia Pulsford.

Completed September 2017

In March 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a proposal to undertake a scrutiny review of homelessness in the Borough. The request was made following a campaign in the local community which had been launched by the Council with the aim of raising awareness as to the situation of homeless people and the ways by which they can be assisted. This was set up as a "short sharp review". Following a delay for the local and general elections, the review commenced in June 2017.

The terms of reference were :-

- To review relevant Council policies and practices in respect of people experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To establish the current levels of homelessness in Redditch.
- To clarify the potential causes of homelessness.
- To analyse the potential impact of homelessness on a person's physical and mental health.
- To assess the existing support available to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To scrutinise the potential impact of the new Homelessness Reduction Bill on homelessness levels.
- To review the findings of any scrutiny Task Groups that have investigated homelessness in other parts of the country and to identify any actions arising from these reports which could be replicated in Redditch.
- To investigate any opportunities for organisations to work in partnership to support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To identify any additional action that the Council could take to address homelessness in the Borough.

During the review the group gathered evidence from a range of sources. Interviews were held with Council Officers in the Housing Options team, Private Sector Housing and Customer Access and Financial Support team, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Mark Shurmer, and external representatives from St Basils, Redditch Night Stop, the YMCA, the CAB – Bromsgrove and Redditch, Radiate Redditch and the St Stephen's Church Food Bank. Members also revisited the findings in respect of a review of homelessness that had been conducted by the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2006.

The group established that there are many forms of homelessness; rough sleepers, sofa surfers, living in temporary accommodation, and people who, through no fault of their own, fall on hard times such as due to divorce, losing a job and problems within families and stepfamilies. Other causes can be alcohol and substance abuse and mental health problems. Whilst provision for young people was found to be in place in the Borough, the

review identified what seemed to be a gap for single people with no dependents aged over 35.

The review resulted in five recommendations, including that Redditch Borough Council should participate in a pilot scheme for a project called Housing First subject to funding being provided for this by the WMCA. Redditch was felt to be a good location for testing this scheme which aims to provide housing and support workers for homeless persons with complex needs. Substance abuse was also identified by the review as a significant issue for homeless persons and Members have requested that the local charity providing support for addicts (Swanswell) be invited to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work in the Borough.

As part of the review amendments to the Councils Housing Allocations Policy were considered and discussed; Members recommended that the changes to the policy should be approved.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TASK GROUP

Membership: Councillors Nina Wood-Ford (Chair), Andrew Fry, Gay Hopkins, David Thain and Jenny Wheeler
Completed: March 2017.

Although the group completed its initial remit and reported back with recommendations in March 2017, some further work was carried out over the summer of 2017. Specifically the group met again to consider issues around PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education in schools and the link between such lessons being provided to children and whether this in turn impacts positively on mental health outcomes.

Members were keen to explore this issue further and were disappointed that none of the schools they contacted responded to the questionnaire that was sent out.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously agreed that the group should reconvene in due course to consider the impact of their recommendations. At the time of writing a date for a meeting of the group to be arranged remained to be confirmed.

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES SHORT SHARP REVIEW

Membership: Councillors Gareth Prosser (Chair), Matthew Dormer and Yvonne Smith
Due to complete: March 2018.

In July 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a short sharp review to look at civil contingencies and emergency planning. The review was proposed a month after the fire that occurred at Grenfell Tower in London which unfortunately resulted in significant loss of life. The fire and the approach adopted by organisations in the aftermath of the fire had implications from an emergency planning perspective and highlighted the need for local authorities to have robust plans in place for dealing with emergency situations.

The review started to meet and gather evidence from September 2017 and the final report is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st March 2018.

The terms of reference for this review were:

- 1) To review how the Council complied with legislative requirements and the Council's procedures to keep relevant risks under review.
- 2) To scrutinise the plan(s) used by the Council in discharging its duty and to assess whether the Council ensures they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.
- 3) To ensure the Council is prepared and able to provide emergency advice.
- 4) To invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the Council's emergency plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.
- 5) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.

