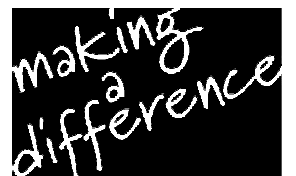


# Council

Mon 25 Mar  
2013  
7.00 pm

Council Chamber  
Town Hall  
Redditch



[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

# Access to Information - Your Rights

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Your main rights are set out below:-

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- Automatic right to inspect minutes of the Council and its Committees (or summaries of business undertaken in private) for up to six years following a meeting.
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- Access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.
- Access to a public register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc.
- A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public must be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council and its Committees etc.
- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:  
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**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  
Ivor Westmore  
Democratic Services**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH  
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Extn. 3269) Fax: (01527) 65216  
e.mail: [ivor.westmore@bromgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:ivor.westmore@bromgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

# Welcome to today's meeting.

## Guidance for the Public

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### ***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***

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### ***Special Arrangements***

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Infra-red devices for the hearing impaired are available on request at the meeting. Other facilities may require prior arrangement.

### ***Further Information***

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**If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.**

**If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.**

**Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.**

**Do Not use lifts.**

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

**The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.**





# Council

25th March 2013

7.00 pm

Council Chamber

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs: Alan Mason (Mayor) Carole Gandy  
Wanda King Adam Griffin  
(Deputy Mayor) Bill Hartnett  
Joe Baker Pattie Hill  
Roger Bennett Roger Hill  
Rebecca Blake Gay Hopkins  
Michael Braley Phil Mould  
Andrew Brazier Brenda Quinney  
Juliet Brunner Mark Shurmer  
David Bush Yvonne Smith  
Michael Chalk Luke Stephens  
Simon Chalk Debbie Taylor  
Greg Chance Derek Taylor  
Brandon Clayton Pat Witherspoon  
John Fisher  
Andrew Fry

### 10. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

(Pages 1 - 24)

To receive the Annual Report for 2012-13 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This has been sent to Councillors separately to the agenda.

**All Wards;**







# Overview & Scrutiny

# Annual Report

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making a difference*

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2012/13





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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 ultimately rewarding period. The Committee has scrutinised a number of crucial Council service areas, and has continued to play an important role in the Council's budget setting process. It has also embarked on a number of Task Group reviews, and taken a fresh approach to pre-scrutinising new Council policies. Many of our recommendations have subsequently been endorsed by the Executive Committee which highlights the valuable contribution that scrutiny continues to make to the Council's performance.

The Committee has responded to the suggestion within the previous year's annual report that the Portfolio Holder's Annual Report process was overly time consuming by suspending it altogether. Instead, it is expected that the performance of Portfolio Holders and their responsible service areas will come under even closer scrutiny through the Committee's new focused approach on services that are undergoing transformation.

Looking ahead, I am confident that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can continue to play an integral role in ensuring that Council services are fit for purpose and enhance the wellbeing of its residents.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all my fellow Committee Members for their hard work, support, and dedication that they have shown during the previous few months. I am also very appreciative of the hard work of Officers to support the work of the Committee, especially during what is a difficult and uncertain period, and would like to thank our lead support officers, Jess Bayley and Michael Craggs, for the excellent work they have produced on a consistent basis throughout the year.



**Councillor Juliet Brunner  
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 also 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 Annual Report provides an opportunity for Members to consider future work programmes and to determine how the Overview and Scrutiny process could be further strengthened in future years.

It also reviews how successfully areas of weakness in the scrutiny process identified the previous year have been addressed, including more appropriate consideration of petitions and more effective pre-scrutiny of reports prior to consideration by the Executive Committee, and looks at how scrutiny of the budget has been made more inclusive. The report also monitors the recommendations that have been made by the Committee during the course of the year.

This report has been produced by 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;
- for scrutiny to be carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
- to drive improvement in public services.

**COMMISSIONING BODY ROLE**

**Membership 2012/13**

**Councillor Brunner (Chair)**

**Councillor S Chalk (Vice-Chair)**

**Councillors Brazier, Bush, Fisher, Fry, Hill, Hopkins, and Witherspoon**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Redditch Borough Council is designed to act as a commissioning body. The Committee has the power to authorise policy reviews and to scrutinise issues of local interest in depth.

