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## **FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR**

I am very pleased to present the annual report for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report provides an account of the work that the Committee has undertaken during the last twelve months, highlights progress that has been made, and identifies potential areas for further development.

As Chair, the last year has been a busy yet rewarding period. The Committee has continued to scrutinise the Council's budget by setting up a Budget Scrutiny Working Group to examine and understand better the finances of the Council. A Performance Scrutiny Working Group was also established to look at our performance. 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. It was particularly pleasing that the work of our LGB&T Task & Finish group and the Officer concerned was acknowledged by the local community and awards were given to recognise this important piece of work.

We have seen a number of new developments, including the setting up of a West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on which we have a representative, and the first joint scrutiny group with Bromsgrove. The latter shows signs of profitable working together in future by the two sets of councillors.

A further group which has the potential to help many residents is the Mental Health Services for Young People Task Group which has provided members with much interesting and helpful information which we hope will lead to improved outcomes for our residents, in particular our young people.

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 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 placed an emphasis on undertaking 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 the Democratic Services Officers with lead responsibility for Overview and Scrutiny 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  
Joe Baker



Councillor  
Tom Baker-Price



Councillor  
Matthew Dormer



Councillor  
Andrew Fry



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.

### **Scrutiny Work Programme Planning**

In May 2016 all Members were invited to participate in a scrutiny work programme planning event and training session. The main aim of this event was to identify issues that would be suitable for further scrutiny during the year. Members worked in groups to identify issues and were keen to ensure that the subjects which were added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme were selected in accordance with the four key principles of good scrutiny (as detailed on page 3 above). A range of issues were added to the work programme as a result of these discussions, both for the attention of the Committee and for consideration as potential Task Group activities.

### **Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan**

One of the principle issues identified during this session as suitable for the consideration of the Committee was the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). At the time of the session the introduction of these plans, designed to act as five year forward plans for local health services, had already been announced. However, the plans were at an early stage of development.

In July 2016 representatives of the Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) attended a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide Members with an update on the requirements for the plans and areas of local interest. They were invited to provide a further update to the Committee in December 2016 once the plan for Herefordshire and Worcestershire had been drafted and was the subject of public consultation. Members appreciated having an opportunity to question the content of the plan and to provide feedback for the consideration of the two trusts.

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 in July 2017.

### **Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

Another subject that was identified as suitable for further scrutiny during the work programme planning event was employment opportunities in Redditch for people with disabilities. This subject was suggested following anecdotal reports about difficulties experienced by some people with disabilities when attempting to secure employment. Members were keen to find out more about the experiences of people with a range of both physical and learning disabilities.

In October 2016 representatives of the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit and Job Centre Plus attended a meeting of the Committee to address this subject. The item consisted of two distinct sections; an update on employment opportunities and

support for people with disabilities at the local level and information about economic development strategies for the Borough. The latter part of the presentation helped to place the discussions in context. Due to the significance of this subject to residents living across the Borough the decision was taken to invite every Member to attend the Committee meeting when this item was discussed.

### Committee level Budget Scrutiny

Despite the establishment of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group during the year 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:

- The Council's Efficiency Statement
- Fees and Charges 2017/18
- Housing Revenue Account 2017/18
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21

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

### Council Plan and Leisure Intervention – Pre-Scrutiny

In line with requirements in the Council's constitution the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also pre-scrutinised the proposed content of the Council Plan 2017 – 2020 in January 2017. Members were interested to view the target actions recorded in the plan, which linked to the Council's strategic purposes. Given the significance of the plan to the local area Members agreed that the Committee should in future receive biannual monitoring updates on the progress that has been achieved implementing the actions detailed in the report.

During consideration of this item the Committee also received a verbal update on the leisure intervention work that was launched in 2015/16. Members were interested to receive this update, following a significant amount of scrutiny of leisure services in the previous municipal year. The Committee was advised that the intervention work, driving waste out of existing services, had been progressing well. However, Members did make it clear that further information would be helpful in writing and it was agreed that this should follow later in 2017.

### Housing Growth Report

This year the Committee continued to consider the Executive Committee's Work Programme at meetings in order to identify potential items for scrutiny. One such item selected for scrutiny was the Housing Growth Strategy, due to the potential level of public interest and the significance of housing growth to the Council's finances. The committee was particularly keen to ensure that the Council was meeting its purchasing targets so that funding would not need to be returned to the Government. Members were reassured to learn that the Council had constructive plans in place in respect of future housing growth and welcomed the chance to comment on these.

