

additional papers 1

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tue 29 Nov
2011
6.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



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If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact

**Jess Bayley and Michael Craggs
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext. 3268 / 3267 Fax: (01527) 65216
e.mail: jess.bayley@brosmgroveandredditch.gov.uk /
michael.craggs@brosmgroveandredditch.gov.uk Minicom: 595528**

Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

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

Chair

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

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

Members of the Public

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

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Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
- The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)

and

- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



Overview and Scrutiny

Tuesday, 29th November, 2011

6.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Committee

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Phil Mould (Chair)	Bill Hartnett
	Mark Shurmer	Gay Hopkins
	(Vice-Chair)	Brenda Quinney
	Peter Anderson	Alan Mason
	Andrew Brazier	Luke Stephens
	Simon Chalk	
	Andrew Fry	

8. Housing Trailblazers - Presentation

(Pages 1 - 36)

E Hopkins, Housing Options Manager

To receive a presentation on the subject of the Housing Trailblazers scheme.

(Report attached)

(No Specific Ward Relevance);

11. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Forward Plan

(Pages 37 - 52)

To consider the minutes of the latest meeting(s) of the Executive Committee and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan are suitable for scrutiny.

(Minutes attached).

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th November 2011

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT:

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Heads of Service	Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing Services
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report provides a summary of the Council's Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Initiative 2009 to 2011 (which was funded via grant totalling £180,000 provided by Communities and Local Government). The Housing Options Team was awarded the grant in recognition of 'good practice' introduced following the scrutiny report 'Preventing Homelessness' published in 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that
the contents of the report are noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1.1 A presentation on the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer was recently delivered to the Corporate Management Team, who considered that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may be interested to see the positive outcomes for customers, as a result of changes made following the initial scrutiny review undertaken in 2006.
- 3.1.2 In 2006 a scrutiny review was undertaken by Members which looked at Homelessness Prevention. The findings highlighted that the Council needed to change its approach to Homelessness and ensure that a greater number of Council Officers were involved in Homelessness Prevention as opposed to Homelessness Investigation. In addition it recommended that greater use should be made of the Private Sector in housing homeless households and called for better use of discretionary housing benefit in the prevention of homelessness.
- 3.1.3 In response to the recommendations made by the former Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Council launched a new Housing Options Advice Service which opened in January 2007. As a

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th November 2011

result of the changes to the way that the service was delivered significantly more people are now prevented from becoming homeless and the number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced. The number of vulnerable people who sustain their accommodation in the long term has also increased.

- 3.1.4 In 2008 the Council successfully applied for, and was awarded, a grant from the CLG to enhance the Housing Options Service by funding a number of key initiatives which are detailed in the Enhanced Housing Options Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1).

Financial Implications

- 3.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report, however, the report does refer to £180,000 of non-recurrent grant funding received by the CLG during 2009 and 2011.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 There are no legal implications to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 There are no operational implications directly from the report but there were many from the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer project (which will be outlined through the presentation).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.5 The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer has significantly changed the housing options available to customers in Redditch.
- 3.6 There are no direct recommendations on equalities and diversity but the enhancements to the Housing Options have focused on offering more assistance to some vulnerable groups.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risks arising directly from this report.

5. APPENDICES

Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Action Plan 2009 to 2011

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th November 2011

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Preventing Homelessness, Final Report, Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2006.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

Name: Elise Hopkins, Housing Options Manager
E Mail: elise.hopkins@redditchbc.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext. 3510



Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Action Plan
Communities and Local Government Trailblazer Program
2009- 2011

Redditch Borough Council,
Town Hall,
Walter Stranz Square,
Redditch,
Worcestershire, B98 8AH
Telephone: 01527 64252

Overview

The Council has a clear vision of what it wants to achieve in Redditch and has set priorities that will enable it to achieve this. Enhancing the Housing Options Service via the Communities and Local Government Trailblazer Grant is one such priority which will play a key role in delivering our vision:

‘An enterprising community which is safe, clean and green’

Enterprising Community

The Enhanced Housing Options Action Plan includes increasing the supply of family accommodation through the use of POD technology; offering more accommodation for young single people to live independently; providing more support for those wishing to downsize to smaller properties; the development of a joint strategy between key agencies and the voluntary sector which identifies and breaks down the barriers which prevent people from becoming self sufficient members of the community; providing more training opportunities designed to raise the skills of our population; offering better support to those seeking employment and housing and encouraging outside investment into the area.

Safe

The Enhanced Housing Options Action Plan outlines how the Council will work in partnership with other agencies and members of the voluntary sector to assist former offenders, drug or alcohol users who have shown a commitment to turning their lives around to find settled accommodation in the Borough. This will reduce the likelihood of individuals re-offending or re-lapsing and contribute towards making Redditch a safer place to live and work.

Clean and Green

The introduction of a Befriending / Mentoring service in partnership with St Basils will support customers to access accommodation, education and employment and advise them how to get involved in the management of our estates and the design of Council services. Through working in partnership with the local community we hope to see an increase in community spirit and a reduction in littering, fly tipping and other behaviour which is detrimental to the environment.

1) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Promote the use of Pod technology as a flexible solution to over-crowding / meeting the needs of those with disabilities</p> <p>Our show flat has already welcomed visitors from other local authorities and housing associations.</p> <p>We have met the needs of two disabled individuals requiring additional space and walk in shower facilities who would otherwise have needed to move.</p>	<p>Publicity for the scheme and staffing of the show flat will continue up until Mar 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Jayne Bough – Housing Services Manager</p> <p>Lead Officer Carol Cockette</p> <p><u>RBC - Project Team</u> Housing Options, Housing Services, Repairs and Maintenance, Capital, Procurement, Care and Repair Agency, Communications Building Control</p>	<p><u>Capital for Project</u> £50,000 Trailblazer Grant</p> <p>Staff time will be met via existing revenue budgets</p> <p><u>Show Flat</u> Community Warden - one day per week</p> <p>Capital will be supplemented via Equipment and Adaptations / Care and Repair Budgets</p>	<p>Produce 1st Case Study and Information leaflet - April 2011</p> <p>Review benefit of Pods in light of more competitive market for brick built extensions April 2010.</p> <p>Select further households to receive assistance with overcrowding.</p> <p>Project completed – March 2011</p>	<p><u>Target</u> Meet the needs of at least five disabled or overcrowded families using Pod Technology</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> Better use of housing stock & reduced overcrowding Wider range of housing solutions Reduced adaptation costs Raised awareness of Pod Technology</p>	<p>At least five overcrowded or households with a need due to a disability will have a completed POD.</p> <p>Lessons learned from the process are available to other Local Authorities looking to adopt a similar approach</p> <p>POD technology is adopted by other Local Authorities and customers get the benefit outside of Redditch area.</p>	<p>The second family has been selected and we are currently negotiating with POD suppliers. The cost of Brick built extensions has reduced (due to the economic climate). Further price negotiation is required.</p>

2) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Increase information available to offenders and coordinate cross-agency training to reduce barriers in accessing accommodation and reduce financial exclusion following release from custodial sentences.</p> <p>We have extended this to include advice regarding tackling financial exclusion as the project team felt that this group were particularly at risk following changes to Housing Benefit direct payments.</p>	March 2011	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Elise Hopkins – Housing Options Manager</p> <p>Lead Officer</p> <p>Glenda Davis</p> <p><u>Project Team</u> Housing Options, Housing Benefits, Probation, Prison Service, Police, Representatives from Poverty Task Force and Community Safety Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Union, NACRO, Her Majesty's Court Service</p>	<p><u>Capital for Project</u> £2,500 Trailblazer Grant</p> <p>Staff Time will be met via existing revenue budgets</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> If this initiative is successful we should see a reduction in housing related debt. Officers would seek to secure funding for future information from Rent and Welfare budgets.</p>	<p>Finalise Court Information pack – Jan 2010</p> <p>Carry out further snap shot survey with ex offenders - Jan 2010.</p> <p>Set baseline for satisfaction level – Jan 2010.</p> <p>Launch information pack in Redditch Magistrates Court – Feb 2010.</p> <p>Review success of pilot – July 2010.</p> <p>Extend pack to all North Worcester Magistrates Courts – Nov 2010.</p> <p>Undertake further snapshot satisfaction survey – Jan 2011</p>	<p><u>Target</u></p> <p>Stock Information Packs in all North Worcester Magistrates courts by November 2011.</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> Improved customer service Reduced abandonment and subsequent housing-related debt Reduced re-offending and Safer Communities Reduced Financial Exclusion</p>	<p>All offenders likely to be placed into custody for over 12 weeks receive appropriate advice regarding managing their tenancies. 100% of long-term offenders are offered Housing Options and Money Advice prior to or immediately after release. More offenders secure settled accommodation and maintain it The level of financial exclusion in ex-offenders is reduced.</p>	<p>Milestones revised to reflect results from consultation and include adoption of pack across all North Worcestershire Magistrate Courts.</p>

3) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Develop a specialist rent deposit scheme to assist more ex-offenders or recovering drug or alcohol addicts into settled accommodation and reduce re-offending or substance abuse.</p> <p>Households will receive appropriate support based on their needs to ensure that they sustain their tenancy.</p> <p>All households that participate will be encouraged to take part in community events and activities.</p>	May 2009	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Elise Hopkins – Housing Options Manager</p> <p>Lead Officer</p> <p>Glenda Davis</p> <p><u>Project Team</u> Housing Options, Probation, Prison Service, Police, Representatives from Poverty Task Force and Community Safety Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Union, After Care Team, Supporting People, SMAT</p>	<p><u>Capital for Project</u></p> <p>£25,000 Trailblazer Grant</p> <p>Staff Time will be met via existing revenue budgets</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u></p> <p>A mechanism for funds to be paid back via Credit Union accounts would be set up to maximise the on-going funds available for future customers.</p>	<p>Set up Project Team May 2009.</p> <p>Introduce information sharing consent form to allow Landlord Forum, SMAT team, Probation, Housing Services and Housing Options to share information for the purpose of monitoring successes - May 09.</p> <p>Produce information to encourage involvement in community events / activities – May 09</p> <p>Identify how funding should be prioritised to maximise success towards LAA targets – May 2009</p> <p>Scheme ready to lend deposits by May 2009.</p> <p>System for monitoring uptake in education / employment / education / activities reviewed – Jan 2010.</p>	<p><u>Target</u></p> <p>At least 35 households are assisted into settled accommodation.</p> <p>75 % maintain accommodation for 6 months (to be monitored quarterly via Landlord Forum)</p> <p>75 % continue to engage with probation or in drug / alcohol rehabilitation programs for 6 months or duration of order (to be monitored via SMAT and probation figures)</p> <p>30% take part in community events/activities</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <p>Greater number of Socially Excluded enter settled accommodation.</p> <p>Reduced re-offending and Safer Communities</p>	<p>The scheme has successfully allowed socially excluded groups to access and maintain accommodation.</p> <p>Offending behaviour has reduced as lifestyle becomes less chaotic</p> <p>Socially excluded groups are integrated into the community and take part in events and activities</p> <p>Socially excluded groups understand their options and make informed decisions about their own future.</p>	Scheme is operational and schedule

4) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Provide more quality single rooms in shared houses within the Private Rented sector for young singles looking to live independently.</p> <p>We would also like to develop a matching service for young people so that they can find other people with similar interests to rent on a longer term basis with them.</p>	<p>Scheme would be fully operational by March 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Elise Hopkins – Housing Options Manager Lead Officer Sharon Samuels <u>Project Team</u> Housing Options Private Sector Team, Landlords Forum, Dave Broadbent (accredited landlord), St Basils Floating Support Service</p>	<p><u>Capital for Project</u> £10,000 – Trailblazer Grant Money will be used to fund furniture, rent deposit guarantees and rent in advance.</p> <p><u>Revenue Support Costs</u> Supporting People funding was secured as part of North Worcestershire Young Peoples Project and provided by St Basils</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> Customers will be asked to pay back the money owed via the credit union so that future funding is available.</p>	<p>Landlord identified March 2009 Service specification completed – May 2009 Essential work to property completed - June 09 Furniture is purchased and installed June 09 Tenants selected June 09 1st property is fully occupied by July 09 Negotiation with landlord for 2nd property completed – Feb 2011. Access to accommodation is linked to North Worcestershire accommodation gateway – March 2011</p>	<p><u>Target</u> Provide 5 units of affordable, good quality, single room Private Rented accommodation with low level support.</p> <p>Landlord agrees to 2nd property to increase the accommodation provision further.</p> <p><u>Outcome</u> Wider range of housing solutions - More accommodation available for Young Single People (which can be added to housing options tool kit).</p>	<p>Young people on benefits have the opportunity to privately rent good quality single room accommodation to prove that they can sustain independent living. Those requiring low level support learn the skills they need. A clear pathway allows individuals to move-on into other privately rented accommodation. Funding via Innovations fund is available to bridge gap between end of benefit payments and first pay from employer.</p>	<p>Inspire Project completed. Two 5 bedroom schemes fully operational and 10 young people have moved in. Case studies produced for individuals helped. All in full time education. Additional £10,000 funding was secured via RBC Capital to help develop the second scheme.</p>

5) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
Develop a cross agency Joint Strategy which identifies and breaks down the barriers which prevent people from being self sufficient members of our community and encourages economic growth in the area.	March 2010	Project Manager Jayne Bough – Housing Services Manager Lead Officer Victoria Caney <u>Project Team</u> Housing Options, Benefits, Job Centre Plus, Primary Care Trust, Night Stop, YMCA, Worcestershire Supporting People, CAB, Credit Union, Sure Start, New College, CRV, Care and Repair, Reddi Centre	<u>Capital for Project</u> £2,500 Trailblazer Grant Money will be used to promote, distribute and train staff as required. Project support met via existing RBC revenue budgets.	Consultation with stakeholders – Jan 2009. Draft Homelessness and Housing Advice Review completed – May 2009. Current cost of service provision identified – May 2009. Partners have developed a Draft Joint Strategy and Action Plan – October 2009. Consultation with Service Users is completed - December 2009. Draft Joint Strategy is published January 2010. Strategy and Action Plan approved by members - March 2010.	<u>Target</u> Joint Strategy Developed which identifies SMART actions for change. <u>Outcomes</u> Greater partnership working Better Value for Money	Partners have developed a joint SMART Action Plan which breaks down the barriers to people being self-sufficient members of the community. Agencies are working together to offer joined up advice regarding housing, housing benefits, employment and education aimed at encouraging people into employment. Agencies have identified savings by joining resources to fund enhanced housing options services beyond Trailblazer grant. Economic Development in Redditch expands providing more jobs.	The strategy was passed by Council in March 2010.

6) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Provide an Innovations Fund or flexible pot of money that the Council, partner agencies and the voluntary sector can access to incentivise or encourage individuals back into employment or education.</p> <p>Where appropriate customers may be required to pay funds back to ensure that fund is able to continue beyond the two years. This will be organised via the local credit union.</p>	March 2011	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Elise Hopkins – Housing Options Manager</p> <p>Lead Officer</p> <p>Brenda Harbon</p>	<p>Trailblazer Grant £5,000</p> <p>We anticipate that this will be used to pay for transport costs, interview clothes, (possibly small rent shortfalls if part-time work is found while benefits are assessed), costs associated with obtaining ID required to access bank accounts or employment.</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> Dependant on the success of this scheme future funding may be requested from LAA budgets</p>	<p>Consult with partners and set up panel – April 09</p> <p>Referral process agreed – May 2009</p> <p>Service Level Agreement Developed – May 2009</p> <p>Loan / Grant agreements formalised and recovery or payback process agreed – May 2009.</p> <p>Materials for scheme are developed and marketing is undertaken in the local area by June 2009.</p> <p>Scheme Launches – June 09</p> <p>Lessons Learned guidance produced – March 2011</p>	<p>We anticipate being able to assist 35 people with maximum awards being in the region of £200.</p> <p>70% of those assisted through the Innovations Fund access education or employment. Case Studies and lessons learned guide produced.</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> Skills of population increase. Individuals are assisted to get off job seeking benefits. (Refer to Tables 1 and 2 to see LAA priorities, and links).</p>	<p>A greater number of people are able to access education and work in order to better themselves and become self sufficient members of the community.</p> <p>RBC provide the CLG with customer case studies which highlight potential barriers to other Enhanced Housing Options Teams trying to achieve similar things and drive best practice.</p>	Scheme is operational and officers are meeting targets.

7) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Set up a volunteer Befriending and Mentoring service using those who have experienced homelessness/housing need to encourage and support individuals approaching the Council for help to find housing to become self-sufficient and integrated into the community. Extend the Homelessness Prevention schools program to visit a larger number of schools and reach more people. Mentors and befrienders from a variety of ethnicities and ages will be recruited to try and meet the needs of all customers.</p>	<p>Fully staffed mentoring program by March 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Joint Initiative: Redditch Borough Council - Elise Hopkins St Basils - Matt Green <u>Staff Resource</u> St Basils YMCA Night stop CSV Housing Options</p>	<p><u>Capital for Project</u> £10,000 Trailblazer Grant The money will be used to fund training of Befrienders / Mentors, fund travel expenses and activities. Existing "Reddi Centre" Courses attract learning skills council funding. <u>Sustainability</u> Depending on the success of this scheme future funding may be requested from LAA budgets to cover transport etc.</p>	<p>Course and service Specifications agreed (involving all key Redditch partners June 09). First intake of Befrienders start course Nov 09. Customer satisfaction questionnaire is developed – Jan 2010. Befriending Service is operational - May 2010. Schools Homeless Prevention Program commences May 2010. First intake of Mentors begin course - May 2010 Mentoring service is operational – July 2010. Target numbers of Mentors and Befrienders are met – March 2011.</p>	<p><u>Target</u> At least 10 Voluntary Mentors are trained. 15 Befrienders are recruited. 80% of Mentors find employment / take part in further skills training (within 9 months). 50% of Befrienders / Mentors become involved in community activities or management of estates (to be monitored via Housing Services Survey). All four secondary schools agree to take part in Homeless Prevention Program (delivered to 2325 pupils from year 9). <u>Outcomes</u> Improved confidence, greater number of individuals find employment or participate in skills training. (Refer to Tables 1 and 2 to see LAA priorities and links).</p>	<p>A 2 Tier course is designed to train Befrienders initially, a selection these are given the opportunity to move on and train as Mentors Service provides a friendly ear and sign posts to appropriate services and provide introductions to community groups to encourage community cohesion. Homelessness Prevention schools program is extended to Redditch based on Birmingham St Basils STAMP approach.</p>	<p>Steering group to oversee the delivery of the schools program and manage the work of the Mentors has been set up. The group meets monthly and has representatives from all the local agencies that already go into schools.</p>

8) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Housing Services advisors offer joined up advice to individuals facing redundancy. This will be facilitated via a Multi agency team of specialist advisors or 'task force' who will attend employer premises to offer advice to staff.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Liz Tompkin Lead Officer Elise Hopkins <u>Project Team</u> RBC Housing Options, RBC Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus, RBC One Stop Shop, RBC Borough Tenants Panel, Homelessness Review and Voluntary Sector project teams</p>	<p>Task force to be resourced using existing staffing from partners.</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> We will look to fund this on an ongoing basis via efficiency savings derived from lean working.</p>	<p>Task force Service Level Agreement developed May 2009</p> <p>Avoidable contact survey is reviewed and recommendations to reduce avoidable contacts are implemented – May 2009.</p> <p>Targets are set for processing applications and outcomes – May 09.</p> <p>Introduce an income maximisation service for customers experiencing financial hardship Nov – 2009.</p>	<p><u>Target</u> Provide task force for companies where more than 10 members of staff face redundancy. (We anticipate having to undertake at least 2 task force events per month in the current climate (assisting up to 50 individuals).</p> <p>The number of un-necessary customer contacts to the Council about Housing is reduced from current baseline 20.60% (NI14). We aim to reduce this by 5%. Mobile technology would also be utilised by visiting officers and for community events.</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> Increased Homelessness Prevention Faster access to Benefits Better customer service More Efficient / Leaner Services</p>	<p>Customers at risk of unemployment and possibly homelessness receive joined-up appropriate advice. Awareness of the Housing Options Service is raised within the Borough and customers approach the Council earlier so prevention of homelessness is easier (demonstrated through number of customers accessing service). The number of un-necessary customer contacts is reduced.</p>	<p>Multi-agency task Forces have attended three companies in Redditch and provided information to 98 individuals in total. Work ongoing to assist further companies.</p> <p>An income maximisation service has been launched by RBC using HRA revenue and DWP grant.</p>

9) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
Promote the Enhanced Housing Options Service via road shows to raise awareness and encourage individuals to approach for support and advice before reaching crisis point.	March 2011	Project Manager Liz Tompkin Lead Officer Elise Hopkins <u>Project Team</u> RBC Housing Options, RBC Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus, RBC One Stop Shop, RBC Borough Tenants Panel, Homelessness Review and Voluntary Sector project teams	<u>Capital for Project</u> £15,000 Trailblazer Grant for Mobile Technology Project Support will be met via RBC existing revenue budgets <u>Sustainability</u> We will look to fund this on an ongoing basis via efficiency savings derived from lean working.	Train Residents in Housing Options to assist officers in informing the community June 2009 Identify target audiences for Events Oct 2009 Produce timetable of Events up until April 2011. Undertake an event every two months up until April 2011.	<u>Target</u> Contribute to the targets set for the Link Worker in assisting individuals to access education and employment. Record numbers attending events and undertake consultation regarding service improvements required. <u>Outcomes</u> Increased Homelessness Prevention (acceptances monitored via P1E, 198 acceptances in 07/08) Raised awareness of Education and Employment Options (recorded via questionnaires undertaken during consultation) Ensure that education providers provide courses required by community (recorded via consultation).	Awareness of the Housing Options Service is raised within the Borough and customers approach the Council earlier so prevention of homelessness is easier (demonstrated through number of customers accessing service). Residents involved in training other members of the community.	Events have been held every two months. The next is scheduled between 18 and 23 Jan 2010.

10) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
Trial mobile technology to provide a more efficient Enhanced Housing Options Service and join the service up with Housing Benefits and other key partners.	March 2011	Project Manager Liz Tompkin Lead Officer Elise Hopkins <u>Project Team</u> RBC Housing Options, RBC Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus, RBC One Stop Shop, RBC Borough Tenants Panel, Homelessness Review and Voluntary Sector project teams	<u>Capital for Project</u> £15,000 Trailblazer Grant for Mobile Technology Project Support will be met via RBC existing revenue budgets <u>Sustainability</u> We will look to fund this on an ongoing basis via efficiency savings derived from lean working.	Improve information and translation services on RBC Website – Oct 2009 Investment is made in technology allowing mobile working – November 2009. Benefits electronic claim form designed and introduced Jan 2010. Develop a combined Housing Enquiry / Application and Benefits claim form – April 2010 . Work with Job Centre Plus to look at ways that information can be shared to deliver leaner services – Jan 2011.	<u>Target</u> The number of un-necessary customer contacts to the Council about Housing is reduced from current baseline 20.60%(NI14). We aim to reduce this by 5%. Mobile technology would also be utilised by visiting officers and for community events. Increase uptake for benefit fast-track service. <u>Outcomes</u> Faster access to Benefits Better customer service More Efficient / Leaner Services.	Customers at risk of unemployment and possibly homelessness receive joined-up appropriate advice from housing and Benefits. We offer better value for money services but reducing duplication.	In light of the impact of the recession on Job Centre Plus the milestones have been revised to put more emphasis on joining up housing and benefits services. Target revised due to Benefit Claim form over running

11) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Employ a link worker, based within the Enhanced Housing Options Team at Redditch Borough Council to facilitate joined up working between Housing Options, Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Education providers in the local area.</p> <p>115% more people were claiming JSA in Jan 09 compared to Jan 08. 44% more people were accepted to receive JSA in Jan 09 compared to Jan 08.</p>	Feb 2010	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Elise Hopkins</p> <p>Project Lead</p> <p>Brenda Harbon</p>	<p>£60,000 (based on two year temporary post for grade 6 officer). Staff member would work to the Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> Depending on the success of this scheme future funding may be requested from LAA budgets to cover this post.</p>	<p>Housing Options Manager to spend 5 days in Job Centre Plus service – March 09 09</p> <p>Write job description and skills required in partnership with all agencies – March 09</p> <p>Advertise post - April 09</p> <p>Recruit to post - Jun 09</p> <p>Information sharing agreement and monitoring arrangements agreed – Jun 09</p> <p>Produce initial Tool Kit for Skills and Employment – Jun 09</p> <p>Enhanced Housing Options service is Launched – Jul 09</p> <p>Amend customer satisfaction questionnaire to reflect enhanced service – Jul 09</p> <p>Produce recommendations for service improvement and future funding proposals - Feb 10</p>	<p><u>Targets</u> Link worker will see 430 individuals over 20 months. Of these individuals 50% will seek further assistance from Job Centre Plus or Training Providers to find employment or training. 25% of individuals seen will find Employment or commence skills training. Tool Kit is produced to outline funding opportunities, skills training and employment opportunities in the Borough. Produce recommendations for service development and long term sustainability of project.</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> More people accessing education or employment Improved efficiency Higher level of customer satisfaction</p>	<p>Customers accessing Housing Options Advice Services and are able to consider their Housing Options in conjunction with income and future employment and education aspirations. Information is shared between organisations. Areas where savings could be made by pooling resources between agencies are identified.</p>	<p>New Link worker joined team in August 2009. Enhanced Housing Options Service commenced. RBC working in partnership with Rooftop Housing to develop a proposal for LAA Reward grant to fund countywide service.</p> <p>On target regarding the number of customers assisted via the service.</p>

12) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Pilot the use of Council Temporary Accommodation for use as Training Flats for Care Leavers wishing to experience living independently According to information recorded since 2006, 77% of young people accessing independent accommodation after leaving the care system lose their accommodation due to Eviction in the first 12 months following non payment of rent or antisocial behaviour. 52% of Young People surveyed in a snap shot survey said that they would like the opportunity to use a training flat.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Elise Hopkins Lead Officer Brenda Harbon</p>	<p>As a result of increased prevention demand for Dispersed Unit Temporary accommodation has reduced so the use of these units as training flats can be accommodated within our existing provision. The After Care Service will fund the foster placement so that there is somewhere the young person can return if they do not wish to live independently immediately.</p>	<p>Establish baseline for housing related debt in care leavers contained in earlier survey – April -09 Negotiate rates with After Care Service - April 09 Review Licence Agreement – May 2009 Produce Service Specification – May 2009 Design mechanism for referral into the service – June 2009 Design Support Service with Supporting People – June 2009 Produce information packs for properties – June 09 Produce service user questionnaire to map success – June 09 Negotiate PCT regarding expanding the service - Nov 09.</p>	<p><u>Targets</u> Reduce the numbers of ex-care leavers losing accommodation to 50% (by end of 2 years). Widen the scope of training flat to include individuals leaving Mental Health Service or supported lodgings. <u>Outcomes</u> Reduced cases of Intentional Homelessness and Homelessness Acceptances Reduced housing related debts with appropriate life skills to maintain tenancies Young people will gain confidence to live independently</p>	<p>The training flat provides those leaving care with the opportunity to experience independent living without losing their long term care placements. It identifies where further work is required before formal tenancies begin. Where placements fail young people are not excluded from the housing register due to debt. Confidence is built and life skills are widened.</p>	<p>Five clients have entered the training flat.</p>

13) What we will do?	When we will do it by?	Who will deliver this?	Resources Needed	Milestones	Target / Outcome	What would success look like?	Comments
<p>Introduce an additional Special Needs Tenancy Officer who will target individuals in under-occupied Council or Housing Association properties and prioritise moves to smaller accommodation to free up family accommodation for overcrowded families.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>	<p>Project Manager Elise Hopkins Lead Officer Carol Cockette</p>	<p>Cost of additional post funded via Redditch Borough Council revenue budgets</p> <p>£10,000 incentives from Redditch Borough Council Capital per year to fund costs associated with helping vulnerable under-occupied tenants to move and fund incentives.</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u></p> <p>If successful further capital funding will be requested to continue the scheme.</p>	<p>Complete survey of under-occupied accommodation - February 2009</p> <p>Approve changes to allocations policy to enhance ability to free up under-occupied accommodation - April 09</p> <p>Undertake campaign to encourage people to downsize - May 09</p> <p>Sign Draft Equipment and Adaptation protocol between PCT and RBC – April 2010.</p> <p>Role out protocol to sub-region May 2010.</p>	<p><u>Target</u> Free up at least 80% of under-occupied properties where individuals are registered and bidding through CBL system (from waiting list information there are currently 39 households under-occupied).</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> Improved customer satisfaction Better use of Housing Stock Better value for Money</p>	<p>Customers wishing to move from under occupied properties are given more opportunity, support and incentive to move.</p> <p>Better use made of existing housing stock.</p> <p>Money from the equipment and adaptations budget is saved to ensure a greater number of individuals have their needs met.</p>	<p>Meeting the targets set to date.</p>

Table 1

Number	Trailblazer Action
1	Use Pod technology to tackle Overcrowding and Disability
2	Information Packs for Offenders and Tackle Financial Exclusion
3	Specialist Rent Deposit Scheme for Socially Excluded
4	Shared House for Young Singles on Benefits
5	Develop a Joint Strategy to tackle the barriers to accessing employment / education and encourage economic development in the area.
6	Innovations Fund to encourage/assist individuals back into work or education
7	Volunteer Mentoring and Befriending Service, plus Homelessness Prevention schools program
8	Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Housing Services advisors offer joined up advice to individuals facing redundancy. This will be facilitated via a Multi agency team of specialist advisors or 'task force' who will attend employer premises to offer advice to staff.
9	Promote the Enhanced Housing Options Service via road shows to raise awareness and encourage individuals to approach for support and advice before reaching crisis point.
10	Trial mobile technology to provide a more efficient Enhanced Housing Options Service and join the service up with Housing Benefits and other key partners.
11	Employ a link worker, based within the Enhanced Housing Options Team at Redditch Borough Council to facilitate joined up working between Housing Options, Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Education providers in the local area.
12	Training Flat for Care Leavers or Looked After Children
13	Special Needs Officer and Move on Fund

Table 2

A tick indicates where a Trailblazer Action will contribute to delivering the LAA Priorities in Worcestershire

	Trailblazer Actions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LAA Priorities														
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities			√										√	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people		√		√				√					√	√
To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol				√										

Table 2 (continued)

A tick indicates where a Trailblazer Action will contribute to delivering the LAA Priorities in Worcestershire

	Trailblazer Actions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LAA Priorities														
To ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to participate in positive activities				√				√					√	
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire		√		√	√								√	√

Table 2 (continued)

A tick indicates where a Trailblazer Action will contribute to delivering the LAA Priorities in Worcestershire

	Trailblazer Actions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
LAA Priorities														
To promote economic growth and enable the economy in targeted sectors and locations						√								

Table 3
Redditch Borough Council – Performance Indicators

Key								
Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Quarter	April 2009-June 2009	July 2009 – Sept 2009	Oct 2009 – Dec 2009	Jan 2010 – March 2010	April 2010-June 2010	July 2010 – Sept 2010	Oct 2010– Dec 2010	Jan 2011 – March 2011

1) Use Pod technology to tackle Overcrowding and Disability																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target Performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Eva 6	Number of minor property adaptations, small extensions or other small works intended to alleviate overcrowding that have been arranged by the EHO or undertaken for EHO clients.	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1					Project on target
RBC1	Number of organisations to visit Show Pod (target 150 for duration of project)	14	14	15	19	19	19	19	19	46	46	47	2					The target has not been increased further as there is a limit to the organisations that will want to visit.

2) Information Packs for Offenders																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target Performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC2	Number of returns received from prisoner information packs.	0	0	0	10	15	15	15	15	0	0	0	3	10	10	10	10	We only began to achieve results in March 2010. Target may need revision in light of numbers of those going through magistrates court.
RBC3	Satisfaction level amongst ex-offenders about Housing Advice.	62% (Annual Target)								75% (Annual Target)								Snapshot survey established baseline Jan 2010. New snapshot to be undertaken Jan 2011.

3) Specialist Rent Deposit Scheme for Socially Excluded																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target Performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Eva3	Total number of households accessing new or different PRS property while clients of the EHO.	3	5	5	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	10	17					We have seen an increased in the number of homeless preventions via our rent deposit schemes.

Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target Performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC4	Number of households approved for assistance with PRS via Socially Excluded Rent deposit scheme (SERDS). Target is 35 over 2 year project.	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	6	4					This is on track based on the target of 35 overall.
RBC4.1 <i>* only includes households helped via SERDS</i>	Number who sustain accommodation for 6 months.	0	0	3	4	3	4	3	4	0	0	4	4					This appears to be on target.
RBC4.2 <i>* only includes households helped via SERDS</i>	Number of those helped who continue to engage with probation / drug / alcohol rehabilitation for 6 months.	0	0	3	4	3	4	3	4	0	0	4	4					This appears to be on target.
RBC4.3 <i>* only includes households helped via SERDS</i>	Number of those taking part in community events / activities.	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0					This is an area that requires more proactive attention.

4) Shared House for Young Singles on Benefits																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target Performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC5	Number of single rooms developed for young people aged 16 to 25 years old.	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	Project completed ahead of schedule.

6) Innovations Fund to encourage/assist individuals back into work or education																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC6	Number of individuals assisted with innovation fund.	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	3	2	3					We have had a couple of requests that have cost over the £200 mark which has reduced the money available to others.
RBC6.1 (just relates to households assisted via innovations fund)	Number who successfully accessed education or employment	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	3	2					This appears to be on target.

7) Volunteer Mentoring and Befriending Service, plus Homelessness Prevention schools program																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Difference % Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC7	Number of peer educators/befrienders completed course.	0	0	0	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	13					We have increased target in quarter five to ensure that we catch up as we underachieved by two in quarter 4.
RBC8	Number of Mentors completed course	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					We will not see results until quarter 5.
RBC8.1	No of activities that Mentors became involved in within the community	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	10									We will not see results until quarters 6 to 8.

8) Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Housing Services advisors offer joined up advice to individuals facing redundancy. This will be facilitated via a Multi agency team of specialist advisors or 'task force' who will attend employer premises to offer advice to staff.																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC8	Number of individuals assisted via multi-agency task force.	150	150	150	30					175	175	0	83					The number of large scale redundancies in the local area has slowed.
Eva1	Number of cases prevented/resolved. P1E (Published Indicator)	50	50	50	80	80	80	80	80	51	45	101	106					We have improved Homelessness Prevention considerably since last year
Eva2	Number of applicant households found eligible for assistance. P1E (Published Indicator)	15	10	10	10	10	8	8	8	4	3	2	6					We have improved Homelessness Prevention considerably since last year

Indicator Reference * RBC indicators are specific to Redditch	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC9	Number of individuals seen by Income Maximisation Service	New Initiative	New Initiative	20	30					New Initiative	New Initiative	33	69					
RBC10	£ saved by Income Maximisation Service (calculated over 12 months)	New Initiative	New Initiative	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		New Initiative	New Initiative	40,475	27,340					Target may need revising but new initiative so difficult to set.

9) Promote the Enhanced Housing Options Service via road shows to raise awareness and encourage individuals to approach for support and advice before reaching crisis point.																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC11	Number of community events / road shows organised.	1	2	1	1					1	2	2	1					On target.

10) Trial mobile technology to provide a more efficient Enhanced Housing Options Service and join the service up with Housing Benefits and other key partners.						
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance		Actual Performance		Comment
		2010	2011	2010	2011	
NI14	The number of unnecessary customer contacts to the Council (as a snapshot survey)	19.57	10.00	10.90		This is a considerable difference between the snapshot taken in 2009. It is largely due to introducing a fast track benefits service and making some modifications / improvements to the CBL website and phone system.

11) Employ a link worker, based within the Enhanced Housing Options Team at Redditch Borough Council to facilitate joined up working between Housing Options, Housing Benefits, Job Centre Plus and Education providers in the local area.																		
Indicator Reference * RBC indicators are specific to Redditch	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC12	Number of clients engaged with IAG / employability service	0	0	65	65	65	65	65	65	0	5	65	39					We haven't seen as many clients through this service as previously due to staff sickness.
RBC12.1	Number of RBC12 clients helped to move into employment.	0	0	6	6					0	0	6	4					
RBC12.2	Number of RBC12 clients helped to move into training or education	0	0	0	59					0	0	60	35					

Eva17	Improved customer service (baseline 86%)									100	100	100	96					
		90	90	90														

12) Training Flat for Care Leavers or Looked After Children																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
RBC13	Number of individuals provided with training flat.	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	2					
13) Special Needs Officer and Move on Fund																		
Indicator Reference <i>* RBC indicators are specific to Redditch</i>	Description of Indicator	Target performance each Quarter								Actual Performance per Quarter								Difference % Comment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Eva 5	Number of households downsizing.	4	4	4	7					7	7	7	9					Target was revised last quarter as over achieving.
		Target performance per annum								Actual per annum								
RBC14	Savings by moving clients to properties already adapted in £ per year of project	75,000				75,000				95,623								Target should be revised up based on this years performance.



Executive Committee

15th November 2011

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier and Phil Mould

Officers:

K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, A Heighway, S Horrobin, C John, J Pickering, G Revans and J Willis

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

103. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Jinny Pearce.

104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

105. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the Committee that the following item of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Housing Revenue Account – Outcome of Review

The Chair also advised that she had accepted the following matters as Urgent Business:

- Solar Panels – Government Consultation Response

.....
Chair

(Not on the Forward Plan and not meeting the publication deadline)

- Referrals from meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Shared Services Board and Constitutional Review Working Party

(Not meeting the publication deadline)

106. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 4th October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

107. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2014/15

The Committee received an oral report setting out a broad overview of the financial environment within which the Council's budget for 2012/13 was to be developed.

A number of the more significant national challenges were identified, including the significant erosion of the earlier proposals to localise business rates and the proposal for localisation of Council Tax benefit. It was anticipated that measures contained within the Localism Bill could have some financial impact on the authority and there was concern that the introduction of Universal Credit might have an adverse effect on service delivery during the transitional period.

Locally, shared services, transformation and efficiencies were providing substantial savings and it was expected that continuation of these measures would help to offset the further reduction in grant funding from central Government.

A number of assumptions were set out, including the projected inflation figures going forward and the expected increase in costs for utilities and, as a result, an anticipated shortfall of around £500,000 was reported. It was recommended that the balances currently held in reserve be retained as far as was possible to provide a financial cushion for the authority.

108. GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE - REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL APPROACH

The Committee considered a report setting out the Council's proposed approach to gritting and snow clearance during bad weather events.

Officers made it clear that the County Council was the authority with responsibility to carry out the majority of gritting and snow clearance within the Borough and the matters under consideration focussed upon measures to be undertaken on Council land and only in other areas of the Borough where the necessary resources were available.

The Leader of the Council expressed her concern that some of the original Overview and Scrutiny recommendations had not been addressed. Following the passing of correspondence received by the Leader from the County Council on to the relevant Redditch Borough Council Task and Finish Group there had been no further comment received by the Leader and an assumption made that matters were in hand. This misunderstanding aside, the Leader provided further feedback on the discussions that she and Officers had had with Members and Officers of the County. It was clear that the County would not entertain delegation of responsibility during adverse weather to the Borough Council. It was also noted that the County was investigating the use of snow-plough attachments which would allow for the removal of a greater depth of snow and ice. Significantly, there had been an acknowledgement that they had not performed as well as they would have hoped in clearing and gritting roads in Redditch last winter.

Members commented that there was some understanding locally that the Borough Council had performed well during the adverse weather and that shortcomings had generally been the result of County Council failings. There had clearly been a lack of recognition at the outset at the scale of the problems facing Redditch, with resources possibly being allocated on the basis of anticipated problems from previous episodes of severe weather.

The measures being considered for adoption locally by the Council were considered in some detail. Members were encouraged to let Officers know which roads they considered to be priority routes for gritting should the Council have the resources available in future winters to carry out gritting over and above that provided by the County Council. A list of priority sites was still being worked up by Officers and this additional information would assist in the process. Discussion ensued around the gritting of the Council's sheltered housing schemes, with Officers highlighting the Council's priority as being to enable access to the properties by Home Support workers.

The provision of up to date information to local residents by the Council on where gritting had taken place and the state of the roads and pavements was suggested as a measure that could be undertaken using the Council's website.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the following policy be adopted with regard to gritting and snow clearance:**

Redditch Borough Council will strive to keep the following areas clear of snow and ice and safe to use:

- a) **crematorium and cemeteries to allow funerals to continue;**
- b) **Redditch Borough Council staff car parks to ensure that there are suitable parking areas for Council staff who are getting into work to provide essential services;**
- c) **key Council sites like the Town Hall and district centres to assist local shops and businesses and enable residents to access services;**
- d) **gritting/snow clearance at other areas including Council sheltered accommodation will only be carried out subject to available resources; gritting/snow clearance at Council owned sheltered accommodation will be to allow the home Support Service Access to residents;**

and RESOLVED that

- 2) **the Council will not provide grit bins on any highway land but may provide grit bins on its own land to enable gritting to take place – e.g. at leisure sites;**
- 3) **further publicity is undertaken to ensure that residents are aware of how the Council will deal with gritting/snow clearance and what to do when bad weather affects their waste collection service;**
- 4) **Officers purchase appropriate snow clearance and gritting equipment from within existing budgets; and**
- 5) **relevant Officers from Redditch Borough Council arrange a meeting with relevant Officers from Worcestershire County Council in advance of winter**

2011/12 to discuss additional issues raised in the Gritting Short, Sharp Review Group's final report and arrangements for gritting and snow clearance in Redditch for the winter.

109. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - PROPOSED MERGER

A report was considered which set out proposals for the creation of a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. Officers explained the rationale for bringing this measure forward at this stage. The Home Office grant each year to fund community safety activity had been reduced in recent years and was facing further reductions in 2012/13. Local Responsible Authorities had capacity issues and were finding it increasingly difficult to bring forward suitable representatives for the meetings of the relevant Partnerships across the County. Furthermore, it was unclear as to how the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners would impact on the activities of the Partnerships.

The other Responsible Authorities within Worcestershire had had the opportunity to consider and comment upon a move to either a single county-based Partnership or to two Partnerships, in the north and south of the County. There had been agreement that the status quo was unsustainable and that a move to two Partnerships be supported.

It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed the proposed merger of the Partnerships in the north of the County and had recommended that the status quo be maintained in order that a local Redditch focus be retained and in order that scrutiny might more adequately be carried out. In order to allay some concerns it was noted that the delivery arm for community safety would be unaffected and the tasking group structure would remain the same. In addition, the relevant Portfolio Holder undertook to discuss with relevant representatives from the south of the County any issues that had arisen with the scrutiny of the Joint Partnership operating across those three Districts.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Redditch Borough Council approve the merger of Redditch Community Safety Partnership with Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership and Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership resulting in the creation of a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership; and**

- 2) **subject to endorsement by each of the Responsible Authorities of the merger, authority be delegated to Officers to take the necessary steps to implement the merger, including the establishment of governance arrangements and entering into any agreements, also subject to endorsement by the relevant Community Safety Partnerships;**

and RESOLVED that

- 3) **Members note the continuation of locality-based operational and responsive partnership working through the operational Tasking Group and its theme groups; and**
- 4) **Members note the intention to review the County-wide partnership arrangements by 2014.**

110. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Committee considered the adoption of a Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure.

The Committee was happy to endorse the Policy, concluding that it was extremely comprehensive. Clarification was sought on the question of Criminal Record Bureau checks for elected Members. Officers confirmed that specific guidance was available for Members but that, generally, Borough Councillors would not fulfil the criteria for requiring such a check to be carried out.

RECOMMENDED that

the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

111. COMMISSIONING OF CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES

Members were informed that the contracts for the management of the Children's Centres within the Borough, which at the present time was carried out by the Borough Council and a partner organisation, Redditch YMCA, were due to expire at the end of March 2012. It was proposed that the two organisations submit tenders to continue to deliver Children's Centres Services from that date.

The Committee noted that there were definite indications that the provision of support through the Children's Centres was having a positive impact on the skills and abilities of very young children as they entered full-time education. There was less evidence available at present as to how this carried through to achievement at GCSE level and above. It was also noted that socialisation of young children and parents was an important role for the Children's Centres alongside an improvement in educational attainment.

Officers undertook to provide members of the Committee with further information on the impacts and outcomes from the activities carried out by the Children's Centres following the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **option 2 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report be approved in relation to the submission of a tender to deliver Children's Centre services in Redditch subject to the Council being the 'lead' organisation if this is required in respect of a partnership bid; and**
- 2) **subject to any tender being successful, a Contract be entered into with Worcestershire County Council.**

112. SOLAR PANELS - GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The Committee was provided with an update on an ongoing Government consultation on fast-tracking changes to the current solar photo voltaic (PV) feed-in tariff scheme. The main impact of such a change was that the payback time for the Council's schemes would be doubled.

The Committee was generally disappointed that the feed-in tariff scheme was potentially to be changed to the detriment of the Council. The potential effects on the solar energy industry were also noted, although there was some recognition that such a change was not unexpected. It was also noted that, due to the prompt action of Officers in pushing through such schemes at an early stage, the Council would be less adversely affected than a considerable number of other authorities. Members were keen that the Council retain its commitment to the installation of solar panels.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **authority be delegated to the Climate Change Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing, to respond to the consultation based on the Committee's comments; and,**

taking into account the revised financial projections as detailed in Appendices 1- 3 to the report,

- 2) the Council proceed in accordance with existing approvals for the installation of solar panels at the three main sites identified (Town Hall, Palace Theatre and Crematorium);
- 3) the Council proceed in accordance with the existing approvals for social housing projects, although acknowledging that further delay may result in fewer sites being completed by 31st March 2012; and
- 4) Officers be instructed to continue to prioritise installation of solar panels at the four main sheltered schemes.

(The report had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business –not on the Forward Plan and not having met the publication deadline – and was considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council’s constitutional rules and the powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree to matters of urgency being discussed by reason of special circumstances.

In this case the exceptional circumstances were the need to agree a response to the consultation because of the proposed reference date for changes of 12th December 2011 and the action to be taken by the Council if the proposals were to be implemented.)

113. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27th September and 18th October and considered the recommendations contained therein.

27th September 2011

External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review – Update Report

RESOLVED that

- 1) based on the costs involved, no further action be taken regarding repainting the pebble dashed facades of properties located on Ombersley Close and Rushock Close;

- 2) no further consultation work be undertaken in respect of the repainting of pebble dashed facades;

18th October 2011

Petition – War Memorial

RESOLVED that

- 3) that planters be installed around the war memorial to deter people from sitting on the war memorial;
- 4) a campaign of education about the war memorial be launched to increase awareness of the purpose of the war memorial;
- 5) Officers be asked to investigate the possibility of introducing improved signage for the war memorial;
- 6) Officers be asked to investigate the possibility of introducing seating in the area;
- 7) Officers be asked to investigate the possibility of installing an extra litter bin in the area; and

Meeting of the Chair with the Leader of the Council – Feedback

RECOMMENDED that

- 8) the quarterly meetings between the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leader of the Council be removed as a requirement from the Council's Constitution.

114. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee considered endorsement of a single Enforcement Policy to be used across the County in relation to all enforcement activities. The Policy had been recommended for adoption at the preceding meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council adopt the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy.

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

The Committee considered a number of urgent referrals from the Shared Services Board and the Constitutional Review Working Party.

Shared Services Board – 10th November 2011

The current management arrangements of the Council were considered and reviewed.

(In view of the fact that information would be revealed relating to individual employees and their personal / financial details, together with employee relations matters, disclosure of which is not considered to be in the public's best interest, this matter was considered following the exclusion of the public and the press.)

Constitutional Review Working Party – 10th November 2011

Members considered recommendations from the Constitutional Review Working Party, including a number relating to the Council's current policies for handling statutory Housing and statutory Employee Grievance appeals. It was noted that in both cases there was currently a non-statutory step involving a hearing before a panel of elected Members.

The Housing Appeal policy was currently at risk of challenge by a Judicial Review to seek a declaration from the High Court that the policy was invalid because the non-statutory hearing was included. There was some concern amongst Members that what had been initiated as an assistance to appellants was now the subject of such a challenge. Officers confirmed that the individual concerned had adopted a contrary view and the Council would be advised to defend its position and remove the cause of offence in the light of recent case law.

(a) Meeting Cycles – Executive Committee / O&S**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) meetings of the Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee be scheduled on a 4-weekly cycle, rather than the current 3-weekly cycle in future calendars of meetings;**

(b) Housing Appeals
RESOLVED that

- 2) for the reasons detailed within the report, the amended **Housing Appeals Procedure** attached at **Appendix 1** to the attached report be approved and adopted with immediate effect; but
- 3) **Officers seek further legal advice as to possible alternative means for a Member-level involvement in appeals against Officer decisions (with regard to Homelessness and Housing Allocation cases); and**
- 4) **Employment Appeal Processes be similarly reviewed in due course, subject to any necessary further consultation, negotiation and report.**

(These urgent referrals had been accepted as matters of Urgent Business –not having met the publication deadline – and were considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council’s constitutional rules and the powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree to matters of urgency being discussed by reason of special circumstances.

In this case the exceptional circumstances were that these specific referrals required attention sooner than the next available meeting of the Committee, to which the full minutes would be reported. “Recommended” items required consideration at the full Council meeting on 5th December 2011.)

116. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the latest Advisory Panels update report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

117. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee’s Action Monitoring report was considered. It was noted that there was no reference within the report to any update on the play area at Hewell Road following the agreement to demolish the swimming pool. Officers agreed to include this matter on future reports until such a time as the matter had been resolved.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

118. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”

- **Referral from the Shared Services Board – Management Arrangements (Minute 115); and**
- **Sandycroft – Future of the Site (Minute 119)**

119. SANDYCROFT - FUTURE OF SITE

The Committee discussed the future of the site known as Sandycroft and took decisions regarding the freehold interest and leasing of the site.

(In view of the fact that information would be revealed relating to individual third party organisations, their financial affairs and terms under negotiation, disclosure of which is not considered to be in the public’s best interest, this matter was considered following the exclusion of the public and the press.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.05 pm

.....
Chair

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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