This year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has commissioned a number of strategic reviews that have been conducted by Task Groups.

There are nine members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee meets approximately every four weeks, convening a week before the meeting of the Executive Committee. This provides Members with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the work of the Executive and to ensure that decision-making processes remain transparent and accountable.



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2012/13. Featured are (back row from left to right) Councillors S. Chalk (Vice Chair), Hopkins, Bush, Brazier and Fisher and (front row left to right) Councillors Witherspoon, Brunner (Chair) and P Hill.

### **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

During 2012/13, the Committee was very selective regarding the topics that it chose for pre-decision scrutiny, and looked at far fewer items compared to previous years.

Members considered a report on the proposed co-location of the One Stop Shop at Woodrow Library for pre-decision scrutiny, and made three recommendations to the Executive Committee, all of which were endorsed. It also considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan, and made two recommendations. However, both of these recommendations were eventually rejected.

The Committee trialed a fresh approach this year to pre-scrutiny through undertaking short, sharp reviews on proposed new Council policies on staff sickness absence, and for offering concessionary rents to third sector organisations on Council owned commercial properties. The outcome of these reviews is detailed later in the report.

### **BUDGET SCRUTINY**

Scrutinising the Council's financial position is another important aspect of the Committee's work. During 2012/13, the Committee once again convened a special meeting that focused on the Council's budget setting process. However, unlike previous years, the Council was not in a position to submit any budget bids due to financial constraints.

The Committee did however continue to receive quarterly budget monitoring reports from each of the Council's six directorates for its consideration, and reviewed the position of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/14 to 2015/16. The Council's proposed fees and charges for 2013/14 were scrutinised in detail. Information about the Council's initial financial estimates from 2013/14 to 2015/16 was also considered following confirmation of the Council's final settlement grant from Government.

It is fully expected that budget scrutiny will remain a very important aspect of the Committee's work programme, especially considering the financial pressures that face the Council during the coming years.



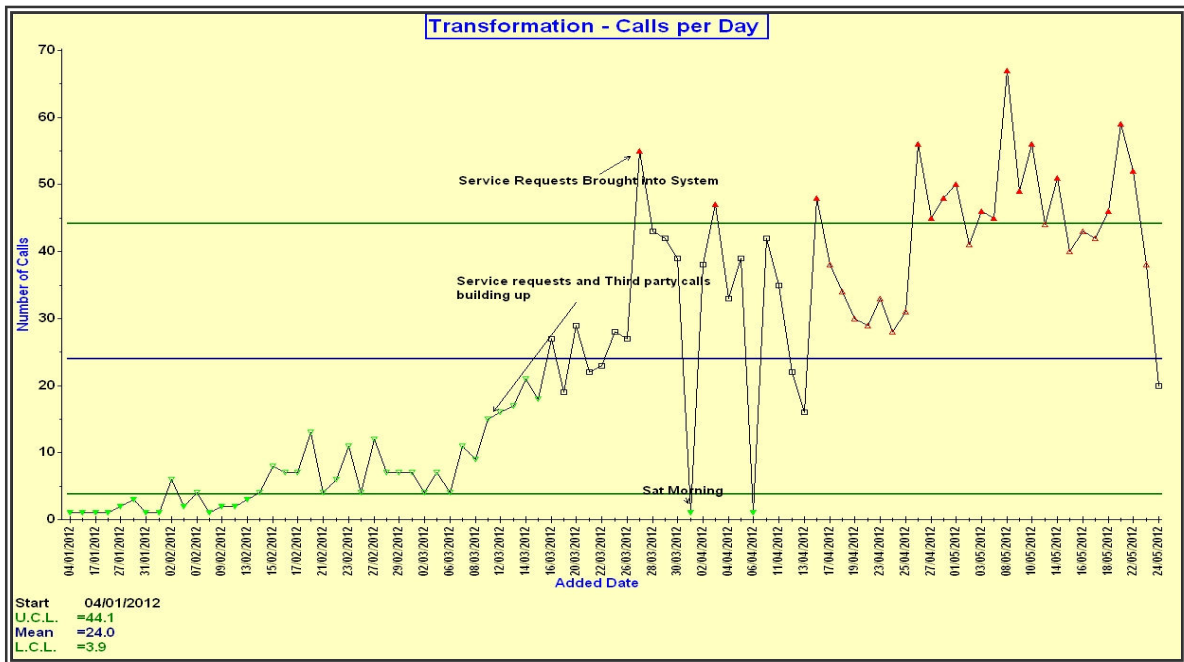
**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY**

Overview and Scrutiny nationally has a key role to play in monitoring service performance at a local level. In previous years this has generally been achieved through scrutiny of quarterly performance reports, which focus on the performance of particular services and meeting specific targets.