## Engagement Strategy – Pre-Scrutiny

Similarly the Council's Engagement Strategy was selected as a suitable item for pre-scrutiny following consideration of the Executive Committee's Work Programme. Members were keen to review the content of this strategy as the Committee recognises the importance of public engagement and the requirement for the Council to take into account the needs of the public (e.g. when redesigning services or launching new initiatives). In addition the Overview and Scrutiny process provides Members with an opportunity to consult with the public about issues impacting on the local community, as and when considered appropriate. The content of the Engagement Strategy could therefore potentially have implications for how scrutiny operates.

At the time of writing pre-scrutiny of this strategy had not yet taken place, though any recommendations will be reported for the consideration of the Executive Committee in April 2017.

## **LGB&T COMMUNITY AWARDS**

During the year Members who had served on the Provision of Support Networks for the LGB&T Community Task Group, and the Democratic Services Officer who supported this review, were honoured with awards from the LGB&T Support Services Redditch community group. These awards, which recognised the work of the Councillors and the Officer on this review, were presented at a meeting of full Council by a range of dignitaries, including the Chair and Vice Chair of the community group, the Mayor of the Borough and a representative of Stonewall. A further award, recognising the Council's support for the LGB&T Community, was accepted by the Leader on behalf of the Council. It was particularly rewarding to receive the awards from the local LGB&T community as the scrutiny review was launched to address concerns within the community about the level of support available locally for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and all Members appointed to the group had aimed to make a positive difference to the lives of people within that community.

The awards were followed by an update at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the action that has been taken by the Council to implement some of the recommendations arising from the work of the Task Group. In particular Members were pleased to learn that the Council is aiming to participate in the Stonewall Equality Index. Whilst the Committee feels it would be unrealistic to expect the Council to achieve a high rating in the index in its first year participation should have a positive impact on the organisation as relevant policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated as part of the process leading potentially to positive outcomes for LGB&T staff. The group also hopes that participation in the Stonewall Equality Index will help to empower LGB&T staff working for the Council and provide further reassurance of the local authority's support.

Members welcomed the hard work of officers from the Council's Policy Team, and partner organisations, to arrange the latest LGB&T history month celebrations in February 2017. This encompassed a range of activities at a number of venues, including at the Palace Theatre. Members hope to continue to support this event in the future.



## **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY**

**Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair), King, Potter, Swansborough and 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.

In February 2017 Members received an invitation to participate in joint scrutiny of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership with Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Councils' Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This proposal to undertake joint scrutiny had been suggested by Bromsgrove Members to enhance the scrutiny process and increase the potential for there to be constructive outcomes from scrutiny of the local community safety partnership. A joint scrutiny arrangement has been successfully trialed in the south of the county for this purpose and it was suggested that similar arrangements could be replicated in the north. However, the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee concluded that the subject merited scrutiny at a local level only and Members agreed to increase the number of meetings of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel from one to two per year from 2017/18 onwards.

The meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel is scheduled to consider one item at its next meeting on 22nd March. This will comprise an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership over the last 12 months.

## **HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford was the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in 2016/17. 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:

- Ongoing developments with the review of WAHT and the outcomes of an unannounced Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.
- The issuing of a Section 29a notice following further CQC inspections of WAHT's services.
- The consultation process in respect of the future of WHAT services.
- Changes to public health budgets and the implications for local services.

- The redesign of Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) and the reduction in services at Orchard Place.
- The use of E-cigarettes.
- The views of HOSC Members in relation to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).
- The performance of the West Midlands Ambulance Trust, which was found to be good.

### **WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Jenny Wheeler was appointed to serve on the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee which was newly established in 2016/17. In order for Members to develop their knowledge of the role of the Committee and to avoid duplication a decision was taken for Councillor Wheeler to provide regular updates to the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of this body.

To ensure that the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee could make a constructive contribution in terms of holding the West Midlands Combined Authority's Partnership Board to account a scrutiny workshop session took place in November 2016. Councillor Wheeler attended this session alongside other Councillors and Officers representing both constituent and non-constituent members of the WMCA. The findings of this session helped to inform the work programme of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which subsequently launched three Select Committees to investigate particular subjects in detail. Due to her experience and knowledge developed as a member of the Mental Health Services for Young People Task Group Councillor Wheeler volunteered to participate in the Select Committee that was established to review the findings of the WMCA Mental Health Commission's work. Councillor Wheeler has since been appointed the Vice Chair of this group.