Through a combination of interviews and written feedback, the review received feedback from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council. The senior officers at the Council with responsibility for Emergency Planning were interviewed, together with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager. The review also considered the legislative framework as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the arrangements in place in Worcestershire for multi-agency working to respond to civil emergencies and the local arrangements whereby support for emergency planning is provided through a shared service for the three North Worcestershire Authorities hosted by Wyre Forest District Council.

Overall the group was satisfied that the Council is well prepared to respond to any emergency situations the might unfortunately occur. At the time of writing this report the group are proposing to put forward two recommendations, that the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements. The Executive Committee will consider the group's report and findings on 6th March 2018.

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVESTIGATIONS**STAFF SURVEY JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP****Review Host: Bromsgrove District Council****Redditch Borough Council representatives: Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Jane Potter (Vice Chair) and Jenny Wheeler.****Bromsgrove District Council representatives: Councillors Steve Colella (Chair), Caroline Spencer and Shirley Webb.****Completed: October 2017**

As set out in the 2016/2017 annual report, Members agreed in October 2016 to set up a joint scrutiny task group with Members of Bromsgrove District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board, to consider the outcomes of the Councils' staff surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016. This joint approach was considered appropriate in light of the fact that many staff work in services shared across the two Councils. This was the first Joint Task Group involving these two authorities only.

Concerns arising from the poor staff response rate to the two surveys inspired this review. The Task Group was allocated the following terms of reference:-

- To consider how to increase the response rates in future.
- To consider the merits of the questions both in terms of desired outputs and number of questions.
- To establish reasons for the low response rates.
- To benchmark the survey with other similar organisations
- To make recommendations to the Bromsgrove Overview and Scrutiny Board and Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Over a series of meetings between November 2016 and June 2017 the Task Group carried out a detailed review of the outcome of the staff surveys and the measures being put in place by officers to address the poor response rate and associated issues. Interviews took place with senior officers including the Head of Business Transformation, and Organisational Development, the Human Resources and Development Manager and the Chief Executive.

The final recommendations from the Task Group were considered at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th October 2017. The Task Group made four recommendations namely:

- 1) That a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny function be appointed to the role of Leader Councillor for Supporting Staff;
- 2) That a quarterly update on the Programme Board's Action Plan be received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- 3) That the Performance Scrutiny (RBC) and Measures Dashboard (BDS) Working Groups' terms of reference be updated to include an area covering performance management processes, performance targets and objective setting across both authorities;

- 4) That the Lead Councillor for Supporting Staff and the relevant Portfolio Holder from each Council assist in the formulation of all future staff surveys and attend staff briefings.

The first 3 recommendations were adopted and the fourth one was recommended to the Executive. However, after debating the issue at its meeting on 31st October 2017 the Executive decided not to adopt recommendation 4.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONTACT DETAILS

For additional copies of this report, or to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council, please contact:

Jess Bayley, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch)
jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 64252 Extn: 3268

Address:

Overview and Scrutiny,
Democratic Services,
Redditch Borough Council,
Redditch Town Hall,
Walter Stranz Square,
Redditch
Worcestershire
B98 8AH

Further Information

Further information about the Overview and Scrutiny process at Redditch Borough Council can also be found on the Council's dedicated web pages. To access these web pages please use the web address attached here:

<http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx>

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

1st March 2018

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 Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups – feedback Working Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chair of Task Group / Short, Sharp Review Chair of Working Group Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. Tracker Report Updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Monitoring Report – Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy	Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service Redditch Borough Council representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

1st March 2018

OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED		
1st March 2018	Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review – Final Report	Councillor Prosser
1st March 2018	Leisure and Cultural Services Business Case – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Director
1st March 2018	One Public Estate Exercise – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Director
1st March 2018	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18	Councillor Potter
1st March 2018	Safeguarding and Early Help presentation	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
24th May 2018	Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny – Training	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
31st May 2018	Housing Benefits Presentation	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
5th July 2018	Redditch Partnership – Monitoring Update Report	Relevant Lead Director

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

1st March 2018

OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		
	Matchborough and Winyates District Centre Redevelopment Consultation – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
	Service Delivery Options – HRA Gas Maintenance – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
	Tackling Obesity Task Group - Feedback	Councillor Potter

This page is intentionally left blank