In 2012/13 the Council reviewed corporate performance monitoring arrangements and the outcomes of this review were reported for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration in November 2012.

Members were advised that in future the focus of performance monitoring work would be on the extent to which services were meeting strategic purposes, or customers' needs identified through consultation with local residents. Performance reporting would focus on measures relating to the purpose of the work, rather than on meeting performance targets.

The new performance management process is not due to be implemented until later in the spring in 2013. Information gathered through performance monitoring will be published on the Council's intranet and it is likely that this information will provide crucial evidence for Members' consideration during future scrutiny reviews.



When the Committee received a presentation on the future of performance reporting at the Council Members considered examples of graphs that will be used to report on service performance in future years.



## **DEVELOPMENTS IN SCRUTINY 2012/13**

In 2012/13 there have been a couple of developments in Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council.

### **Referral from Council**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has started to receive referrals direct from Council this year.

In January 2013 the Council received a Motion on Notice regarding payment of the living wage to members of staff employed by Redditch Borough Council. Members agreed during the course of their deliberations to recognise the case for all employees to be paid the living wage of £7.45 per hour as a minimum. It was also agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be asked to investigate proposals with a view to reporting back to the Executive Committee at a later date on the full implications for staffing and financial costs.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this request in detail in February 2013. Members reached the conclusion that additional information was required to enable the Committee to determine whether to launch a detailed review of the subject. A report, which will provide further information on this subject, is due to be received by the Committee in April 2013.

### **Portfolio Holder Annual Reports**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided this year to end the delivery of Portfolio Holder Annual Reports at meetings of the Committee. The process had originally been introduced in 2007/08 to provide the Committee with an opportunity to hold the Portfolio Holders to account. During subsequent years the Portfolio Holders had consistently presented reports and answered questions that had been proposed in advance.

Increasingly, however, members of the Committee had become concerned about the value added by the Portfolio Holder Annual Report process. The reports took significant time to prepare, particularly the written report stage of the process, and diverted the work of senior officers from managing day-to-day services. In addition, only six recommendations had been made since 2007 following consideration of an annual report.

Prior to a decision being made on this subject three Portfolio Holders attended meetings of the Committee to deliver their reports: the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport, Councillor Greg Chance; the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Phil Mould; and the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment and Health, Councillor Debbie Taylor. The Committee would like to thank these Portfolio Holders and the Officers who accompanied them for presenting these reports.

## **Scrutiny of Service Transformation**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were keen to ensure that the time that had been taken by the Portfolio Holder Annual Report process should be redirected to constructive scrutiny activities. In particular the Committee is aiming to focus increasingly on scrutinising the Council's service transformation programme; whereby services are being redesigned in order to reduce 'waste' costs in service delivery whilst maintaining or even improving the service provided to the customer.

The Committee has already received some information about service transformation. In particular, when considering updates monitoring the implementation of scrutiny recommendations Members have considered information about the impact of transformation on the following services:

- Environmental Services.
- Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service.
- The Hub (Customer Services).

To enable Members to further scrutinise and hold the transformation process to account constructively the Committee received a briefing on the potential role of scrutiny in the service transformation process at a meeting in March 2013.

During the course of this briefing Members learned about the systems thinking approach to service transformation. The Committee was particularly impressed by the fact that this process encouraged staff to focus on the needs of the customer, though Members were also interested in the potential for financial savings to be made.

Following this briefing the Committee concluded that Members should have an opportunity to learn more about service transformation. To address this objective a series of transformation orientation sessions, which provide participants with an opportunity to listen directly to customers' demands and to check whether current service delivery models are meeting customers' needs, have been requested. The Committee is committed to focusing on scrutinising specific examples of service transformation in 2013/14.