## **WORKING GROUPS**

This year scrutiny working groups were established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These groups were tasked with considering 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 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. During these meetings Members considered a range of subjects including the following:

- Management of the Council's property assets by the Place Partnership and the Council's contribution to funding this partnership.
- 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 Council's capital programme. Based on the evidence they gathered Members recommended that senior officers should improve forward planning and add any one off funding requirements for later years in the programme as this was not happening regularly. The group also proposed that the length of the programme should be extended from three to four years in line with the length of the Council's Efficiency Statement.
- Housing Services and the Right to Buy process. Members were keen to learn more about the amount of funding available to the local authority from sales of Council houses which could be reinvested in new properties and the length of time in which this funding was available to spend. The group was also keen to ensure that this process was managed efficiently so that the council did not need to pay any funding back to Government.
- The Shopmobility service and the potential to reduce the costs associated with delivering that service through alternative models of service delivery. Members received information about a survey that had been conducted with customers and recommended a review of the different options available to manage the service. The Executive Committee has since considered and approved changes to the operation of the service, including the introduction of a new charging system.
- Recharging arrangements between Council departments as well as between local authorities in shared services. In particular the group welcomed the work of the Officer Recharges Working Group and recommended a wholesale review of recharging arrangements, though Members are eager to ensure that Officers' time is accurately recorded in terms of where they are delivering services and the tasks involved.
- Section 106 funding agreements. The group has monitored expenditure of Section 106 funds in line with proposals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2016 that use of this funding should be scrutinised by Members.

## **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**

**Membership: Councillors Tom Baker-Price (Chair), Natalie Brookes, Matthew Dormer and David Thain.**

Performance Scrutiny was identified by Members as an area in need of improvement in 2015/16. Performance monitoring is a key aspect of good practice in the scrutiny process nationally. It was not considered to be appropriate to replicate the performance scrutiny arrangements in place at other local authorities as Redditch Borough Council, in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, has developed a separate approach to managing the performance of services. This involves focusing on performance measures for services, rather than targets or performance indicators, 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.

Following a demonstration of the dashboard by representatives of the Council's Policy Team Members were tasked with identifying items from the dashboard which they considered suitable for further scrutiny. During the course of the year Members considered a number of issues including the following:

- The potential for the dashboard to be made available as a tool which other local authorities could use to manage performance.
- The Council's performance management system, the focus on measures over targets and the extent to which this was the best system available to enable Council services to meet the needs of residents.
- Performance in respect of Lifeline services, following concerns amongst Members that the data on the dashboard appeared to indicate a decline in the number of customers. The group noted that changes in customer numbers had been influenced by factors outside the Council's control and were encouraged by the dedication of staff. Members agreed that more could be done to market the service to other potential customers and a recommendation on this subject was approved by the Executive Committee in December 2016.
- The potential to add measures to the dashboard specifically relating to the activities of elected Members. As part of this process the group recommended the introduction of a measure monitoring Members' participation in training. This recommendation is due to be considered at the next meeting of the Council's Member Support Steering Group.
- In connection to this the group also suggested that broadcasting arrangements for Committee meetings should be explored in order to enhance the transparency of the decision making process. However, this proposal was rejected by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Sickness absence levels within Housing Services and the potential causes of this was debated. Members learned that due to the nature of their work staff in the team were more likely to be exposed to colds and other viral illnesses whilst staff with physical duties might be unable to fulfil their roles if they sustained injuries which prevented heavy lifting.
- The fluctuation in the number of customers visiting Forge Mill Needle Museum was discussed. Members were advised that the museum had been selected as a potential site for the use of the crematorium during renovation works and for this reason had been unable to book a programme of events during an otherwise typically busy period.

- The possibility of adding a measure in respect of the participation of people with disabilities in physical activities was discussed with officers from the Sports Development Team. Members were pleased to learn about the inclusive approach adopted by the Council and the significant amount of work undertaken by officers to promote sporting opportunities to the public. Based on their discussions the group concluded that no additional measures for this subject were necessary.
- The potential for Leisure and Cultural activities to have separate branding from the Council in order to encourage participation was discussed with a range of officers. On the one hand the group felt that there would be greater participation, potentially to the benefit of people's health, if separate branding could be used in these circumstances. However, Members also noted the need for consistency in use of branding and to ensure that this complied with an overarching corporate approach.
- The use of the civic suite and income generated from external bookings was considered during a meeting of the group. Members interviewed Officers about measures for this purpose as there was general consensus that an increase in the hiring out of the civic suite could have a beneficial impact on the Council's finances. Members were impressed with the work that Officers had been undertaking to market the civic suite and noted the limitations mid-week, particularly in respect of use of these rooms for Committee meetings as part of the local democratic process.
- Performance in respect of gas safety inspections was discussed during an interview with Officers. Members agreed that it was important to receive an update in respect of this matter following a breach of the regulations in 2015. The group interviewed Officers about the work that has been undertaken by the Council since this breach occurred as well as the current position and Members welcomed the hard work of Officers to address this.
- Members have concluded that in future it would be helpful for the Performance Scrutiny Working Group to scrutinise the development of measures for the Council Plan which was approved in January 2017.