## **MONITORING RESPONSES – COMMITTEE RECOMENDATIONS**

### **Joint Worcestershire Hub Review (May 2012)**

**(The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was monitoring the work of a joint Scrutiny Task Group. Redditch Borough Council's representatives on the former Task Group had been in succession former Councillor R King, former Councillor Jinny Pearce, Councillor Gay Hopkins and Councillor R Hill).**

A joint review of the Worcestershire Hub, led by Worcestershire County Council, was completed in November 2010. The Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to monitor the implementation of the 22 recommendations that had been made by the review group, some of which had implications for district Councils.

The Committee was delighted to learn that a number of improvements had been made to the Hub service in Redditch in recent months, largely as a consequence of service transformation. As part of the process the Council had adopted a Systems Thinking approach, which focused on how the needs of the customer could be met. Increasingly staff were being encouraged to provide a direct face-to-face contact for customers rather than the self-service approach that had been promoted in the Joint Worcestershire Hub report.

### **Recycling Review (November 2012)**

**(The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was monitoring the work of the former Increasing Rates of Recycling Scrutiny Group. The Membership of this group had been Councillor Hopkins (Chair) Councillors Fry, R Hill and Mould and former Councillor Anderson).**

A review of recycling services was completed in March 2012. Due to the significance of the group's work to local recycling rates it was agreed that an update report on this subject should be received before the end of the year.

The Committee was advised that a lot of action was being, or was due to be taken to implement the Recycling Task Group's recommendations. Members were informed that promoting recycling was a key feature of the Environmental Services' three year publicity campaign. In addition, progress had also been made in extending recycling services to more residents in the Borough, as part of the 100 per cent project.

The Council's Environmental team were in the process of participating in service transformation. As part of the process action that could be taken to effectively promote green bin collections to the public was being considered. Service operatives were also involved in the transformation process to ensure that any problems in service delivery could be quickly identified and addressed.

Unfortunately, Members were advised that there had only been a small increase in recycling rates since the scrutiny review had been completed. However, Officers were anticipating that recycling rates would improve in the following 12 month period.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested that this review be submitted for consideration in the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Good Scrutiny Awards process 2013. The CfPS will announce a short list of successful entries in spring 2013.



Members of the Increasing Rates of Recycling Group. Featured are (from left to right) former Councillor Anderson and Councillors Fry, Hopkins (Chair), R Hill and Mould.

**External Refurbishment of Housing Stock (July 2012)**  
**(The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was monitoring the work of the former External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp review. The Membership of this review had been former Councillors Vickery (Chair) and Norton.**

The External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review, focusing on improvements that could be made to the housing stock in parts of Woodrow, was completed in December 2010. The group had made a number of recommendations about improvements that could be made to the aesthetic appearance of houses in the area and to the local environment.

The Committee received an update on action taken to implement the group's recommendations in July 2012. Members were advised that Ombersley Close and Rushock Close, which had been visited as part of the scrutiny review, had been selected for inclusion in the External Wall and Insulation Project for Woodrow, a project that had previously been delivered successfully in Winyates.



Properties in Woodrow prior to completion of external wall insulation works.



Properties in Woodrow following completion of wall insulation works.

A total of 261 properties were eligible for inclusion in the project including 112 Council properties and 140 private properties. Works included surface insulation, loft insulation and replacing boilers. Members were advised that the works would cost £1.7 million which would be paid for using carbon funding received from the energy company E.ON.

The Committee also received an update on the impact of the transformation pilot process for repairs and maintenance services at the Council. A number of problems had been identified prior to transformation including: delays to works caused by reporting processes; delays caused by the need for operatives to return to Council stores for equipment; and a high rate of failure demand, or services which did not meet customers' expectations.

The Committee was advised that a number of actions had been taken during the trial transformation of the service to address these concerns. Four members of staff had been appointed to work on the trial. These four employees had been provided with vehicles that were fully stocked with all the equipment that might be required to make effective repairs at a property. The four operatives had responded to 215 demands. Only three of these cases had resulted in a dissatisfactory outcome for the customer. The timescales for completing repair and maintenance works had also improved, having been reduced from a maximum of 75 days to a maximum of 6.52 days.



**CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY**

**Membership: Councillors Brazier (Chair), Baker, Clayton, P Hill and R Hill.**

The Police and Justice Act 2006 required every local authority in England and Wales from April 2009 to have a designated Committee with the responsibility for scrutinising the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP). The legislation was designed to provide local councillors with a More enhanced role in relation to the work of CDRPs, the Statutory bodies for crime and disorder matters, anti-social behaviour and community safety.



Councillor Brazier, Chair,  
Crime and Disorder  
Scrutiny Panel

The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel was subsequently established in 2010 as a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to focus on the performance of the local CDRP, the Community Safety Partnership. It currently meets on a quarterly basis.

During 2012, the Redditch Community Safety Partnership merged with the other CRDPs in North Worcestershire to form the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. In keeping with its main scrutiny function, the Panel continued to focus solely on performance information for Redditch, and how the reconfiguration of CRDPs in North Worcestershire would affect the Borough. This was achieved through their regular consideration of Community Safety Performance Framework figures throughout the year.

The Panel also considered how the election of a new Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, and the establishment of Police and Crime Panels to monitor the Commissioner’s performance, would impact on Redditch.





## **HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

In May 2012 Councillor Witherspoon was appointed as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). District 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.

Since her appointment Councillor Witherspoon has delivered regular updates to the Committee about the work of HOSC. In particular Members have been informed about the following issues:

- The Joint Services Review (JSR) into the configuration of acute hospital services in the county. HOSC has been involved throughout the review, including the consultation process, the outcomes of which may have significant implications for the future of the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch.
- The application for Foundation Trust Status for Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust.
- The Strategic Modernisation Programme of the Adult Acute and Community Mental Health Services.
- Progress updates on changes to the West Midlands Ambulance service.



Councillor Witherspoon,  
Redditch Borough Council's  
representative on the  
Worcestershire Health  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee



**PROMOTING SPORTING PARTICIPATION TASK GROUP**

**Membership (July 2011 – May 2012): Councillor Luke Stephens (Chair) and Councillors Bush, Griffin, R King and Shurmer  
Completed May 2012**

The Promoting Sporting Participation Task Review was completed in May 2012. It was launched the previous year in an attempt to create greater awareness of all opportunities to play sport in Redditch ahead of the expected spike in public interest created by the Olympic Games in London.

The group met with local providers of sport to help gain a clear understanding of how effectively sport was being promoted and marketed in the Borough, and whether more could be done to raise public awareness of existing opportunities and to ultimately increase overall levels of sporting participation, including for disabled sport. They also looked at whether more volunteering opportunities could be provided locally.

The review was completed in May 2012. All of the group's five recommendations were endorsed by the Executive Committee.

A full update on the action that has been taken to implement the group's recommendations is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2013.



Sport Relief, Redditch

**ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE TASK GROUP**

**Membership (May – August 2012): Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair) and Councillors M Chalk, Mason, Quinney and Smith Completed August 2012**

The review of access for people with disabilities to Redditch town centre was launched in 2011/12. The group focused on access for people with all types of disabilities using public transport, taxis or travelling by car.

A variety of expert witnesses were consulted during the review including: representatives of bus companies; representatives of local taxi firms; and Council Officers.

Local residents were also consulted by the group. A number of residents completed a questionnaire, though residents were also consulted at meetings of the Disability Action Redditch Group and the Redditch Older People's Forum.

The review was completed in August 2012. The majority of the group's proposals were endorsed by the Executive Committee.

An update on the action that has been taken to implement the group's recommendations is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2013.



Featured during a field trip to Shopmobility are (from left to right) Councillor Fry (Chair), Mr M Fowler, and Councillors Quinney and Mason.

### **CONCESSIONARY RENTS SHORT, SHARP REVIEW**

**Membership: Councillors Brunner and Brazier**  
**Completed: September 2012 (reported December 2012).**

The Concessionary Rents Pre-Scrutiny Short, Sharp review was launched in July 2012 to pre-scrutinise the proposed introduction of a Council policy for offering concessionary rents to third sector organisations on Council owned commercial properties. At the launch of the review it was anticipated that the Executive Committee would consider the draft policy in September 2012.

The group interviewed the relevant lead Council Officers to learn why the proposed changes were being introduced and how these would benefit the Council and third sector organisations. They also consulted with a representative of the voluntary sector, and reviewed how similar policies had fared at other local authorities. However, in line with constitutional requirements, the group was not permitted to consider the content of the proposed new Concessionary Rents Policy, as it remained in draft form throughout the course of the review.

The Councillors eventually proposed eight recommendations for the consideration of the Executive Committee. As the report's recommendations were not able to address a number of the points in the draft policy, it was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Mould, should give these recommendations further consideration following the meeting.

### **SICKNESS POLICY PRE-SCRUTINY SHORT, SHARP REVIEW GROUP**

**Membership: Councillors Fisher and Witherspoon**  
**Completed: September 2012 (reported November 2012).**

The Sickness Policy Pre-Scrutiny Short, Sharp review was launched in July 2012 to pre-scrutinise proposed changes to the Council's Sickness Absence Policy for staff. At the launch of the review it was anticipated that the Executive Committee would consider the draft policy in September 2012.

The group interviewed a number of expert witnesses during the course of the review including: representatives of the Council's HR department; representatives of Unison and UCATT; and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Mould. The Councillors also considered the content of the Council's previous Sickness Absence Policy, scrutinised comparable policies for other local authorities and received an overview of proposed changes to the policy. However, in line with constitutional requirements, the Councillors were not permitted to consider the content of the proposed new Sickness Absence Policy for staff, as it remained in draft form throughout the course of the review.

At the end of the review the Councillors proposed eight recommendations. These were all approved by the Executive Committee in November 2012.

## **REDDITCH MARKET TASK AND FINISH REVIEW**

**Membership: Councillors Brazier (Chair), Baker, Mason, (Derek) Taylor, and Quinney.**

**Completed: February 2013**

Launched in June 2012, the Redditch Market Task Group Review was undertaken to identify ways in which the local market could be revitalised. There was a strong sense that the market had declined in recent years which was having a negative impact on the local economy and the town centre in general. With Redditch possessing a strong heritage as a traditional 'market town', it was felt that this was a very suitable topic for an in-depth scrutiny review.



Councillors Brazier, Mason and Quinney during their site visit to Bromsgrove Market, November 2012.

The Task Group made a number of site visits to other markets to learn what was working well elsewhere and what could potentially be implemented in Redditch. They conducted a public consultation in collaboration with the local media to garner the views from residents about what they would like to see introduced at the market to make it a more attractive place to visit, and also spoke to current traders to obtain their thoughts about how their business could be improved.

The Task Group eventually made a total of 17 recommendations that are due to be considered by the decision making Executive Committee in March 2013. If endorsed, it is expected that these recommendations will lead to improved facilities, attractions and choice at the market for residents to enjoy.



## **ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE TASK GROUP**

**Membership: Councillors Hopkins (Chair), Baker, Clayton and Witherspoon.**

**Co-opted Member: Mr M Hall.**

**Deadline: The review is due to be completed in April 2013.**

The Arts and Culture Centre Task Group review was launched in October 2012. Members were tasked with investigating the potential to introduce an arts and culture centre in the town.

During the course of the review the group has visited a number of arts venues located in the country including The Artrix in Bromsgrove, Avoncroft Arts Centre in Bromsgrove, Number 8 in Pershore, and The Public in Sandwell. The group has also visited Redditch Palace Theatre, interviewed Officers from the Council's Leisure Services team and representatives of the Campaign for a Redditch Arts Centre.

Public consultation has formed a key part of the review. A questionnaire was circulated amongst local residents by the group at the end of 2012 to find out what people thought about the arts in Redditch and whether there was support for the introduction of an arts centre. A total of 359 completed questionnaires were received. Local community arts groups have also been consulted, though the number of responses was more limited.

At the time of writing the Councillors had agreed a draft list of recommendations and remained on target to complete their review by April 2013.



Members of the group visited The Artrix in October 2012. Featured are (from left to right) Councillors Witherspoon, Baker, Hopkins (Chair) and Clayton.