### **Future of the Working Groups**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that at the end of the municipal year the outcomes from the work of these groups would be assessed. Based on this information a decision will be made as to whether these groups should continue to exist, either in their current or in an amended form.

## **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.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TASK GROUP**

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

During the scrutiny work programme planning event in May 2016 mental health was identified as a subject that was suitable for further scrutiny. This subject had also recently been identified by the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) as an area where a scrutiny investigation could make a positive difference to the lives of Redditch residents. At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2016 Members agreed that it would be useful to investigate the subject of mental health further. In particular, it was proposed that a review of support services for children and young people with mental health and wellbeing difficulties would be particularly helpful.

In July 2016 the review was launched with the following terms of reference:

- To clarify the roles of different agencies in supporting (and referring) young people with 'milder' mental health problems.
- To consider current arrangements in the provision of child and adolescent mental health services, including any local strategies which shape services.
- To investigate current preventative action undertaken to support young people vulnerable to developing mental health problems and to identify ways in which this could be improved.
- To consider the impact on Council services of demand from young people with 'milder' mental health problems.
- To clarify at what point a young person's mental health is considered serious enough to merit direct intervention from mental health services.
- To explore best practice in other parts of the country in terms of supporting young people with 'milder' mental health problems and the potential to replicate this in the Borough of Redditch.

The review has taken place in a context in which at the national level mental health has increasingly been the subject of public scrutiny and there have been a number of Government announcements on the subject. At the local level Members have found that partners have recently been working to improve CAMHS services through service transformation work. Significant progress has been made with the delivery of actions detailed in a transformation plan for the county, though more changes are scheduled to take place. The Council has also signed up to the WMCA's Mental Health Concordat during the period in which the review has been taking place. All of these developments have been taken into account by the group and have informed the seven recommendations which are due to be reported for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28th March.

## **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVESTIGATIONS**

### **INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP**

**Review Host: Worcestershire County Council**

**Redditch Borough Council representative: Councillor Gareth Prosser**

**Completed: June 2016.**

The Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) at a meeting on 26th February 2015 discussed the Worcestershire Public Health Annual Report 2014. A key theme in this report is a local aim to increase opportunities for participation in physical activities. The report highlighted that "*...physical activity rates decrease quite steeply after the age of 45...*" (although) "*...when comparing with the region and England, Worcestershire participation rates are relatively high...*" It also noted that "*...there is fragmentation of responsibility between County, District and national (Sport England) levels...*" The County Council was keen to ensure opportunities to access sport and physical activity were available to all, and were interested to find out what impact the 2012 Olympics had had on participation rates. For these reasons the Board concluded that a review of this subject would be worthwhile.

The Board recognised that, due to the involvement of district Councils with the delivery of leisure and cultural services at the local level, it would be appropriate for this review to be conducted as a joint exercise. The Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the terms of reference for this review on 7th July 2015. The Committee agreed that this was an important subject and noted that participation would correspond with addressing two of the Council's strategic purposes including: provide good things for me to do, see and visit and help me to live my life independently (including health and activity). The review could also help to address significant issues relating to health inequalities which the local authority is committed to addressing as a member of the Redditch Partnership. Furthermore, Members noted the links to a previous review completed by the Committee, a review of action that could be taken to tackle obesity levels in the Borough, which was completed in March 2015.

The Task Group completed their investigations in June 2016 and the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the outcomes of the investigation in July 2016. The recommendations were largely endorsed by Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet subject to a few amendments to the wording of some recommendations. As Worcestershire County Council was the host authority for the review it is envisaged that County Members will take a lead on monitoring implementation of the group's recommendations.

## **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.**

**Deadline: May / June 2017**

Bromsgrove District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board has considered the outcomes of the Councils' staff surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016 at a number of meetings over the past three years. In September 2016 Members expressed concerns about the outcomes from the first staff survey and the decline in the number of employees who had completed the second survey in 2016. Based on these concerns Members agreed that it would be helpful to launch a Task Group to investigate the matter further.

As many of Bromsgrove District Council's staff work in services shared with Redditch Borough Council a decision was taken to approach the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the potential to hold this as a joint review. Members in Redditch welcomed Bromsgrove Members to a meeting of the Committee in October 2016 and, based on the information provided, agreed that Redditch should take part in this exercise.

The Task Group has been 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.

The review is the first joint scrutiny exercise to involve Redditch and Bromsgrove Members only. To ensure that the review operates effectively and in a balanced manner a decision was taken at the start of the investigation to hold meetings at alternate locations and to appoint an equal number of Members from each authority's scrutiny Committee to the review. At least one Member of each authority needs to be present for the meetings to be quorate to ensure that both Councils can contribute to the evidence gathering and recommendation setting stages of the process. The group's final report is due to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2017.



## **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:

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### 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>