## **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Councillors and Officers have participated in the following scrutiny related training sessions in 2012/13:

- Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny, delivered by Officers (14th May 2012) attended by Councillors Bennett, Braley, Brazier, Brunner, Bush, Fisher, Fry, Hartnett, P Hill, R Hill, Hopkins, Mason, Mould, Quinney and Smith.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee training, delivered by Officers (17th May 2012) attended by Councillor Witherspoon.
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Training, delivered by Officers (5th July 2012) attended by Councillors Baker, Brazier, P Hill and R Hill.
- Call-in Briefing, delivered by Officers (11th December 2012) attended by Councillors Baker, Bennett, Braley, Brazier, Brunner, S Chalk, Fisher, Fry, Gandy, P Hill, Hopkins, Smith and Witherspoon.
- Effective Questioning Skills for Members, delivered by Mr Kevin O'Keefe, Excelsa Interim Management and Consultancy Ltd, (17th January 2013) attended by Councillors Bennett, Brazier, Brunner, Bush, Clayton, Gandy, P Hill, R Hill, Hopkins, Smith and (Derek) Taylor.
- CfPS Parliamentary Seminar Series, Local Government House, London (6th February 2013) attended by Councillor Smith.



A number of Councillors attended the Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny Training that was delivered in May 2012.

### **OUTCOME OF RECOMMENDATIONS 2012/13**

Up to and including its meeting on 5th February 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made a total of sixty-two recommendations during 2012/13. Of these, thirty-four recommendations have been approved by the Executive Committee, and two were declined.

Twenty six recommendations remain pending a final decision. This includes seventeen recommendations as part of the Redditch Market Task Review which will be considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 12th March 2013.

The Arts and Culture Centre Review is due to be completed in April 2013. The Executive Committee's response to these recommendations will be included within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's tracking report, which will be considered by the Committee in May 2013.

### **SCRUTINY IN THE FUTURE**

This year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken some thorough reviews and has made a significant number of recommendations, most of which have eventually been endorsed by the Executive Committee. However, it is acknowledged that there are areas that the Committee needs to focus on if it is to continue to be effective in its role:

During the coming year, Members and Officers have identified that the following areas should be addressed in the Overview and Scrutiny process during 2013/14

- There should be a clear focus on scrutinising Council services that are currently or about to undergo transformation. In particular, It is felt that the Committee can make a very valuable contribution by helping to identify existing 'waste' in service delivery that offers no benefit to local residents. Given the very difficult economic climate, it is felt that this can be a very important area on which the Committee can concentrate.
- A more targeted approach to performance scrutiny that focuses on the services which are of greatest importance to the Council's customers.
- An increased focus on forward planning and a continued commitment to Member Development in Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committee also looks forward to the continued attendance and support of senior Officers' at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2013/14.

**MEMBERSHIP GALLERY**

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



Councillor Juliet Brunner  
Chair of the Committee



Councillor Simon Chalk  
Vice Chair



Councillor  
Andrew Brazier



Councillor  
David Bush



Councillor  
John Fisher



Councillor  
Andrew Fry



Councillor  
Pattie Hill



Councillor  
Gay Hopkins



Councillor  
Pat Witherspoon

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Committee wishes to thank all those who took the time to provide information and advice during the course of the review, and to everyone who participated in the public consultation. The Committee would especially like to thank those listed below for taking the time to provide evidence and attend scrutiny meetings:

- Lyndsey Berry (Planning Officer)
- Jonathan Cochrane (Arts and Events Manager)
- Ray Cooke (Leisure Services Manager)
- John Godwin (Head of Leisure and Cultural Services)
- Ruth Griffin (Dial a Ride and Shopmobility Manager)
- Teresa Kristunas (Head of Finance and Resources)
- Sam Morgan (Financial Services Manager)
- Jayne Pickering (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources)
- Steve Singleton (Economic Development Manager – North Worcestershire)
- John Staniland (Executive Director of Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services)
- Judith Willis (Acting Head of Community Services)

Members would also like to thank the Redditch Standard, in particular Harriet Ernstsons, for their regular attendance at meetings of the Committee throughout the year and for helping to publicise its work to a wider audience.

## **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 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://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx>