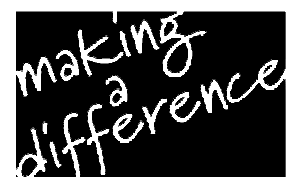


Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 6th March,
2012
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Access to Information - Your Rights

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000, has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

Your main rights are set out below:-

- Automatic right to attend all Council and Committee meetings unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Automatic right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- 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.
- Automatic right to inspect lists of background papers used in the preparation of public reports.
- 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:
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk /
michael.craggs@bromsgroveandredditch.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.

Special Arrangements

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Committee Support Officer.

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

Further Information

If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Support Officer (see foot of page opposite).

Fire/ Emergency instructions

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.

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 Committee

Tuesday, 6th March, 2012

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

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

1. Apologies and named substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip.
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)	To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record. (Minutes attached) (No Specific Ward Relevance);
4. Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Portfolio for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport - Councillor Jinny Pearce (Pages 13 - 16) Councillor Jinny Pearce	To receive the annual report from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport. (Report attached oral report to follow) (No Specific Ward Relevance);

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 6th March, 2012

<p>5. Communications Task and Finish Group - Monitoring Update Report</p> <p>(Pages 17 - 54)</p> <p>A Darroch</p>	<p>To receive a monitoring update report regarding the implementation of recommendations proposed by the Communications Task and Finish Group in 2008.</p> <p>(Report attached).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>6. Gritting Short, Sharp Review - Monitoring Update Report</p> <p>(Pages 55 - 72)</p> <p>S Horrobin, Waste Management Manager</p>	<p>To receive a monitoring update report regarding the recommendations of the Gritting Short, Sharp Review Group and further information about gritting and road clearance processes in Redditch.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>7. Performance Report for Services within the Remit of the Portfolio for Community Leadership and Partnership</p> <p>(Pages 73 - 80)</p>	<p>To consider the content of the written report regarding the performance of services within the remit of the Portfolio for Community Leadership and Partnership and to propose a series of questions for the consideration of the Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>(Report attached).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>8. Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Parliamentary Seminar Series Training - Feedback Report</p> <p>Councillor Luke Stephens</p>	<p>To consider a report on the subject of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Parliamentary Seminar Training session, attended by councillor Stephens on Tuesday 14th February 2012, and the implications for scrutiny in Redditch.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>9. Actions List</p> <p>(Pages 81 - 82)</p>	<p>To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>10. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Forward Plan</p> <p>(Pages 83 - 110)</p>	<p>To consider the minutes of the latest meetings of the Executive Committee and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan are suitable for scrutiny.</p> <p>(Minutes attached).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 6th March, 2012

<p>11. Task & Finish Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents</p>	<p>To consider any scoping documents provided for possible Overview and Scrutiny review.</p> <p>(No reports attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>12. Task and Finish Groups - Progress Reports</p> <p>Councillor Alan Mason, Councillor Simon Chalk, Councillor Gay Hopkins, Deputy Mayor 2011/12, Councillor Luke Stephens</p>	<p>To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Access for Disabled People – Chair, Councillor Alan Mason;b) Improving Recycling – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkinsc) Promoting Sporting Participation – Chair, Councillor Luke Stephens; andd) Youth Services Provision – Chair, Councillor Simon Chalk. <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>13. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Councillor Brenda Quinney</p>	<p>To receive a verbal update on the recent work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(Verbal report)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>14. Referrals</p>	<p>To consider any referrals to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Committee or full Council• Other sources. <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 6th March, 2012

15. Work Programme

(Pages 111 - 116)

To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:

- The Forward Plan / Committee agendas
- External publications
- Other sources.

(Report attached)

(No Specific Ward Relevance);

16. Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".

These paragraphs are as follows:

Subject to the "public interest" test, information relating to:

- Para 1 – any individual;
- Para 2 – the identity of any individual;
- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;
- Para 4 – labour relations matters;
- Para 5 – legal professional privilege;
- Para 6 – a notice, order or direction;
- Para 7 – the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime;
and may need to be considered as 'exempt'.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor Mark Shurmer (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins and Brenda Quinney

Also present:

A Scarce

Officers:

S Hanley, T Kristunas, S Morgan and S Skinner.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers:

J Bayley and M Craggs

164. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mason and Stephens.

165. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

166. MINUTES

The Committee was advised that a number of minor textual amendments needed to be made which did not otherwise affect the record of the meeting. These amendments would be made to the final version of the minutes.

RESOLVED that

subject to making a number of minor amendments the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 24th January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

167. FEES AND CHARGES 2012/13

The Committee considered the proposed fees and charges for 2012/13 for the Council's chargeable services. Reference was also made to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 31st January 2012 which detailed the Committee's decisions regarding fees and charges.

Officers had increased many of the fees and charges by 2.5 per cent, though there had been some variances. In particular, a number of fees were set at a statutory level. Attempts had been made, where possible, to round up the fees charged for particular services, though this had not always been considered appropriate.

There were a number of licensing fees which had not been increased when compared to the previous year. A decision had been made to retain the same fees to ensure that, as legally required, the Council did not generate a profit from these charges.

The Committee suggested that clarification should be provided with regards to the timeframes for charging new fees for the Council's allotments. Residents would be interested to learn that these fees were set a year in advance as it would help allotment holders to calculate the charges they would need to pay.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

168. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2012/13

The Committee received the Housing Revenue Account Initial Estimates for 2012/13. Reference was also made to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 31st January 2012, which detailed the Committee's recommendations on the subject.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Initial Estimates were designed to set the budget for the HRA for the following year. In previous years the Council had paid £6.8 million to the government due to the local authority being in a negative subsidy position. This housing subsidy process would cease in March 2012 and the Council would no longer need to make these payments.

The process for rent setting had also been reviewed in the report. Local authorities were increasingly being urged to secure rent

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

convergence with the social housing sector by 2015/16. As part of this process similar rents would be charged for similar properties. The rents charged by the Council were due to increase by seven per cent in line with government guidelines and the average rent would be increasing from £72.82 to £79.90 on a 48 week basis.

There were concerns amongst Members that some tenants would struggle to pay these increased rents. However, Officers advised that significant adjustments would need to be made to the figures if the rents were to be increased at a lower rate.

An assumption had been made that there would be a limited increase in the number of residents who would request to purchase their Council house under the Right to Buy scheme. In recent years the number of properties sold to tenants under Right to Buy had stabilised at an average of five properties per annum. In the current economic environment many tenants were struggling to obtain mortgages and it was anticipated that this would continue to be a problem for the foreseeable future.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the draft 2012/13 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account, attached to the report at Appendix 1, be approved;**
- 2) the actual average rent increase for 2012/13 be 7 %;**
- 3) £2 million be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme; and**

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

169. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REPORT - UPDATE ON FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

Members received a report on the Housing Revenue Account review for pre-scrutiny.

Officers advised that the previous Housing Revenue Account subsidy system was due to be replaced with a new Council housing finance process, called self-financing. As part of this process a valuation had been made of each local authority's Council housing stock and assumptions had been made by the government

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

regarding each Council's income through rents and maintenance expenditure over the next 30 years.

The Council would need to pay the government £98.929 million for the local authority's housing stock by 28th March 2012, though money could be borrowed to cover these costs from the Public Works Loans Board. The local authority would be required to pay back the amount that had been borrowed over the next 30 years. Members agreed that Officers' proposal to pay back the amount that had been borrowed every five years after year 15 of the process would help to minimise the risks of this borrowing to the Council.

A draft Capital Programme for the following 30 years had also been provided for Members' consideration. Funds had been transferred from the current Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) to this Capital Programme. Members were advised that until year 11 surplus funds would not be available from the Capital Programme to repay the borrowing. However, in subsequent years significant funding would be available from the programme to contribute to repayments.

RECOMMENDED that

subject to the Council's approval of the budgetary implications,

- 1) the 5 year Housing Capital Programme, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;**
- 2) the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be authorised to acquire debt from the Public Works Loans Board up to the amount of the actual Debt Cap in line with the profile set out at Appendix 4 to the report;**
- 3) subject to Members' comments, the viability of the 30 year business case for the Housing Revenue Account, and the projected availability of resources within the Business Plan to undertake projects such as regeneration be noted;**
- 4) Officers be authorised to incur expenditure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, up to the limit approved by the Council and for the purposes detailed in the report;**
- 5) the Council approve the financial / budgetary implications, as detailed in the report; and**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

170. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY - PRE-SCRUTINY

As requested the Committee received a report on the Street Naming and Numbering Policy for pre-scrutiny.

Members were advised that the revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy contained many of the points that had been detailed in the previous version of the policy. However, additional information had been added to the policy including information about the legislative framework and standards for road signage.

The Council was committed in the policy to prioritising any suggestions from Feckenham Parish Council for the parish as long as the proposals met the approved naming criteria. In cases where the Parish Council's suggestions did not correspond with this naming criteria authority to make a decision on the proposals would be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration, Housing and Regulatory Services in conjunction with the Head of Business Transformation. This would require a further addition to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Local Councillors would continue to be consulted with regards to the selection of street names for streets within their wards. These names could be selected from the Candidate List for Street Names provided in the policy, though consideration would also be given to additional names proposed by Members when appropriate.

Members suggested that the artist Norman Neasom should be added to the list of well-known local "characters" detailed in the Candidate List for Street Names. Officers were also asked to review a number of signs located in the Borough where spelling mistakes and incorrect ward references had been identified by Members.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2, be approved and adopted;**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Business Transformation to carry out all functions relating to the addressing process, as now detailed in the revised Policy;**
- 3) **the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be updated accordingly; and**

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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

Members received the Medium Terms Financial Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15 for comment. Reference was also made to the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2012, when a decision had been made on this subject.

The Committee was advised that a number of assumptions had been made in the report. This included the assumption that approximately £600,000 worth of savings would be made by the Council through transformation and the shared services programme and that fees and charges would be increased by an average of 2.5 per cent. Assumptions had also had to be made with regards to the level of government grant that would be allocated to the Council.

A number of revenue and capital bids, as detailed in the report, had been approved by the Executive Committee on 31st January 2012. Two further revenue bids had been approved as high priorities during the meeting. This included the proposal from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the revenue bid for an Energy Advisor, jointly employed by Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council, to be supported as a high priority.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

172. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE PORTFOLIO FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Committee proposed the following list of questions for the consideration of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

- 1) What is elected Members' involvement in the governance arrangements of the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit?
- 2) What actions have been taken and what plans are in place to grow the night-time economy in Redditch?
- 3) How successful has the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit been in creating new jobs in Redditch? What arrangements are in place to measure its effectiveness?
- 4) The written report for your portfolio, which was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th February, stated that "Worcestershire County Council funding cuts to bus services managed well and impact minimised in Redditch" (p2)
 - a) In this context what is your view of the recent removal of the 57 and 58 bus services to the Alexandra Hospital?
 - b) What is being done to alleviate inconvenience to local residents?
- 5) To what extent is the Portfolio Holder involved in assessing new commercial planning applications that could help create new jobs in Redditch?
- 6) What plans are in place to continue and develop the *Organised Work Experience Awards* programme in Redditch?
- 7) What is being done to fill empty retail units and office spaces in the Borough?

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the questions detailed in the preamble above be addressed by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport during her annual report to the Committee on Tuesday 6th March 2012; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

173. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER - MID-YEAR REPORT 2011/12

The Committee received the first Overview and Scrutiny recommendation monitoring report for 2011/12. The report detailed the recommendations that had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 24th May 2011 – 1st January 2012 and outlined the response that had been received from the Executive Committee as well as actions that had been taken to date to implement the approved recommendations.

Officers advised that by 1st January 2012 the Committee had proposed 20 recommendations. A total of 16 recommendations had been approved by the Executive Committee, three recommendations remained to be considered and one recommendation had been rejected. The three recommendations that remained to be considered were due to be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee in a report on the subject of the private sector home support service on 21st February 2012.

The Council had already taken action to implement many of the approved recommendations, as detailed in the report. Further information, with regards to gritting and snow clearance and the Redditch war memorial would also be provided for the Committee's consideration in March and April 2012.

A report, detailing responses to the Committee's recommendations between 1st January – 1st May 2012 would be received at the beginning of the following municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

174. ACTIONS LIST

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Actions List be noted.

175. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting that took place on 31st January 2012 for comment and considered the contents of the latest edition of the Forward Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

Members noted that a report on the subject of the Housing Allocations Policy review was scheduled to be presented for the Executive Committee's consideration in due course. Due to the significance of this policy to local tenants Members agreed that the report would be suitable for detailed pre-scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Housing Allocations Policy – Review be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for pre-scrutiny; and**
- 2) **the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2012 be noted.**

176. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents for consideration.

177. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received the following reports in relation to current reviews:

- a) Access for Disabled People – Chair, Councillor Alan Mason

Members were advised that the group had agreed an initial list of proposals during a meeting in January 2012. Officers had been consulted with regards to the financial and legal implications of each of the group's proposals. Based on the feedback received from Officers Members would be agreeing their final list of recommendations at the following meeting of the group.

- b) Improving Recycling – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Councillor Hopkins advised the Committee that the group was continuing to gather evidence. The majority of Members had accompanied staff undertaking green bin collections in the town. The group was considering options on how the Council could most effectively engage non-English speaking residents on recycling. These included plans for visiting local mosques to promote the value of recycling amongst the Islamic community in the Borough.

The group had discovered that the performance of the street sweeping teams in Redditch was excellent, though this

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

performance was not reflected in the local authority's statistics for recycling. A letter was due to be sent to Worcestershire County Council to formally request that Redditch be prioritised for the recycling of mechanical sweeper arisings.

c) Promoting Sporting Participation – Chair, Councillor Luke Stephens

The group had convened a meeting to discuss the possibility of introducing a centralised sport website for Redditch. Relevant senior Officers representing Leisure Services and the Communications team were due to be interviewed to discuss this idea further.

d) Youth Services Provision – Chair, Councillor Simon Chalk

Councillor Chalk explained that the group had met on 26th January 2012 to agree a list of initial proposals. The Student Council, which had been consulted over these initial proposals, had been in favour of the majority of the group's suggestions. Officers had also been consulted regarding the financial and legal implications of the group's proposals. Based on the feedback received by Members the group would make a decision about their final list of recommendations.

RESOLVED that

the update reports be noted.

178. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Quinney provided an update on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) as Redditch Borough Council's representative.

Members were advised that the HOSC had recently received information about the current performance of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. The trust was performing well in relation to a number of targets, including the 18 week waiting times and in relation to MRSA infection rates. Changes were also occurring including the approval of a new radiotherapy centre, the opening of a new audiology centre, the provision of extra support to patients in the early stages of pregnancy and the launch of the Drive to Free Up, which aimed to help nurses cease spending time producing unnecessary paperwork. In addition a new contract had been awarded to the Working Well Centre to provide occupational health

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

support the Hereford and Worcester Fire Service over the following three years.

A number of issues continued to be monitored by the HOSC. This included the proposed changes to ambulance services in the county and the review of the appropriate location for the Stroke Unit in Worcestershire. The HOSC would also be responding to the joint services review on an ongoing basis.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

179. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

180. WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that Councillor Luke Stephens had asked to present a report at the following meeting of the Committee detailing the outcomes of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Parliamentary Seminar Series training and the implications, if any, for scrutiny in Redditch.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.10 pm

Overview & Scrutiny

No Direct Ward Relevance

Committee

6th March 2012

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS: QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR JINNY PEARCE, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The following questions have been suggested by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These questions will be posed to Councillor Jinny Pearce, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Public Transport at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 6th March 2012.

1. What is elected Members' involvement in the governance arrangements of the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit?
2. What actions have been taken and what plans are in place to grow the night-time economy in Redditch?
3. How successful has the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit been in creating new jobs in Redditch? What arrangements are in place to measure its effectiveness?
4. The written report for your portfolio, which was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th February, stated that "Worcestershire County Council funding cuts to bus services managed well and impact minimised in Redditch" (p2)
 - a) In this context what is your view of the recent removal of the 57 and 58 bus services to the Alexandra Hospital?
 - b) What is being done to alleviate inconvenience to local residents?
5. To what extent is the Portfolio Holder involved in assessing new commercial planning applications that could help create new jobs in Redditch?
6. What plans are in place to continue and develop the *Organised Work Experience Awards* programme in Redditch?
7. What is being done to fill empty retail units and office spaces in the Borough?

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

6th March 2012

NB Note draft revision /Update – Page 2. S

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL GUIDE TO / FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Portfolio Holders are appointed annually by the Council (separate sheet refers) and between them cover all areas of the Council's work and responsibility.

"Portfolio" indicates a specified area of responsibility allotted by formal resolution, for the purposes listed below.

"Portfolio Holder" indicates a member of the Council's Executive Committee who, within the allotted area of responsibility,

CAN	1.	Monitor Council performance informed by documents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strategy • Corporate Plan • Service Plans • Budgets • E.Government statements • BVPI's / Local PI's (separate document available) • Forward Plan 	*
	2.	Monitor the implementation of Council policy and decisions informed, in addition to the above, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reports and Minutes • Personal contact with Officers 	*
	3.	Act as consultee for Members and Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally, in accordance with approved delegations of authority to Officers • Informally for general reference. 	*
	4.	Act as "Spokesperson" for the Council in relation to Press / Media / outside the	

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		Council, but not exclusively (other Members may also have this shared role) (Council decision – 11th October ??)	
	5.	Act as “Rapporteur” a) to report annually to Overview & Scrutiny on the Services for which the Portfolio Holder has responsibility; and b) to act as a channel for feedback from representatives of outside bodies which fall within the remit of the Portfolio Holder. (Council Annual Meeting 22 nd May 2006)	
	6.	the role of Portfolio Holders be expanded to include a higher level of involvement with the Local Strategic Partnership, and, more specifically, with relevant Sub-Groups of the Redditch Partnership, as and when formed. (Exec January 2007 / Council ...)	
CANNOT		Act with delegated authority in any personal capacity (PFHs cannot therefore commit resources – financial / staffing, without further authority – Exec., Council, or Officer authority)	
			*
MAY	1.	Represent and “sponsor” their allotted Portfolio(s) at meetings of the Executive and the Council, and, <i>where appropriate</i> , at other Council meetings, e.g. O&S.	
	2.	Develop closer working relationship with relevant lead Directors and, via Directors, other relevant Officers.	
	3.	Attend relevant meetings, e.g. relevant O&S meetings, beyond those to which formally appointed by the Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an approved duty where invited to the meeting • Also as an approved duty when present on own initiative. <p style="text-align: right;">in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	
	4.	Seek to trigger reports to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Executive or Council, via normal report / 	

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		<p>agenda preparation processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Committees, via normal report / agenda preparation processes • Overview and Scrutiny Committee <p>in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	

G:M&C/Members/Portfolio Holder Guide
& Constitution / Const.documents/revised sms/8.7.6/16.7.7

Response to Communications Task and Finish Report 2008

Background

Since the Communications Scrutiny Report was written four years ago, there have been a lot of changes in the Communications Team.

- In April 2011 a new shared Communications Team was appointed across Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- This new team comprises one Manager and two communications officers – replacing two managers, three communications officers and a communications admin post. Since January one communications officer has left, which leaves a manager and a communications officer covering communications for two Councils.

These changes have meant the service that the team provides *and is able to provide* is different to the recommendations set out in the scrutiny report.

In this report I want to take all of the recommendations and provide an update on them, as from April 2011, when I was appointed as Communications Manager – and set out the current functions of the Communications Team.

Communications in 2012

National research used in the original scrutiny exercise, the Reputation Campaign and research by Ipsos MORI has since been updated after research showed the measures recommended by both sources did not see a significant increase in resident satisfaction with the Council. This was also produced before the importance of social media was recognised – a new guide has since been published by the LGA

http://www.lgcomms.org.uk/asset/69/WCC_LGcomms_ReputationGuide.pdf

This need for fast-moving communications means news outlets now, even the weekly newspapers, operate a 24/7 news output so there is even less time to respond to a media enquiry or to produce a press release. The media are changing the way they require news – and we have to change the way we provide news accordingly.

Update on Recommendations

1. Prioritising Communications

- a) the Council adopts communications as an underpinning principle of the key priorities of the Council;
- b) Officers and Members undertake further work to establish what key messages the Council wants to promote;
- c) the Council website be updated on a weekly basis in order to convey the Council's key messages effectively;

Update

The Communications Team holds monthly meetings with the Leader, and fortnightly with the Chief Executive to ascertain the key messages or major

projects which are on the horizon. These are picked up in a communications planner which goes to CMT each month. As a result of the restructuring of Policy, Performance and Partnerships the Communications Team will report directly to the Chief Executive to recognise the importance of communications to the Council.

The team is responsible for updating the news section of the website which has recently been scored as '4*' by a customer. Other updates on the website are the responsibility of the individual departments however the Communications Team regularly work with them to ensure that what appears on the website is written in an appropriate style.

2. Communications Strategy

- a) the Council's Communications Strategy be rewritten to:
 - i) improve the presentational style of the strategy;
 - ii) maintain a consistent report style throughout the document;
 - iii) shorten the document making it easier to read; and
 - iv) make the information contained within the strategy personalised to Redditch and Redditch Borough Council;
- b) the Communications Strategy include a Public Relations Strategy to promote the image of Redditch;
- c) the Communications Strategy include a Members' Communication Strategy detailing how Members communicate with the local media;

Update

A Communications Strategy, as per the above, does exist for Redditch Borough Council [Appendix 1]. As a shared service the Communications Team is currently planning to create a joint communications strategy which will obviously seek to maintain the individuality of each Council whilst maximising the resources that are available.

We are working closely with the departments to promote the image of Redditch and are supporting their communications plans to do so which will be picked up in the strategy. The media protocol will pick up how Members and the Communications work together to maximise coverage in the local media.

3. Internal Communications

- a) Communications Officers regularly attend key meetings at the Council including Full Council, the Executive Committee, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- b) Committee Services Officers and Lead Service Officers to proactively engage with Communications Officers on a regular basis regarding key decisions taken at meetings;

Update

The Communications Team strives to attend every Council meeting. If officers were to attend all of the above, then this would time in lieu spent out of the office. Instead the team works with the Committee Team, portfolio-holders and senior managers to ascertain what key stories are coming up so pre-press releases are issued. Telephone briefings with the two local newspapers are also held before and after each meeting. We asked the media if they

would prefer us to be at the meetings, where we are just hearing what they are, or to be available for further clarification/extra information, after the meetings. They chose the latter.

4. Joint Working

a) the Council Communications Officers to utilise opportunities to receive informal advice and support from Worcestershire County Council Communications Officers;

Update

The Communications Team is an active part of the County Communications Group and does work closely with the County Council's Communications Team on joint issues.

5. Civic Newspaper

a) Redditch Borough Council produces a section of 'Redditch' pages that can be inserted in each edition of Word On Worcestershire;

b) this arrangement to be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in twelve months. Prior to this, Officers from the Communications Unit to investigate options for reinstating the civic newspaper and buying pages in the local press to communicate information about Council activities;

Update

WOW no longer exists – but Redditch Matters is now published three times a year. When it was first reinstated it was published three times a year – but following the cuts to the Communications budget –and the implementation of the Shared Communications team it was agreed three editions would suffice

6. Corporate Branding

a) all service areas of the Council should adhere to the Redditch Borough Council Corporate Identity Guidelines for all external communications;

b) all external communications material must be sent to the Communications Unit for verification before being released;

c) the Council to provide a briefing, at least once a year, for all members of staff regarding corporate branding and customer contact standards;

Update

Our design team particularly, along with the Communications Team ensures, as much as possible that the branding and style guidelines are adhered to. It is important to note that to maximise the impact of all the different types of communications that they are all clearly branded as being part of the Council. As more teams become shared in order to maximise the effectiveness of communications within the resources available, a joint brand and style guide is to be produced picking up letterheads, banners etc. This will seek to maintain the individual sovereignty of each council and will need political buy-in from both authorities.

7. Media Relations

- a) the Communications Officers produce a new local media strategy and protocol to improve channels of communication between the Council and the local media;
- b) the Council designates an Officer in each service area to act as a 'publicity champion' and the Communications Officers to work proactively with the 'publicity champions' to increase the number of press releases sent to the local media; and
- c) Communications Officers ensure that, where appropriate, all press releases contain a comment from a relevant spokesperson. If Portfolio Holders are approached for a comment, they should be contacted as soon as possible and given 24 hours to provide a comment.

Update

A media relations policy was launched in 2009 [appendix 2], after this scrutiny exercise. As highlighted in section 2 of this report, the speed at which the media requires information so it can stream news 24/7 means there is now far less time to produce news. The Communications Team is writing a Joint media strategy to reflect these new ways of working. However, the team works closely with Portfolio-holders, cross-party senior members and senior officers to ensure the relevant people are quoted in press releases where appropriate and possible.

Communications Now – and Going Forward

Currently the Communications Team, across Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Council is made up of a Communications Manager and a Communications Officer – this is since a member of the team left in January but will hopefully be replaced in the next few weeks.

With reduced Communications Resources including money and staff, here is the service the Communications Team provides for Redditch Borough Council only.

- Produces 3 copies of Redditch Matters a year
- Produces on average 5 press releases a week for Redditch and responds to, on average, 6 media calls a day. [not including those for the Trading Standards at WRS]. The local BBC station said we were the best media team in Worcestershire (May 2011)
- Updates the website daily
- Makes sure Twitter feeds and Facebook entries are up to date
- Produces a monthly communications plan which, from March will be circulated to Managers before going to CMT
- Supports teams with their campaigns and news
- Produces a daily e-update for staff and a monthly newspaper
- Makes sure the intranet's news section is up to date
- Ensure the Council's corporate messages around initiatives e.g shared services, has a raised national profile and thus raising the profile of the Council

- Works with the Leader and senior Members, including portfolio-holders, to ensure the Council's corporate messages are promoted.

Going Forward:-

- Produce a joint media protocol
- Produce a joint brand and style guidelines
- Produce a joint communications strategy
- Rebuild Communications Team to full capacity

Summary

The Council's Shared Services project and budget constraints has seen the Communications Team re-shape the service it provides with resources in mind. In turn the Communications Team has refined its service to complement the changing needs of the media and residents need for news. Whilst the Communications Team works to the overall ethos of the Scrutiny Report i.e., that effective Communications is essential to any organisation and in particular a public service a lot of the individual recommendations no longer reflects these changes.

Appendices:

- 1 - RBC Communications Strategy 2010-13
- 2 - RBC Media Protocol 2009

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Redditch Borough Council
Communications Strategy
2010-13

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1 Communication is a process that allows us to exchange information by several methods and happens at many different levels. It is a two way process and an integral part of what we do all the time. Good communication leads to more effective services, a better reputation and stronger relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

1.2 Redditch Borough Council understands that effective communication is a key driver in how the public perceives our services. Research suggests that keeping residents informed, listening to their concerns and involving them when making decisions has a significant impact of the satisfaction with the Council and its services. The Communications Strategy looks at internal and external communications and includes an annual Communications Action Plan that aims to deliver the strategic wishes.

1.3 An effective communications strategy takes you from where you are now to where you want to be. It ensures that all your communications are focused on your priorities and are effectively targeted to the right people at the right time.

1.4 To be effective, it has to be a live working document and should reflect the fact that communicating is a cross-cutting issue that affects the whole council as well as the many partners the Council works with. Individual Council teams, departments, directorates should not be operating their own communications in isolation.

1.5 The strategy endorses the Local Government Association's Reputation Campaign. This recommends that the following components make for good council communications:

- Effective media management
- A – Z guide of Council services
- Regular magazine or newsletter
- Branding
- Good internal communications

1.6 Consultation is equally an essential part of the work that the Council does. This is to be covered in a separate Community Engagement Strategy covering both Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council but with separate actions for each Council. Consultation (or engagement) has close links to our communications work but is a separate discipline with its own needs and wants. There is a statutory duty to consult on the Council's work and activities and this has recently been strengthened with the Duty to Involve legislation from Government.

1.7 Listening to what the community wants and involving them in decision making, whether through formal engagement processes or feedback across our communications work (letters from the public in the media on our activities, online reaction through blogs and other social media, or perhaps informal feedback on the Council's magazine) leads to services which are better quality and more appropriate. It makes people within the community feel empowered, giving them a sense of ownership, and it demonstrates to the community the commitment by the Council to listen to and value their views.

1.8 Overall, the Council is involved in a great deal of communications work and consultation. Its commitment to building on and developing this further is underpinned by Redditch Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2009-12. One of the Council's Values described in the Corporate Plan is 'Modernisation (Consultation)'. Next to this Value is the statement 'Consulting with residents and other stakeholders on how we can improve our services and the way we deliver them'. In October 2009 councillors agreed to review this value and the Council's other values and, if anything, have strengthened them in favour of our communications and consultation work. Hence 'Modernisation (Consultation)' has become 'Communication and Consultation'. While among the Council's priorities during 2009-12 is being a 'Well Managed Organisation'. Key objectives in this priority are communications work and include re-introducing the Council's magazine 'Redditch Matters', revising the Council's Corporate Identity, introducing a new media relations policy, reviewing existing communications work and producing a new Communications Strategy. This strategic document is therefore firmly rooted in our corporate planning and priorities.

1.9 The Communications Strategy needs to also contribute to wider community planning and council-wide programmes such as e-government and customer service, or refer to those strategies where they already exist. If those strategies are to be developed, they in turn should tie into the Communications Strategy. If separate departmental or directorate communication strategies are produced, they should show how they will contribute to the objectives set out in this Communications Strategy, as well as setting more local objectives of their own.

1.10 The Communications Strategy must be owned internally, from the top of the organisation to the front line staff, if it is to be implemented effectively and receive the resources it needs.

2. Why do we need a strategy?

2.1 The purpose of this document is to set out Redditch Borough Council's approach to communication over the next three years. It has been written to incorporate elements of the Local Government White Paper 2006; Stronger and Prosperous Communities, findings from the 2008-09 Place Survey for Redditch, the results of a communications audit carried out internally in 2009, and the 2009 Staff Survey. Councils are also directed by the Local Government Publicity Code which is expected to be revised in 2010 by Government. Redditch Borough Council was consulted about possible changes to the code during 2009.

2.2 The adoption of this strategy will ensure that we build a strong and effective communications infrastructure throughout the whole Council and Redditch Borough. It will enable us to assess our performance and to judge if we are delivering best value in terms of policymaking and service delivery through communication with our stakeholders. The Leader of the Council; Executive Committee Members and the Leadership Team will ensure this strategy is successfully implemented throughout the Council.

3. The need for effective internal and external communications

3.1 It is recognised that all facets of communication are equally important in raising the Council's profile and, indeed, improving communications and the perception of the authority both inside and out. We understand that if staff and Members are well informed about the 'bigger picture' and about what the Council is trying to achieve, then they can become true ambassadors for the Council.

3.2 Communications is seen as a priority within the Council and it is recognised that a good communications infrastructure is essential in supporting the delivery of our key priorities. It touches every service and every interaction with the public; from the way it presents itself visually to the way our customers are treated, from its public advertising, to its leaflets and forms; from its information to staff, to its consultation with user groups.

3.3 We want to communicate better with our stakeholders – the people we serve, our staff, partners and audiences beyond our borough boundaries. As a Council, we are committed to improving the way we communicate, engage and consult with our stakeholders, building upon work already being done within our services.

3.4 Evidence of how we have recently been performing comes with the **Place Survey for Redditch 2008-09** (see Appendix B). This was conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Redditch Borough Council. The survey methodology comprised posted self-completion forms as required by the Audit Commission and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The survey period was late September to mid December 2008. It should be pointed out, however, that as with the new Audit Commission Oneplace reports, the survey is mostly about Redditch and not just the Council.

3.5 The chart for `Being kept informed` shows that only 36 per cent of people surveyed felt they were `very well informed` or `fairly well informed` with, what actually should read, 64 per cent not feeling informed. The average for Worcestershire was 39 per cent for informed. Worryingly Worcestershire districts are lagging behind the 49 per cent `informed` figure for all districts nationally. We anticipate the re-introduction of the Council's magazine `Redditch Matters` last year and greater media activity will help increase this figure next time the survey is conducted.

3.6 In 2009 a Council Task and Finish Group was established to consider the future of Neighbourhood Groups. As a channel for external communication, the setting up of the groups over a decade ago had been innovative but in recent years their effectiveness had been questioned on the grounds of the low numbers of people attending meetings (often same people each area meeting), issues discussed (often repeated) and the costs of staging Group meetings bearing in mind officer time and venue hire. Councillors have now decided to abolish the groups in favour of more involvement in the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings. They have recommended a range of further actions. Some of these have a communications aspect to them and are covered in this strategy.

4. The need to engage and consult

4.1 The Council recognise that in order to develop policies and provide services that our local communities actually benefit from, the Council needs to be able to understand their needs, views and expectations. The Local Government White Paper 2006; Stronger and Prosperous Communities first set out a range of proposals designed to strengthen local communities and to expand their opportunities for local decision making. When it became law it gave local authorities and their partners the flexibility to draw up a comprehensive community engagement strategy to combine activity, improve the coordination of engagement across Local Strategic Partners (the Redditch Partnership in the case of this Council), including the Third Sector, and to reduce the risk of `consultation overload`.

4.2 Engagement and consultation as envisaged by the Government in its Act was to cover three main areas, which are: Sustainable Community Strategy; Local Area Agreement and the Local Development Framework. As a result, we now work with our partners to ensure that we capture all planned engagement requirements and, wherever possible, combined activity. This has been endorsed further by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill that has changed the Council's statutory duty from `to consult` to one of a `duty to inform, consult and involve`.

4.3 In doing so we want, as a Council, to ensure that:

- *A wide variety of viewpoints are considered that enable us to make effective decisions about the services we offer to our communities.*
- *We have a transparent process that can increase public trust.*
- *All parts of the Council need to share this commitment to enable us to achieve our objectives to improve the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors and to underline our priorities.*

4.4 With the sharing of services with Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council is about to work on a new joint strategy for community engagement, especially in view of the latest Duty to Involve requirements (briefing presented to Members recently), but with separate actions for both Councils. Bromsgrove has a recently approved Community Engagement Strategy which we intend to build upon, thus taking forward a joint approach to community engagement.

4.5 Recent consultation carried out in Redditch has been supported by the Communications Team, particularly in regard to organising a series of Consultation Roadshows and the general promotion of consultation work and its results. With our Policy Team colleagues we have recorded all consultation carried out during 2009 and consultation planned for the first part of 2010. The Communications Team will be supporting the production of the new joint strategy with its bespoke actions for Redditch.

5. What we have done so far

5.1 The previous Communications Strategy for Redditch covered 2006-10. However, this was superseded part way through its delivery by the creation in 2007 of a Task and Finish Group of Members (chaired by Councillor Juliet Brunner) who were appointed to look at our Communications as a Council. Furthermore 2008 saw significant staff changes within the Communications Team which severely hindered delivery of the strategy. Both the then Communications Manager and the Council's Press Officer departed midway through the year.

5.2 But in November 2008 a new, strengthened team was in place following the appointment of a Communications and Marketing Manager and two new posts of Media and Communications Officer. They joined a Senior Design and Print Officer and a part-time Administration Assistant. Communications became part of the HR and Communications service, led by a Head of HR and Communications and located within the Environment and Planning Directorate. The Council's Print Unit of four further staff became the responsibility of the Communications Team's Senior Design and Print Officer.

5.3 The Task and Finish Group completed its work in late summer 2008 and made a number of recommendations. These effectively became the **Council's Communications Priorities for late 2008 and for 2009**. They were:

- re-introducing Redditch Matters, the Council's magazine for residents
- introducing Communications Champions across the Council's service teams
- introducing a Corporate Identity for the Council
- introducing a PR issues or a Communications Planner
- supporting partnership working especially with Worcestershire County Council and the other Worcestershire districts, and the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for emergency planning
- developing internal communications
- ensuring communications is on Corporate Management Team (CMT) agendas
- working closely with the Leader and Portfolio Holders to develop the Council's profile and reputation (and that of the town)
- stepping up media relations work and introducing a media relations policy

This is what the Team has been concentrating on since November 2008 and its formation.

5.4 The table below outlines our progress so far. This information has been used to determine what our aims are going to be over the next three years and how we are going to achieve those aims. The **Council's Communications Priorities for 2010-11** are shown from page 14.

Communications priorities for late 2008 and for 2009	What was achieved in late 2008	What was achieved in 2009	What has been achieved in the first part of 2010
Redditch Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding identified for 3 editions in 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approves re-introduction of magazine • Editorial Panel formed of Members to agree on contents and provide feedback • Appointed advertising sales and printer/distributor for spring edition • New photography undertaken for the magazine • Magazine re-launched with spring edition • Appointed suppliers for following 3 editions after quotation process • Summer edition published • Autumn/winter edition published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agreed to increase to 4 editions in 2010 • Work on spring edition completed • Survey created for spring edition to obtain residents' views

Communications Champions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champions recruited from the 11 Council services and scope of role published • First meeting held includes session with a reporter from the Redditch Advertiser and a look at media relations work • Second meeting includes a photography workshop with a local professional photographer 	
Corporate Identity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Identity taken to Council for approval. No change to existing logo but new Style Guide and Plain English Guide introduced for all staff and Members, secondary logos rationalised and corporate e-mail footer introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Identity explained to the Redditch Community Forum and large print, Braille and translation services promoted
Communications Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly planner created identifying issues and opportunities across the whole Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planner on CMT agenda once a month and updated accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planner on CMT agenda once a month and updated accordingly

Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Marketing Manager re-establishes Redditch's involvement in the County Communications Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Council Tax leaflet produced through County Communications • Support given to County's Economy Action Group • Re-join West Mercia LRF with particular involvement around swine flu pandemic • Help Redditch Partnership respond to media interest in the red flag status for Redditch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on joint Council Tax leaflet for publication in March 2010 • Support for `We are Redditch` event in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and produce related newspaper advertising four-page wrap
Internal communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Members' Bulletin started • Develop Core Brief as regular staff e-newsletter • Contact, the staff quarterly magazine goes to full-colour. December edition introduces staff to the new Communications Team as well as the Print Unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal communications reviewed and discussed with the Chief Executive and CMT. Various recommendations made and followed through including developing a new joint intranet with Bromsgrove District Council. • Core Brief goes fortnightly picking up on each CMT meeting decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work begins on a new joint intranet site (to go live from April/May)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff briefings and drop in sessions with the Chief Executive held around Shared Services, as well as `walk the floor` by the Chief Executive. • Staff Survey undertaken and results given to staff 	
Communications and CMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications added to all CMT agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative from the Communications Team attends each CMT meeting to report for Core Brief 	
Supporting the Leader and Portfolio Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols created for responding to media requests and discussions on working style and priorities held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All press releases include quote from either the Leader or relevant Portfolio Holder as per the media relations policy • Provide media support to the Redditch Partnership for the Audit Commission's Oneplace report 	
Media relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press coverage analysed on a weekly basis and circulated to senior staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations policy introduced • 272 press releases issued between November 2008 and December 2009 and approximately 20 radio interviews given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap produced with the Redditch Standard on behalf of the Redditch Partnership

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press coverage analysed on a weekly basis and circulated to senior staff • Responses to critical letters in the local newspapers made, as appropriate • Press briefing held on proposed budget savings • Meetings with the Redditch Standard's Editor and Redditch Advertiser Publisher held plus with reporting staff • Discussions held with all the major TV broadcasters about covering the 2010 General Election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press coverage analysed on a weekly basis and circulated to senior staff • Working with an independent production company and NEW College on a documentary for Channel 4 about this year's Morton Stanley Festival
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6. Our aims over the next three years

6.1 Ensure we are seen as a 'customer first' organisation by:

- *Everyone who lives in, works in and visits Redditch Borough is kept well informed.*
- *Raising our profile by actively promoting our services and celebrating successes.*
- *Improve the level and quality of engagement with our community by engaging and consulting with the whole community, as appropriate, in order to continuously improve and shape the services we offer.*

6.2 How will we achieve our aims?

- *Through effective internal and external communications.*
- *We will improve the way we communicate with our stakeholders, and ensure that the Council develops its branding and that it is used consistently in all publications, advertising and promotional material.*
- *Manage the media effectively and innovatively in order to promote the Council to the public and to protect its image and reputation.*
- *Improve internal and external communications so that staff and members become advocates for the council.*
- *Ensure that we use plain English and clear print in all our publications, and so communicate and engage effectively.*
- *Ensure that we listen to the views, needs and aspirations of our residents.*
- *Ensure that we engage with as many sectors of the community as possible regarding our policies and plans in particular the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Local Development Framework.*
- *Actively use information we gather through consultation and engagement to inform and influence our decision making.*

7. Communications Priorities for 2010-11

7.1 The previous year's communications priorities were largely shaped by the findings of a Task and Finish Group and the need to establish a brand new Communications Team. The Council's **vision and priorities** were, nevertheless, communicated throughout the year at appropriate opportunities.

7.2 The Communications Priorities for 2010-11 take the Council's vision as its cue but include two further priorities that are important: developing our digital communications, and helping to improve Redditch's profile as a place to live in, work in or visit. They are:

- **Enterprising Community**

This is defined as having a vibrant and vital borough where the population is well educated, has high skill levels and is healthy and fit. Housing is excellent and varied and the community is served by a prosperous town centre that has access to first class leisure facilities. The Council's voice is influential and respected by residents, partners, other governmental agencies and suppliers. The town's economy provides sufficient high quality jobs for residents with good levels of pay and reward.

The Communications Strategy includes promoting Redditch as that enterprising community and seeking to ensure our voice is heard and respected.

- **Safe**

The Council works in partnership with other agencies through the Redditch Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and disorder. The Council identifies key projects to build community confidence and allow residents and visitors to be safe and feel safe.

Community safety has, and will continue to, reflect strongly in our communications activity.

- **Clean and Green**

The Council is committed to the development of attractive open spaces, taking enforcement action against littering, fly tipping and other behaviour detrimental to the environment where appropriate and supporting measures to tackle climate change. The Communications Strategy seeks to promote Redditch's enviable green credentials (large amount of green space in the borough, commitment to tackling climate change, pro-active work to improve the local environment) at all possible opportunities.

- **Well Managed Organisation**

Underpinning all of the above is the desire for Redditch Borough Council to be an organisation that uses its resources effectively in order to achieve its priorities and values and to deliver high quality services that meet the needs of its residents and provide value for money.

This priority is particular to the Council's Communications work and places communication at the heart of the Council's service delivery, by informing and involving residents and stakeholders about all our services, and ensuring users know about the Council and what it is here to do and intends to achieve in the future.

- **Increasing digital communications**

As a Council we have embraced intranet and extranet technologies since their introduction to this authority in the early part of this decade. The website is one of our most important communications tools and was re-designed in 2009 as part of a Worcestershire Hub project. The staff intranet has been in need of a re-design for a while but this too will see major improvement in 2010 with the launch of a new joint intranet site with Bromsgrove District Council as part of the sharing of services.

`Increasing digital communications` needs to be a communications priority to reflect the continuing and rapid growth in web, intranet usage and especially in the area of social networking through applications including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr photographic sharing and blogging. Digital can help us communicate quickly, target the more `hard to reach` groups (young people especially make great use of social media), can be inexpensive, and is certainly going to expand in importance and probably at the continuing expense of print communications. It therefore has to be one of our priorities in this strategy. But we have to be realistic what we can achieve with our resources i.e. some councils now employ officers solely to respond to social media sites, a luxury we are unable to afford at the present time.

- **Helping to create a more positive image for Redditch**

Redditch does have an image problem especially in the context of its location adjacent to some quite prosperous areas in the rest of Worcestershire and neighbouring Warwickshire. While the economic statistics do confirm Redditch, overall, is less prosperous than its neighbours, this is a friendly town that people are proud to live in.

For its geographic size, it has some impressive facilities – a top ten shopping centre, an excellent theatre, a country park and lake, extensive sports centres and facilities, an historic mill celebrating Redditch's proud history as the world's needles maker, award winning parks and abundant green space (including some five million trees), and a range of Council services that few other councils of Redditch Borough Council's size could match – many of them community rooted; plus major businesses whose headquarters are here including GKN and Halfords.

There are many organisations that have a role to play in helping to improve the image of Redditch. The Redditch Partnership is one such, as is the Borough Council (which also provides management support to the Partnership). As perceptions of Redditch can impact hugely on the Council's work and service delivery i.e. the ability of the Economic Development Team to attract new businesses, the Communications Strategy has a role to play in helping to create a better profile and reputation for Redditch, particularly in supporting the work of the Redditch Partnership (although our main focus and top priority, given limited resources, should always be on promoting the Council first).

With a fair amount of negativity about Redditch in 2009 following press reporting of a survey that placed Redditch poorly in a list of UK areas and the CAA Oneplace report giving Redditch a red flag for poor educational attainment and health inequalities, this therefore needs to be a communications priority in 2010-11.

7.3 The Council also has a set of **Values** (revised by Council in October 2009) that support the **Vision** of `an enterprising community which is safe, clean and green` and the Council's **Priorities** of Enterprising Community, Safe, Clean and Green. The Communications Strategy embraces all of these values and has a specific role to play in the values of `Partnership Working` and `Communication and Consultation` as identified in the strategy document. The new values will appear in a revised Corporate Plan for 2010-13.

- We place a value in **Partnership working**, ensuring that these partnerships add value to service delivery and provide Redditch with a strong voice both locally and regionally.
- We are **Fair** in the decisions that we make. We value probity and fairness and strive to understand the needs of all communities, embracing a diverse range of needs and showing respect at all times.
- We are **Responsive and Accountable**. We believe in customer focus and aim to deliver a standard of service that our customers require whilst being open and honest about the decisions we make. We aim to achieve greater value for money through smarter practices and new technology.

- We value feedback through **Communication and Consultation**. We will listen and act appropriately, and will enable and provide support for people to become involved in the services we deliver.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 This strategy recognises that everyone has an important part to play in communicating the Council's vision, of 'an enterprising community that is safe, clean and green' and the services the Council provides. It also recognises that all employees within their own service areas are responsible for promoting a strong, consistent and professional image that is wholly representative of the Council they work for in Redditch. It is the responsibility of the Communications Team to ensure that this is effective by providing support and working with all teams/services to ensure that consistent messages are communicated to all stakeholders. This includes:

- *Internally - elected Members; the Corporate and Senior Management Teams; the trade unions; all employees communicating those messages via the media, our publications, face-to-face or phone, by email, memo, letters, reports and presentations, the website and social media - and ensuring that all publications are published on the website if appropriate.*
- *Externally - Residents includes Council Tax payers, registered voters, users of our services. Businesses includes potential, new and existing businesses. Partners - the public, private, third sector and non-Governmental agencies. Potential employees. Visitors – any person visiting Redditch Borough.*

8.2 It is important that people living in the borough feel that we, as a Council, communicate with them in such a way that it encourages them to participate in our communications activities where they are able. It is very important to us that they feel they are able to influence and shape the things that we do, especially through our engagement work, not only in Redditch Borough but also in their own communities.

9. Where do we go from here?

9.1 This three-year strategy has an annual **Communications Action Plan (Appendix A)**, which will be reviewed every 12 months. The action plan mirrors our aims set out in section 6 and contains priorities (section 7) that are directly linked to our Corporate Priorities of 'Enterprising Community, Safe, Clean and Green, and Well Managed Organisation'.

9.2 All activities contained within this strategy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are effective, fit for purpose and good value for money.

9.3 This strategy has been produced by the Communications Team at Redditch Borough Council. Contact details for further information are:

Adrian Marklew, Communications and Marketing Manager, Redditch Borough Council, tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3002, email: adrian.marklew@redditchbc.gov.uk

10. Appendices

The following appendices relate to the Communications Strategy and are listed as below:

- A) Communications Action Plan for 2010-11**
- B) Extracts from the Place Survey for Redditch 2008-09**
- C) Redditch Borough Council Media Relations Policy**

Redditch Borough Council Media Relations Policy

(September 2009)

Acknowledgements:

Gloucester City Council media guidelines

Worcestershire County Council media relations protocols

1. Why we need to have a policy
2. The media
3. Role of the Communications Team
4. How we communicate with the media
5. Protocols for staff
6. Protocols for members

1. **Why we need to have a media relations policy**

There is plenty of evidence to show why Redditch Borough Council should take media relations seriously.

According to the Local Government Association, we should aim to improve media relations because:

- **Perceptions shaped by the media affect satisfaction ratings**
- **Positive coverage protects our reputation and 'brand'**
- **It demonstrates community leadership**
- **Good media coverage helps recruit and retain quality staff**
- **It helps with place shaping, promoting the area as a positive place to live and work in, as well as to visit**

Research by MORI has found residents often cite the local media as a key influence on their perceptions of their council.

MORI has also proved there is a direct link between residents' satisfaction ratings of their local authorities and the amount of information they receive.

2. The media

Items about Redditch Borough Council may appear in print, on the radio, on television and online.

Our primary media group is made up of organisations with whom we do the majority of our media relations business. They cover Redditch as a stated business aim and include the borough's two free weekly papers the *Redditch Advertiser* and the *Redditch Standard*, the daily *Birmingham Mail* and radio station BBC Hereford and Worcester. All of these organisations also have websites.

Our secondary media group includes organisations that also cover Redditch, but less frequently and usually only the bigger stories. This includes the regional television programmes BBC Midlands Today and Central News. Regional radio stations such as BRMB, BBC Radio WM, Touch FM and Kerrang! are also included, as are newspapers such as the *Worcester News*, the *Birmingham Post* and the *Sunday Mercury*.

There is also the trade media. This includes local authority publications such as *Local Government Chronicle* and *Municipal Journal*, and specialised magazines like *Inside Housing*.

A fourth media group consists of all other organisations that occasionally cover the borough. This group includes national daily and Sunday papers, national and international television stations and national radio stations.

There are also some on-line, service-specific news services such as www.letsrecycle.com and the BBC has experimented with local television broadcasts that can be viewed via broadband connections or through interactive digital stations.

We also need to reach media that targets a diverse audience, including from ethnic minority communities and disabled groups.

3. The Communications Team

The Communications Team is the first point of contact for **all** media enquiries.

There are two Media and Communications Officers within the team who co-ordinate the Council's media relations activity, with the support of the Communications and Marketing Manager. They will:

- Handle and log media enquiries, identifying who is best placed to deal with the enquiry and ensuring that responses get to the media by an agreed deadline (media deadlines can often be tight)
- Produce and issue press releases and operational notes on behalf of the Council
- Organise media briefings where appropriate
- Organise photocalls as appropriate
- Set up TV/radio interviews
- Establish and maintain positive working relationships with the media
- Ensure that the media are treated equally and fairly
- Attend Full Council and Executive Committee meetings to assist any media who are attending, and also subsequently brief those who are unable to attend
- Advise officers and councillors on media handling strategies
- Organise media training for officers and councillors
- Keep press cuttings up-to-date and available
- Monitor and evaluate media coverage
- Provide support in the event of an emergency

Identifying news stories

The Media and Communications Officers look ahead to identify positive news stories to publicise the aims, works and successes of the Council. These include important events in the democratic process (eg Council decisions, setting the budget, election results) and national public service announcements, such as CAA scores.

These will be identified by the Council's own Forward Plan, and through regular discussion with officers.

It is the responsibility of individual services to tell the Media Officers as early as possible about internally-generated opportunities for publicity that are not automatically flagged up, such as:

- A milestone in service provision (eg first anniversary of Home Choice)
- The beginning of a consultation exercise (eg 'My Home, My Future, My Choice')
- Endorsement of our work by a third party (eg Green Flag Awards for our parks)
- Refurbishment or improvement work (eg Environmental Enhancement Programme)
- The release of a new Council publication (Redditch official guide)
- The launch of campaigns/events (eg Hate Incident Reporting scheme)
- Additional funding for a service from other organisations
- Training courses (eg free procurement seminars)
- Warnings to residents

4. How we communicate with the media

Contact with the media can be **proactive**, when we inform them of Council activities and decisions or **reactive**, where we respond to their enquiries.

Proactive media relations

This can involve bad, as well as good news. The Council often has to make difficult decisions that will impact on the lives of residents and businesses. They must be informed of these decisions, even if there is potential for negative stories in the media. If we do nothing, someone else will inevitably bring the issue to the media's attention, which could result in damaging, inaccurate stories with possibly no response in return from the Council.

Press releases and operational notes

The Media and Communications Officers are involved in the creation and distribution of press releases. This involves drafting a release based on a briefing or revamping/checking background for a release drafted by officers.

Releases are then shared with the relevant officer to ensure they are satisfied with their content and forwarded to the appropriate service head or director for clearance. They then go to the relevant media.

Operational notes are brief and are sent to the media to inform them of briefings, launches and photo opportunities or to alert them to agenda items of interest at upcoming Council meetings.

Press releases on court cases

Due to contemporaneous reporting issues, releases involving fraudulent benefit claims, fly-tipping etc have to be cleared and issued within two days of a case ending. Quotations in court case press releases are made by Portfolio Holders but it is imperative that these are obtained on time in order to meet the strict time limits. Failure to do so will result in quotations coming from an officer or spokesperson.

Feature coverage

Feature articles/coverage are particularly favoured by county and regional lifestyle and business magazines, BBC local radio and TV magazine programmes. The Communications Team will seek out opportunities to gain feature coverage that `goes behind the scenes` eg work of the landscape team, how people can enjoy sport pre 2012, or support for businesses etc. With so much feature coverage being lifestyle, there are opportunities to show a more human face to the Council.

Trade press coverage

In the recent past, the Council has achieved coverage in housing and waste collection magazines. The Communications Team will target relevant trade publications magazines as well First, the MJ, The Councillor and PR Week to promote corporate activity. LG Communications and the Government's I&Dea website welcomes case studies from councils.

Media Briefings and press conferences

If a press release cannot do justice to the story being covered then the Media and Communications Officers will recommend a media briefing. These involve inviting the relevant media to a specially-arranged session. Here they can be briefed by an expert officer.

Media briefings have proven very successful when it comes to helping reporters understand complex issues that will run and run (such as the introduction of the Alternate Waste Collection).

Press conferences are held for major stories or announcements. They have a particular role to play in emergencies.

Online press office

The Communications Team has plans to set up an online press office on the Council's website. This will feature issued press releases, contact details, a protocol for working with the media, and useful information for journalists.

Reactive media relations

Unsolicited media enquiries are not always bad news. And it is important to remember that positive media coverage of the Council far outweighs the negative. But, as a Council, we are limited by laws and by budget. We deal with emotive issues such as housing, so it is inevitable that we will sometimes make decisions that make residents unhappy and that they will contact the media.

Unfortunately, the lines between fact and emotion can become blurred and the perception the public may take from stories in the media is not the view we would like them to take.

Any response to such an enquiry must be mindful of data protection issues and cover all the points which explain our decision, eg legal requirements, financial constraints, eligibility criteria.

Sometimes a story may run for several days, even weeks, especially where readers/viewers/listeners can comment. This can be a particular issue with blogging and social networking websites. There will come a time when further comment from the Council is fruitless and ideally the story `should be killed`. The Communications Team can advise in such situations.

Rebutting every single negative story can be a dangerous game to play and can seriously damage media relations. It is always best to be selective and seek to rebut the most damaging stories only.

The Council will **never** respond to an enquiry with “no comment.” This implies that we have something to hide.

Press statements

Statements are responses to specific media enquiries and are reactive. They can include comment through quotations. Statements need to be turned around quickly in accordance with media deadlines.

5. Protocols for staff

1. All media enquiries must be directed to the Media and Communications Officers as the first point of contact.
2. If a reporter contacts any officer directly, they must be referred back to the Media and Communications Officers. This is to ensure that call is logged and that the right officer (or councillor where appropriate) is contacted to deal with the enquiry.
3. The Media and Communications Officers will contact an appropriate officer to either talk to the reporter or to provide the information needed to respond to the query.
4. Officers should only speak to reporters or do interviews if they have been media trained. Interview and media handling guidance is available from the Communications Team.
5. Only the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive may speak on behalf of the corporate Council, on issues of major importance or controversy.
6. To avoid a 'no comment' situation, the Communications Team may give a holding statement to the press in the absence of any appropriate spokesperson.
7. All press releases, statements, briefings and photo calls should be issued or arranged by the Media and Communications Officers.
8. Any press releases concerning matters which may affect staff in any significant way should only be issued after those affected have been informed by an appropriate Council source.
9. Individual services are responsible for informing Media and Communications Officers of any upcoming newsworthy events (both positive and negative) that are not flagged up on the Forward Plan. This should be done as far in advance as possible.
10. If officers become aware of any issues which may result in bad press for the Council, they should inform the press office as soon as possible. This will ensure that press office is ready to deal with any media enquiries that may follow and that appropriate officers and councillors are briefed.
11. In general, all staff have a duty not to bring the Council in to disrepute in the media.

6. Protocols for Members

1. Council media relations involving individual Councillors must conform to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. This is available from the Council's Monitoring Officer.
2. Members wishing to publicise themselves or their groups for political purposes must do so in an independent capacity without using Council resources.
3. The Communications Team will discuss controversial/crisis issues with Executive Members, as appropriate, before any news is released to the press.
4. Only the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders (or in their absence another delegated member) may speak on behalf of the elected Council.
5. The Mayor may speak on behalf of the Council as its civic representative, without reference to policy or politics.
6. Only the Chair of a committee (or in their absence another delegated member of that committee) may speak on behalf of that committee.
7. Sometimes the media will make direct contact with a member delegated to speak on behalf of the Council. This is understandable as relations can be well established. However, it is imperative that members keep the Communications Team informed of discussions they have with the media on Council business.

Communications Team
September 2009

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th March 2012

GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE UPDATE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	√
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	√
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report follows a report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8th November 2011 and a report to the Executive Committee on 15th November 2011. It provides the Committee with further information on the recommendations made in the final report of the Gritting Short, Sharp Review (May 2011) and on progress that Officers have made working with Worcestershire County Council colleagues to improve the gritting and snow clearance services in the Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) Members note the content of the report and the partnership work with Worcestershire County Council to improve gritting and snow clearing services in the Borough; and**
- 2) Members also note the feedback that is provided in Appendix 1 to the recommendations made in the Gritting Short, Sharp Review that Overview and Scrutiny completed in 2011.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has contributed £15,000 towards a total of £26,000 which has been used to purchase snow clearing equipment that will be used to assist WCC in clearing routes within the Borough and other routes that have been locally identified. The cost of procuring this equipment has been met from within existing budgets. Gritting and snow clearance work and the purchase of rock salt is carried out using existing resources at no additional cost to the Council.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th March 2012

Legal Implications

- 3.2 Redditch Borough Council has no responsibility for gritting or clearing snow from roads or footpaths, this falls to WCC as the Highways Authority. However, as an owner of land the Council needs to undertake reasonable endeavours to make that land safe.
- 3.3 Clare Flanagan, Legal Services Manager, has been consulted in the preparation of the report that contains the Council's policy on gritting/snow clearance that was agreed in November 2011 and in the preparation of this report.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.4 In November 2011 the Council agreed the following policy with regards to gritting/snow clearance:

Redditch Borough Council will strive to keep the following areas, listed in priority order, 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 will only be carried out subject to available resources.
- 3.5 This report is to provide the Committee with feedback on the recommendations made in the final report of the Gritting Short, Sharp Review (May 2011), on progress that officers have made working with WCC colleagues to improve the gritting and snow clearance services in the Borough, since the Committee considered the report in November 2011 and on local gritting and snow clearance routes.
- 3.6 The Gritting Short, Sharp Review made a number of recommendations and an update on each of these is included at Appendix 1. Members will note that a number of improvements have been made and there are strong partnership working arrangements between WCC and the Council. Updates on actions which were agreed at a meeting between the Leader, Chief Executive and Leader and officers of WCC are also included in Appendix 1.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th March 2012

- 3.7 A list of sites for gritting/snow clearance is included at Appendix 2. Members will be aware that the majority of gritting/snow clearance in the Borough is carried out by WCC. The majority of gritting/snow clearance which is carried out by Redditch Borough Council is carried out by Environmental Services cleansing teams. Staff from other service areas will be used in severe weather emergencies where they are unable to undertake normal duties.
- 3.8 We have agreed defined locations within each of the listed areas where gritting takes place where an approximate 1m pedestrian route gritted/snow cleared through the defined areas marked on plans of each site. The list at Appendix 2 is intended as a guide and there may be variation as to the route that is followed depending upon weather conditions and available resources.
- 3.9 Whilst the list at Appendix 2 is provided as a guide, it is important to note that our gritting/snow clearance routes will be subject to change and input from WCC who may need us to deal with an area that they are unable to reach – e.g. a primary or secondary route. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis as part of the conference calls with operational teams during bad weather events.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 There has been no public/stakeholder consultation or service sampling on this subject. However, when there are bad weather events of snow and ice, the Council will receive a large number of calls from residents and businesses. It is therefore important to have a clear approach to gritting and snow clearance and to provide as much information as possible through the website. Frequently Asked Questions and information are available on the council's website and on the WCC website.
- 3.11 Direct.gov provides advice regarding clearing snow and ice from pavements as follows:

“Prevent slips

Pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways - you might need to use more salt on these areas. If you clear snow and ice yourself, be careful - don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. But don't be put off clearing paths because you're afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves. Follow the advice below to make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively.”

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th March 2012

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are two key risks associated with this issue:

Business risk – failure to carry out effective gritting/snow clearance at prioritised agreed locations will result in a loss of business and negative impact, both financial and reputation.

Social risk – failure to carry out effective gritting/snow clearance at prioritised agreed locations can have a negative impact on local residents and communities – e.g. access to local shops.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Detailed update on each of the recommendations made by the Gritting Short, Sharp Review in May 2011.

Appendix 2 Redditch Borough Council's Gritting and Snow Clearance Routes

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 8th November 2011;
Report to Executive Committee, 15th November 2011.

7. KEY

WCC – Worcestershire County Council.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix 1 - Detailed update on each of the recommendations made by the Gritting Short, Sharp Review in May 2011

Recommendations made by the RBC Gritting Short, Sharp Review Group in May 2011 are shown in shaded boxes, a response by Worcestershire County Council/Redditch Borough Council is shown underneath each one.

1) When monitoring the implementation of their recommendations Worcestershire County Council's Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel should observe that the following recommendations proposed in their report, *Gritting: Winter Service Policy*, were not fully implemented in Redditch during the inclement weather in December 2010: recommendations 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 15;

Recommendation 2 - Whilst recognising that the Precautionary Network includes the principal road network, we recommend that other roads should be prioritised for treatment if they meet the following criteria: steep gradient, above a certain height, north facing, a route to shops, medical supplies, emergency and care services and businesses.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: An additional 2.2km had been added to existing gritting routes. The criteria used to determine which roads should receive treatment was an enhanced version based on national guidance used by all local authorities, such as traffic speed, gradient, the gradient of minor roads joining a main road, proximity to a secondary gritting route, whether more than 100 residents would benefit and consideration of the number of vulnerable residents. Worcestershire had increased the emphasis on the people who will benefit.

Another example of enhanced criteria was that most local authorities would not consider a grit bin for areas with less than 50 premises, compared to 20 in Worcestershire.

Members were advised to contact their local highway liaison officer to deal with particular issues about gritting and roads in their local areas.

Recommendation 3 - We believe that there is a special case for keeping routes to schools open and feel this should be a priority of the Council. We recommend the Council considers adding particular school routes to a secondary gritting route, where this would be sensible and cost effective, based on individual schools' circumstances.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: It was confirmed that main school routes were now all covered by secondary gritting routes. In addition, the principle of conference calls with the fire service during 'Silver' severe weather to discuss assistance in clearing school access where appropriate had been established. One such call was made last year.

Recommendation 5 - We recommend that the Council consults with businesses and bus companies on priority gritting routes.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: All public service bus routes were also now on secondary, if not primary, gritting routes. Principal business and retail locations have also been taken into account after engagement with the business community.

Recommendation 6 - Hertfordshire has a Closure Notification System, where head teachers text updates on school closures directly to the Council's website. This has been very successful and the Council is looking to extend it to other high use services. We recommend that the Council considers adopting a similar system. The System will eliminate the need for teachers to telephone or email their status to the Council. It should reduce the stress on school websites, and the Customer Service Centre.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: It had been recommended that this Council adopts a similar system to that of Hertfordshire, which has a closure notification system where head teachers text updates on school closures direct to the council's website. Members believed that texting directly from schools was happening and working well. The Head of Integrated Transport would seek an update on progress from Children's Services (within whose remit this issue fell) and advise the Panel in due course.

Recommendation 7 - The Panel noted that some roads (not on gritting routes) are particularly dangerous, such as where a steep downhill minor road joins a main road. Or, where a road is above a certain height, north facing and known to be a problem previously during bad weather. These roads would benefit from grit bins and we recommend that these are considered when the current criteria are evaluated during the annual winter service review.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: In response to a question about the number of requests for grit bins, Members were advised that last year 500 – 600 were made and of these, 150 requests were met. It was highlighted that grit bins were only supplied on roads and not on a gritting route.

Recommendation 10 - The Panel considers that twenty pre-accredited arrangements with farmers is comparatively few given the size of the county and that the number should be increased. Although the Council advertises for farmers to put themselves forward, we recommend that the Council asks Parishes to nominate a farmer in their area who might be willing to apply. We further recommend that the Council increases its efforts to advertise for farmers to help with gritting and road clearance.

Update September 2011 at meeting of WCC Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: It was good news that potentially 71 farmers could be contracted to help clear rural roads, although not all of those contracted by parishes had responded positively. A Member advised that last year a farmer had spent about a week clearing local rural roads around Bromsgrove and Redditch.

In response to a question about the difficulties experienced clearing snow from urban areas, particularly dual carriageways in Redditch, Members were advised that some new lower snow plough equipment (produced in Germany) had been purchased to trial this year.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility advised that he, and County Council officers responsible for winter services had met with senior officers and leaders in Redditch Borough Council to explore and improve joint working during severe weather.

It was noted that there were good relationships with district councils, which provided invaluable extra resources. Cleansing and refuse crews not able to carry out normal duties during severe weather doubled the available staff for snow clearing.

Recommendation 11 - Currently, we understand there is a degree of consultation with the emergency services about core gritting routes, however we believe it is important to take into account the views of the emergency services and therefore recommend that the Council consults fully with these groups. [paragraph 65]

Update September 2011 at meeting of Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: It was good that the Council had fully consulted with the emergency services resulting in the identification of critical short links and better joint understanding of priorities and resource limitations.

Recommendation 15 - **Currently the Council's website shows a countywide salting route map and maps of the salting routes in the main towns in each of the six districts. However, the Panel found it was still sometimes difficult to tell whether a particular road was on the gritting route, particularly for the countywide map and towns such as Tenbury or Droitwich, which don't have dedicated maps. Some of the maps appear side ways. We therefore recommend that the Council improves the clarity of the precautionary and secondary gritting route maps on its website.**

Update September 2011 at meeting of Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel: The improvement in the winter service website was welcomed. However, some of the gritting route maps were still quite small and difficult to navigate and had technical glitches. The Panel was advised that improvements were being sought through further discussions with staff from Information and Business Systems (IBS).

- 2) the co-ordination of responses to inclement weather should be delegated to the district level; and**
a) responses should involve local stakeholders planning local solutions to local problems;

Discussions between the Leader and Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council have established that WCC is unable to delegate co-ordination of responses to the district level. However, during bad weather events regular conference calls are held with operational teams to discuss both county wide and local issues and the Council's Chief Executive and Communications Manager are included in bad weather alert emails which WCC circulate. Additionally, with financial contribution from WCC, Redditch Borough Council has purchased snow clearing equipment which will be used to assist WCC where needed as well as clear locally identified priority routes.

- 3) Redditch Borough Council should urge Worcestershire County Council to adopt this local approach to co-ordinating responses to inclement weather;**

As per the response above, we can confirm that there is much improved partnership working between WCC and districts.

- 4) Resources, suitable for local needs, should be available to access in Redditch when needed;**

Redditch Borough Council has procured specialist snow clearing and gritting equipment and WCC have contributed £15k to the cost of this. Officers have discussed with WCC areas of the town that the Borough Council will help to clear and grit during snow events but it should be noted that there has to remain some flexibility to deal with issues on a case by case basis as needed and therefore the routes and schedules cannot be completely pre-planned.

- 5) The precautionary gritting route map needs to be agreed with district Councils to make use of local knowledge;**

The Winter Service web has been completely overhauled. It now includes much more detailed and clear maps of precautionary and secondary routes with explanations of their purpose and when these are triggered. In addition an interactive map of grit bins is being produced that will enable the public to report service requests for refilling, damage, etc. WCC is satisfied that the Precautionary Gritting Routes are best optimised. They are reviewed every year after the Winter Season and are adjusted slightly in light of any areas of concern or significant change in circumstance (e.g. road adoptions).

- 6) Worcestershire County Council and Redditch Borough Council should:**
a) identify and use local private resources, including farmers' tractors, for snow clearance;

WCC are able to contract with local farmers to clear snow in certain areas. WCC has provided RBC with details of the contract arrangements which are based around the type/make of plant available, availability on any one day and areas in which it could operate. Members can request further details if they would wish to pass this onto local farmers in their wards. See also the update to Recommendation 10 above.

WCC use a contractor farmer located in Tardebigge who is available to cover any area of Bromsgrove or Redditch and are always looking to add any other local contractors in the Redditch area are who would be able to assist at times of severe weather.

b) Identify and use smaller, more suitable vehicles to clear snow on smaller urban roads; and

WCC have invested in new equipment for gritting and snow clearance. Also as above, Redditch Borough Council has procured specialist snow clearing and gritting equipment and WCC have contributed £15k to the cost of this. As above, officers have discussed with WCC areas of the town that the Borough Council will help to clear and grit during snow events but it should be noted that there has to remain some flexibility to deal with issues on a case by case basis as needed and therefore the routes and schedules cannot be completely pre-planned.

c) identify and develop a list of emergency additional labour forces that could be used to clear snow during inclement weather;

During bad weather events regular conference calls are held with operational teams to discuss both county wide and local issues, including available resources at the local level.

7) There should be a service available to deploy 24 hours a day 7 days a week locally in response to inclement weather;

WCC's gritting service operates on a 24/7 basis as required during the winter period. Redditch Borough Council's access to resources is dependent upon weather conditions and unfortunately due to limited resources is limited to working hours.

8) Worcestershire County Council should meet with representatives of Redditch Borough Council to clarify the standards expected from each other in relation to snow clearance;

This has been done, the Leader and Chief Executive have met with WCC and officers at an operational level are holding regular meetings – this is reflected in the update provided at the meeting of Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel, September 2011, as above.

**9) Grit bins should be filled when requested. (However, we recognise that it may not be possible to fill grit bins immediately). Therefore:
a) members of the public who request that their grit bin be restocked should be clearly advised when this will take place;**

An interactive map of grit bins has been produced that enables the public to report service requests for refilling, damage, etc. Whilst WCC will try and respond as fast as possible, due to the unpredictable nature of demand they are unable to give an exact timescale for the work to be completed. We have agreed that we will assist WCC in filling grit bins if this is needed during snow events, and this is arranged via the conference calls.

b) a schedule for restocking grit bins should be published for public consideration in a clearly accessible format; and

Unfortunately this cannot be done as this depends on demand and the use of a bin; however as indicated above, the information available via the WCC website in relation to grit bins is much improved and Redditch Borough Council will assist WCC in filling grit bins during periods of bad weather.

c) if the snow is worse than expected one tonne tote bags should be distributed to roads where needed as an emergency measure;

WCC have said that this is not something that they would wish to do as grit supplies have to be carefully managed.

10) Worcestershire County Council ensure that following information on the Council's website is presented in a more user friendly manner:

- a) general information about gritting and snow clearance;
- b) gritting routes;
- c) snow ploughing routes together with clarification as to whether these routes are the same as the gritting routes;
- d) grit bin locations;
- e) and when gritting, snow ploughing and the filling of grit bins will take place;

As above, the Winter Service web has been completely overhauled. It now includes much more detailed and clear maps of precautionary and secondary routes with explanations of their purpose and when these are triggered. In addition an interactive map of grit bins is being produced that will enable the public to report service requests for refilling, damage, etc.

11) The successful approach that Worcestershire County Council has adopted to communicate road conditions to the schools should be extended to all stakeholders;

Prior to the winter season all WCC managed schools were contacted in regard of additional grit bin provision; this is no different to WCC's approach with all Worcestershire Parish & Town Councils.

A daily press release is issued during times of inclement weather detailing proposed winter maintenance action.

The decision regarding gritting activity is posted on Twitter and also published on the WCC website, and also communicated to stakeholders including Redditch Borough Council each day.

12) Worcestershire County Council and Redditch Borough Council should ensure that clear information about both the road conditions and public transport is provided when communicating with the public during inclement weather;

As above, each day our decision regarding gritting activity is posted on Twitter and published on the WCC website. Stakeholders (nominated recipients) also receive an email to precisely detail WCC actions. This includes RBC and may be repeated throughout the night during times of extreme weather.

The RBC Chief Executive Officer and Press Officer are now included on the mailing list.

Redditch Borough Council has improved the information on its website following the adoption of the local policy relating to gritting and snow clearance in November 2011.

13) Worcestershire County Council's Highways Department should:

- a) be available for all relevant bodies, particularly the emergency services, to contact directly and quickly and at all times; and**
- b) be more responsive to residents.**

WCC is available for contact 24/7 by relevant bodies, particularly emergency services, all of whom have 24 hour out of office contact numbers.

The public may contact WCC via the Worcestershire Hub. During out of office hours, answer phones give details of emergency contact numbers. WCC has well documented and published service level agreements for response to public enquiries.

Actions taken following meeting in July 2011 between Leader and Chief Executive with WCC Leader and WCC officers

- 1. Both Kevin Dicks and Anne-Marie Darroch to be added to decision e-mail regarding winter maintenance activities, which is sent out every day and which details our actions for the day and/or night.**

Currently sent to David Kesterton and Redditch Contact Centre. If there are further additions to this then RBC to inform WCC.

Kevin and Anne-Marie now receive these emails.

2. **Jon Fraser to contact Anne-Marie Darroch to discuss communication and publicity issues during winter activities.**

Jon Fraser and Anne-Marie Darroch have discussed communication and publicity during winter activities.

3. **WCC to create PDF files of gritting route maps and email them to RBC.**

PDF files of gritting route maps have been produced and received.

4. **RBC to consider salt storage capacity and advise WCC if additional salt required prior to winter season.**

RBC considered and felt that there was no need for additional salt to cover this winter. We stock around 90 tonnes of rock salt and we feel that this is a sensible amount and got us through the bad weather in 2010/11 – however, this does depend on controlling the application of grit carefully. We do have capacity to store extra amounts but this has to be balanced against the risk of ordering salt which is not used – salt has to be managed carefully as if it is not stored correctly, it cannot be used.

5. **RBC to consider requirement for Borough funded grit bins which WCC will supply at cost price, and salt at discounted rates. WCC currently writing to Parish Councils across Worcestershire with a similar offer.**

This was considered in the report to Executive in November 2011 where it was agreed that the Borough would not provide additional grit bins.

6. **RBC to consider and discuss with us joint working arrangements when operatives are unable to work due to extreme conditions.**

RBC have discussed joint working arrangements and effective use of resources when operatives are unable to carry out their normal duties and priority areas/tasks are agreed on a case by case basis during the regular conference calls that take place during extreme weather events.

7. **RBC to provide WCC detail of any farmers or other contacts who may be potential winter maintenance contractors – we will let you have our contract details and paperwork in this regard.**

WCC use a contractor farmer located in Tardebigge who is available to cover any area of Bromsgrove or Redditch and are always looking to add any other local contractors in the Redditch area are who would be able to

assist at times of severe weather. WCC has provided RBC with details of the contract arrangements which are based around the type/make of plant available, availability on any one day and areas in which it could operate. Members can request further details if they would wish to pass this onto local farmers in their wards.

8. **RBC suggested that we could train some of our drivers on snow ploughs to provide cover (only at emergency times) – WCC to check with contractor / their insurance to ensure this would be okay.**

WCC have confirmed that they have adequate cover for snow plough operation and there would be insurance implications for our drivers to undertake this work; therefore this option will not need to be pursued.

Appendix 2 - Redditch Borough Council Gritting/Snow Clearing Routes

**Priority 1 locations for mechanical/hand snow clearance/gritting
All will be gritted by 10:00. However snow clearance would take longer
and it is difficult to give exact time.**

Town Centre, outdoor market area

Town Hall Car Park** ,Trafford Park car park** & Walter Stranz Square and a number of other WCC owned key areas including:

- Slopes to underpass under Ipsley Street
- Access to Town Hall crèche
- Unicorn Hill
- Church Green West (both sides of road)
- Alcester Street
- Top of Easemore Road - bus stop area

****Town Hall & Trafford Park car parks will also be treated/cleared at weekends as they are pay & display car parks** and to allow access for staff who work in the Monitoring Centre (Town Hall)**

Crossgates depot and car park

Crematorium

Abbey Stadium - car park areas and Bordesley Lane if necessary (WCC route)

Queens Cottages & St David's House

Woodrow Centre, Medical Centre & Bredon House & access to neighbourhood office (to allow access for home support service).

Matchborough Centre

Winyates Centre

Church Hill Centre

**Priority 2 locations for hand snow clearance/gritting
Identified as priority locations by home support service as starting points, these will be started once priority 1 locations are completed.**

Ibstock House & Sheltered Accommodation

Mendip House & Loxley Close Sheltered Accommodation

Harry Taylor House (Winstone Close) Sheltered Accommodation

Arthur Jobson House (Johnson Close) Sheltered Accommodation

Beoley Road West Sheltered Accommodation

Evesham Road Scheme (120 to 190B) Sheltered Accommodation

**Priority 2 locations for mechanical snow clearance/gritting
Determined by waste collection day and including other known local hot spots**

Monday

Ipsley Church Lane (up to Church)

Waste collection rounds 2,5

Woodrow South, Grafton Close, Longdon Close, Martley Close, Ombersley Close, Salford Close, Tredington Close, Rushock Close, Woodrow North, Astley Close, Bengrove Close, Bushley Close, Cropthorne Close, Doverdale Close, Eckington Close

Tuesday**Waste collection rounds 1,3,4,6**

Littlewoods, Forest View, Crabbs Cross Lane, Priestfield Road and if possible to access St Peter's Close, Grangers Lane and where possible closes off, Greenlands Avenue, Auxerre Avenue, Dowlers Hill, Highland Way, Paddock Lane, Hightrees Close, Guinness Close, Ellerdene Close, Hollowfields Close, Ashperton Close, Lodge Road, Marsden Road

Wednesday
Waste collection rounds 1,3,5,6 Jubilee Avenue, Clent Avenue, Yvonne Road, Campden Close, Mason Road, Plymouth Close/Court, Feckenham Road, Tennyson Road, Middle Piece Drive, Great Barn Lane and where possible closes off, Foxholes Lane and where possible closes off
Thursday
Waste collection rounds 3,4,5 Vicarage Crescent, Vicarage View (if access), Coppice Close, Ferney Hill Lane, Holmwood Drive, Prophets Close, Bentley Close, St David's House/Queens Cottages, Wheelers Lane, Pennyford Close
Friday
Waste collection rounds 2,4,5,6 Rickyard Lane, Exhall Close, Greystone Close, Loxley Close, Riding Lane, Stoke Lane, Thornbury Lane, Seven Acres lane, Donnington Close, Edgeworth Close, Heronfield Close, Northleach Close, Astwood Bank – all accessible roads
Priority 3 locations for hand snow clearance/gritting All other locations where there gritting/snow clearance may be carried out subject to available resources or on request
Central
Holloway Park (4-11) Sheltered Accommodation
St. Phillips Terrace Sheltered Accommodation
St. George's Gardens Sheltered Accommodation
Bentley Close Sheltered Accommodation
Plymouth Road Cemetery
Forge Mill Museum Site
Easmore Road footway (WCC/RBC)
Salop Road footway (WCC/RBC)
Ivor Road footway (WCC/RBC)
Mayfields footway (WCC/RBC)
East
Chiltern House SA (Haseley Close) Sheltered Accommodation
Ashorne Close SA (65-67) Sheltered Accommodation
Brinklow Close - (28-36) Sheltered Accommodation
Drayton Close Sheltered Accommodation
Eathorpe Close Sheltered Accommodation
Frankton Close Sheltered Accommodation
Illmington Close Sheltered Accommodation
Grendon Close Sheltered Accommodation
Yardley Close Sheltered Accommodation
Winslow Close Sheltered Accommodation
Leysters Close Sheltered Accommodation
Treville Close Sheltered Accommodation
Furze Lane (Meeting Room)
Arrow Vale Sports Centre
North (Church Hill)
Chedworth Close Sheltered Accommodation
Fulbrook Close Sheltered Accommodation
Flanders Close – (29-37) Sheltered Accommodation
Deans Close – (31-42) Sheltered Accommodation
Upperfield Close Sheltered Accommodation

Sandhurst Close Sheltered Accommodation
North (Batchley)
Pitcheroak Cottages Sheltered Accommodation
Hawthorn Road (Childrens' Centre)
Willow Way (Yew Tree Close) Sheltered Accommodation
Cedar Road Sheltered Accommodation
Cedar View Sheltered Accommodation
Haresfield Close (Specific Areas) Sheltered Accommodation
Roxborough House Sheltered Accommodation
Mount Pleasant Sheltered Accommodation (Top of Tilehouse)
Mount Pleasant - (17-31) Sheltered Accommodation
Sycamore Avenue – (30-36) Sheltered Accommodation
South
Manor House Sheltered Accommodation
Western Hill Close Sheltered Accommodation
Retreat Street Sheltered Accommodation
Gorsey Close Sheltered Accommodation
Coupass Cottages Sheltered Accommodation
Whitchurch Close (Oakenshaw) Sheltered Accommodation
Paddock Lane Sheltered Accommodation
Mickleton Close Sheltered Accommodation
Fladbury Close – (1-25) Sheltered Accommodation
Kingsley High School (Leys) – (Entrance to Sports & Leisure Centre)
South West
Downsell House Sheltered Accommodation
Lyndenwood Sheltered Accommodation
Ashton Close – (13-22) Sheltered Accommodation
Malvern House & Fordbridge Close Sheltered Accommodation
St. Lukes Cottages Sheltered Accommodation
Chapel Street – (6-22) Sheltered Accommodation
Keats House Sheltered Accommodation
Kenilworth Close Sheltered Accommodation
Forest View Sheltered Accommodation
Crabbs Cross Lane – (17-35) Sheltered Accommodation
Leacroft Sheltered Accommodation
Light Oak Close – (50-56) Sheltered Accommodation
Banners Lane – (106-114) Sheltered Accommodation
Stonepits Lane footway (WCC/RBC)
Priority 3 locations for mechanical snow clearance/gritting All other locations where there gritting/snow clearance may be carried out subject to available resources or on request
Industrial Areas Burnt Meadow Road, Merse Road, Walkers Road, Colemeadow Road, Fringe Meadow Road, Madeley Road

Portfolio Holder Annual Report

Portfolio: Community Leadership and
Partnership

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Carole Gandy

Year: 2011/12

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Please provide a summary of progress over the last year (no more than one page).

Community Leadership

A range of community engagement activities have been undertaken including a stand at the Morton Stanley Festival and roadshows around the Borough, including a very successful day at the Kingfisher Centre during the January sales where over 150 residents and visitors to the Borough had their say. The Budget Jury process was also repeated this year, with 14 residents involved and their feedback was extremely positive. The Community Forum has continued to meet and has been working towards the Betty Passingham 'No Barriers' Disabled Access Awards, in addition to having an individual stand at the Morton Stanley Festival. There was a joint LGBT History Month programme with Bromsgrove, coordinated by the Policy Officer (Equalities), a new Interpretation and Translation Policy drafted to make the process easier for frontline staff and work started under the requirements of the Equality Act.

Corporate Policy

The Council Plan 2011-14 was approved, supported by a corporate performance indicator set. The number of indicators reported corporately was reduced during the year to reflect the changes that a systems thinking approach will bring to the Council, with work progressing on how transformation will change corporate strategy and policy going forward. There has also been analysis of consultation and demographic data undertaken to support the development of strategic purposes for the Borough. During the year there have also been negotiations with the Research and Intelligence Unit at Worcestershire County Council to bring an analyst and insight capacity in to support the Policy Team, which will be implemented April 2012.

Communications

Since April the Communications Team is now a shared across Redditch and Bromsgrove. Three editions of Redditch Matters have been published and a Council Tax leaflet. The team has continued to support the Council with proactive and reactive media liaison including campaigns such as the Abbey Stadium naming competition and subsequent open day publicity and the Every Customer, Every Time project.

Partnerships

The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and its associated action plans were agreed and signed off in March 2011. Since then, the Health and Well Being Sub Group and the Redditch Local Children's Partnership have been working to deliver on actions to tackle health inequalities and raising educational achievement and aspirations. The Redditch Partnership also held its annual conference in June 2011. Partner

organisations and agencies were invited to discuss the new SCS and how they could contribute to the delivery of this strategy for Redditch.

Voluntary Sector

The Stronger Communities grants supported 24 smaller community groups with grant of up to £500 in 2012/13. This allowed the Council the opportunity to engage with groups that historically have been under the radar, feeling that they are ineligible to apply for funding. The 2012/13 grants programme will fund a 3 year training programme to support infrastructure & capacity building within the local Voluntary Sector in place for 2012/13 to 2014/15.

2. Performance

2.1. Please detail areas of good performance over the past year.

- Budget Jury was both popular and successful.
- Morton Stanley festival community engagement presence.
- Supported road shows and other community engagement events (e.g. Caribbean Roots event, Chinese New Year).
- Council Plan agreed.
- Quarterly reporting of performance.
- First joint LGBT History Month programme with Bromsgrove.
- Well received equalities training for Members.
- Interpretation and Translation Policy.
- First ever 'Summer sports' pull-out launched as a centre spread in Summer Redditch Matters – and a Christmas events pull-out followed in the Winter edition.
- Press releases and day to day media management – including Trading Standards for WRS.
- Promotion of Shared Services nationally to highlight the Council's forward thinking approach
- Leader's column ongoing
- Proactive presence on Twitter of campaigns e.g. Britain in Bloom
- Managed media at May election
- Worked with departments to promote events and campaigns including Democracy Day, Morton Stanley, Abbey Stadium, Winyates, Church Hill development and community grants.
- Produced Council Tax leaflet
- Procured new company to sell adverts in Redditch Matters on behalf of the Council
- Launch of Staff newsletter 'Oracle' and Oracle e-mail service
- Supported the Council's Youth Services Provision Task Group and the Increasing Recycling Rates Task Group.
- Redditch Career's Fair organised by a range of partners
- Redditch Partnership Conference

- Closer working relationships with the Bromsgrove and Redditch Clinical Commissioning Group
- Establishment of the Local Joined Up Working Group (lead by Kevin Dicks)
- Completion of the Capital project in Winyates
- Drafting of Winning Winyates (AoHN) outcomes and measures
- Champions' Visit to Winning Winyates project
- The grants team delivered several training, networking and up-skilling opportunities to the VCS in 2011.
- Grant Bid Writing Workshop – 25 attendees
- Health & Safety Training – 30 attendees
- 2 day Outcomes Training – 16 Attendees
- Grant Information Coffee Morning – 50+ attendee's
- The grants team produce a monthly newsletter that highlights projects, profiles groups and advertises funding available to the sector.

2.2. Please detail key performance indicators that are of concern

Key Performance Indicators – Areas of Concern			
PI Ref	PI Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on budget
	No areas of concern identified		

3. Revenue Budget

3.1. Explain problem areas – what has been done, what is planned to be done – impact on priorities, key deliverables

Revenue Budget – Areas of Concern			
Budget Code	Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on performance and priorities
0421 / 0419	Redditch Partnership Budget	There is a small (approximately £1,500) budget for the Redditch Partnership. In the past this funding has	Lack of a budget will mean that Partnership activities such as promotion, consultation and other Partnership

		<p>been provided by the Council and other partners but contributions have since ceased and this funding is now dwindling. In the future, as this money decreases, a small budget bid will need to be made or further contributions from partners will have to be encouraged.</p>	<p>networking events will be restricted or will not take place.</p>
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4. Capital Budget

- 4.1. Explain problem areas – what has been done, what is planned to be done – impact on priorities, key deliverables

Revenue Budget – Areas of Concern			
Budget Code	Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on performance and priorities
	No areas of concern identified		

5. The Year Ahead

5.1 Please detail the portfolio holder's main areas of focus in 2012/2013:-

Community Leadership

The start of the SLA with Worcestershire County Council to provide analyst/customer insight support (matrix managed by the Policy Manager) should support the community leadership agenda with a greater analysis of and better targeted community engagement. There will be an evaluation of the Budget Jury and further public involvement through the next budget round, reflecting the changes that are happening internally through transformation. The roadshow programme will continue, hopefully building on the success of the last roadshow at the Kingfisher Centre, with a further event planned for May, and having a presence at Morton Stanley and any proposed Street Theatres. There will be a review of "walking the wards" in order to enable a more target approach and specific engagement activity (both areas and relevant partner events). The Community Forum will be supported to grow and develop, bringing the needs of different equality groups to the Council. There will also be further work to develop the Council's response to the Equality Act.

Corporate Policy

With the move away from performance indicators to measures, the Policy Team will be working with Business Transformation to develop and support operational measures and the corporate dashboard of measures, subject to approval by Members. This will also change how performance is reported, which should hopefully enable a more responsive management of our performance. The start of the SLA with Worcestershire County Council to provide analyst/customer insight support (matrix managed by the Policy Manager) should increase the capacity of the team to support the corporate policy agenda, in particular, understanding our data and demand. The Council Plan will be reworked to reflect the strategic purposes of the Council and will be an evolving document, reflecting the changes that interventions and the transformation programme will have and will be updating to include the corporate dashboard when it goes live.

Communications

The Communications Team will continue to produce 3 copies of Redditch Matters and provide continued proactive and reactive media support to the Council including managing the media at the Election in May. We will continue to provide marketing support across the Council and its departments to raise the profile of events and campaigns. We want to spend some time making sure the staff intranet is up to date and utilised. We are also involved in the Communications Scrutiny Report.

Partnerships

The membership of the Local Children's Partnership is to be widened to increase the involvement of voluntary sector groups who deliver services to young people. This is to ensure the group is fit for purpose to act as an advisory board to the new Commissioning Group for the distribution of the Positive Activities funding. The Health and Wellbeing Sub Group will continue to look at issues around obesity, smoking and alcohol but will also consider the relationship of mental health to these issues. Redditch Partnership Board will look to host its second annual conference in the summer of 2012. The Joined Up Working Group will continue to examine how partners work together in a locality using transformation methods.

Voluntary Sector and Grants

The Councils 2012/13 Voluntary & Community Sector Grants Programme includes themes that encourage projects to increase local capacity in the community and supporting training and volunteering opportunities within the town. The grants team will look raise the profile and increase the range of projects delivered by the local Voluntary & Community Sector in Redditch. The grants team has been invited by Droitwich Spa & Rural Voluntary Service to participate in a funding fair on 5th March, delivering one to one sessions and a workshop on Redditch Borough Council's grant programme.

The 3 year training and infrastructure funding opportunity will be advertised for providers to tender in February 2012. By working in partnership with a recognised provider we will identify ways in which the voluntary and community sectors are supported in developing their 'capacity'. We will continually review current practice and experience within the sector, and identify early trends and respond to these as required.

The outcomes identified for 2012/13 are:

- To increase awareness of Redditch Borough Council's grant process
- To increase the standard of grant applications
- To improve communication within the sector
- To increase partnership working within the sector
- Increase funding the local VSC organisations attract to the Borough due to up-skilling opportunities offered as part of the Councils capacity building support plan

Actions requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Action Requested	Action to be Taken	Response
24th January 2012 1	Officers to report back to the Committee at a later date on the outcomes of transformation and the implications for the recommendations detailed in the final report of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review.	Officers to schedule a date for this update to be presented for the consideration of the Committee. TO BE DONE
24th January 2012 2	Members questioned expenditure levels detailed in the report in relation to the Home Repairs Grant (for over 60s).	Email with clarification sent on 21 February 2012 DONE
24th January 2012 3	Members questioned the projected variance figures for Audit Services. Officers to provide further information about the projected variance figures for Audit Services for 2011/12, whether this projected variance is likely to be ongoing and why.	Email with clarification sent on 21 February 2012 DONE
14th February 2012 4	Members commented that the proposed concession rates increase for use of the Abbey Stadium and Arrow Vale Sports Centres appeared to be disproportionate to that of the proposed increase in the Reddicard charge.	Relevant Officers to provide written clarification on this matter and to circulate to Members TO BE DONE
14th February 2012 5	Members queried how a 5% rather than 7% increase in actual average rent in 2012/13 for social housing tenants would impact on funding for the Capital Programme.	Officers to obtain requested information and circulate to members accordingly. TO BE DONE

<p>14th February 2012</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Members commented that there were a number of road signage errors within the Borough. Comments would be forwarded onto relevant Officers to correct the errors.</p>	<p>Members comments forwarded onto relevant Officers on 16 February 2012</p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>14th February 2012</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Members developed a list of questions to be addressed by Councillor Pearce during delivery of her Portfolio Holder Annual Report for the consideration of the Committee on 6th March 2012.</p>	<p>Officers to record and circulate for the consideration of the Portfolio Holder and relevant Officers.</p> <p>(Questions sent by email on 15 February 2012)</p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>14th February 2012</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Members requested further information on the planned disposal route for Roxboro House – including whether it was the intention to list the flats on the market for sale.</p>	<p>Officers to obtain requested information and circulate to members accordingly.</p> <p>(Information circulated by email on 15 February 2012)</p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>14th February 2012</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Members proposed that the <i>Housing Allocations Policy Review</i> report be considered for pre-scrutiny. This was awaiting a date to be considered by Council.</p>	<p>Officers to add this report to the Committee's Work Programme.</p> <p>DONE</p>



Executive Committee

20th February 2012

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall, Jinny Pearce, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor and Mr M Collins (Vice Chair, Standards Committee)

Officers:

T Beech, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, S Morgan, J Pickering, S Skinner and J Smyth

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

163. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

164. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

165. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

.....
Chair

166. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS - ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012-13

The Committee considered the recommendations for the coming year from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils. The Leader advised the meeting that she considered Members were placed in an invidious position each year in having to determine the level of remuneration applicable to them, most particularly at a time of considerable economic pressure. She suggested that levels of remuneration should be set externally by Central Government, or the Remuneration Panel (IRP) itself.

She recommended that the budget for Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances remain at the same level as proposed by the IRP for 2011/12 and 2012/13. However, individual Members would have the discretion as to whether they accepted the full level of allowances available to them or the lower amount that had been taken by most Members in the previous year.

It was proposed that the Member Support Steering Group should critically consider the present apportionment of Special Responsibility Allowances to determine whether they were set at the appropriate levels and targeted at the appropriate positions. An amendment to the Scheme was also proposed to bring the travel allowances for Members in line with those now set for Officers by incorporating an additional amount for carrying a qualifying passenger.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) in view of the continuing exceptional economic circumstances, the Basic Allowance remains unchanged from the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations from 2011/12 for 2012/13 at £3350 per Councillor;**
- 2) the Special Responsibility Allowances similarly remain unchanged for 2012/13, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- 3) travel allowances for 2012/13 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance (currently 45p per mile) and an additional 5p per mile be paid for each qualifying passenger;**
- 4) subsistence allowances for 2012/13 remain unchanged;**

- 5) **the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged; and**
- 6) **for Parish Councils in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by the Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**

167. INITIAL ESTIMATES REPORT 2012/13, 2012/14 AND 2014/15 AND STATEMENT OF PAY POLICY

The meeting received a report setting out the estimates for spending for each service and any high priority capital and revenue bids for the coming years, together with a proposed Statement of Pay Policy document.

Officers highlighted the ongoing financial pressures on the authority and the expectation that these would continue for the next two years at least. The Finance Team had undertaken a rigorous examination of service budgets to identify areas for savings and additional scrutiny of the budget bids had been provided by both the Council's Budget Jury and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Savings were being achieved through measures such as the sharing of services, the Single Management Team and Transformation. However, it was proposed that £259,000 be taken from balances in the current year, retaining what was considered a prudent level of reserves of £901,000.

The Localism Act had placed a new requirement on local authorities, the publication of a Pay Policy Statement, and this had been incorporated as an appendix to the current report. It was noted that the levels of pay reflected in the Policy Statement reflected the position prior to Job Evaluation as that was still awaiting final agreement by all parties. It was also noted that the Statement incorrectly asserted that the Head of Housing post was a shared cost, whereas it was a cost borne solely by Redditch.

The Leader stated that the budget proposals were focussed on investment in the Council's equipment, staff and physical resources as well as the environment and local neighbourhoods. Whilst the Council would have liked to have invested more in services, this was not possible in the current financial situation.

It was finally noted that the Taxpayers' Alliance had recently congratulated the Council on the reduction achieved in its management cost by transferring to a shared management team.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the high bids as identified in Appendix A to the report be approved:

2012/13	£116,000
2013/14	£101,000
2014/15	£101,000;

- 2) the high capital bids as detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved:

2012/13	£1,217,000
2013/14	£1,586,000
2014/15	£1,687,000;

- 3) the use of balances totalling £259,000 be approved;
- 4) the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix D to the report be approved;
- 5) the retention by Redditch Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Club of the sum representing the refund on VAT on the grant funded works undertaken at their grounds in 2005/06 be approved and, in return, the Club agree to relieve the Council's of its commitment to provide a sinking fund for the refurbishment/replacement of the all weather pitch (ATP) which will in future be the exclusive responsibility of the Club; and
- 6) the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be requested to prepare an agreement that brings Resolution 5), above, about.

168. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX 2012/13

Members considered the report that would enable them to set the level of Council Tax for the Borough for the coming year.

Given the prevailing economic conditions and the effect that this was having on the residents of the Borough it was proposed that the Council Tax level for 2012/13 remain at the same level it had been for the previous two years.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **it be noted that at its meeting on the 16th of January 2012 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2012/13 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:**
 - a) **27,611.67**

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year;
 - b) **Feckenham Parish – 363.60**

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;
- 2) **the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:**
 - a) **£ 71,045,020**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account the precept issued by Feckenham Parish Council.

(2012/13 Gross General Fund Expenditure)
 - b) **£65,260,831**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

(2012/13 Gross General Fund Income)
 - c) **£5,784,189**

being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.

(2012/13 Council Tax Requirement)

d) **£209.48**

being the amount at 2 (c) above divided by the amount at 1 (a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including parish precept).

(The average amount Band D properties pay for Redditch Borough Council services)

e) **£8,300**

being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act;

(Feckenham Parish Precept)

f) **£209.18**

being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates.

(The amount Band D properties pay (except within the Parish of Feckenham) for Borough Council Services)

g) **£232.01**

being the amount given by adding to the amount at 2(f) above, the amount of the special item relating to the Parish of Feckenham, divided by the amount in 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the Parish of Feckenham;

(The amount Band D properties pay within the Parish of Feckenham for Borough Council Services including the Parish Precept)

h)

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Part of Council's area	
		Parish of Feckenham	All other parts of the Councils area
A	6/9	£154.67	£139.46
B	7/9	£180.45	£162.70
C	8/9	£206.23	£185.94
D	1	£232.01	£209.18
E	11/9	£283.57	£255.67
F	13/9	£335.13	£302.15
G	15/9	£386.68	£348.64
H	18/9	£464.02	£418.37

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2(f) and 2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands;

- 3) **it be noted that, for the year 2012/13, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:**

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Precepting Authority		
		Worcestershire County Council	West Mercia Police Authority	H & W Fire & Rescue Authority
A	6/9	£692.71	£119.15	£49.10
B	7/9	£808.16	£139.00	£57.28

Executive Committee

20th February 2012

C	8/9	£923.61	£158.86	£65.46
D	1	£1,039.06	£178.72	£73.64
E	11/9	£1,269.97	£218.44	£90.01
F	13/9	£1,500.87	£258.15	£106.38
G	15/9	£1,731.77	£297.87	£122.74
H	18/9	£2,078.13	£357.44	£147.28

- 4) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2(h) and 3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2012/13 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Part of Council's area	
		Parish of Feckenham	All other parts of the Council's area
A	6/9	£1,015.63	£1,000.42
B	7/9	£1,184.89	£1,167.14
C	8/9	£1,354.16	£1,333.87
D	1	£1,523.43	£1,500.60
E	11/9	£1,861.99	£1,834.09
F	13/9	£2,200.53	£2,167.55
G	15/9	£2,539.06	£2,501.02
H	18/9	£3,046.87	£3,001.22

- 5) the level of General Fund balances to be utilised in 2012/13 be £258,945; and
- 6) the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2012/13 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined for the year by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZB Local Government Act 1992.

The Meeting commenced at 7.04 pm
and closed at 7.28 pm

.....
Chair



Executive Committee

21st February 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Jinny Pearce, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Peter Anderson and Robin King

Officers:

M Bough, E Cartwright, C Flanagan, D Hancox, S Hanley, J Knott, T Kristunas, D Poole and L Tompkin

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

169. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Michael Braley.

170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

171. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Highway Impact and Accessibility Modelling Report – Worcestershire County Council (Halcrow) - May 2011

.....
Chair

She also advised that she had accepted the following items as Urgent Business:

- Item 5 and Item 7 – Additional information from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February 2012

(Not meeting the publication deadline)

- Item 9 – Employment Policy – Review

(Not on the Forward Plan for this meeting)

172. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 31st January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

173. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - OUTCOME OF REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Members were advised that the Government would be dismantling the current HRA subsidy system and that it would be replaced with a new regime of self financing with effect from April 2012.

Officers advised that the Council would have to take on a share of the national housing debt but would be entitled in future years to keep the subsidy, which is currently paid each year to Central Government.

Members were informed that the Council's share of this debt amounted to £98,929 million, payable to central government on 28th March 2012 with self financing operational from 1st April 2012. The Council would be compensated for the interest paid in respect of the days between 28th March and 1st April 2012, which is expected to be £35,000.

An additional recommendation was proposed from the Chair as follows:

“Officers bring forward a report outlining the proposals for how this Council might build council houses on some of the land owned by the Council and already declared surplus.”

RESOLVED that

subject to the Council's approval of the budgetary implications,

- 1) the 5 year Housing Capital Programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) the Director of Finance and Resources be authorised to acquire debt from the Public Works Loans Board up to the amount of the actual Debt Cap in line with the profile set out at Appendix 4 to the report;**
- 3) subject to Members' comments, the viability of the 30 Year Business Case for the Housing Revenue Account, and the projected availability of resources within the Business Plan to undertake projects such as regeneration be noted;**
- 4) Officers be authorised to incur expenditure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, up to the limit approved by the Council and for the purposes detailed in the report;**
- 5) Officers bring forward a report outlining proposals for how this Council might build council houses on some of the land owned by the Council and already declared surplus; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 6) the Council approve the financial / budgetary implications, as detailed in the report.**

174. PRIVATE SECTOR HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

Members considered a report on extending the Home Support Service to non Council tenants who would not be eligible for funding through the Supporting People programme and who could afford to pay for a service.

Officers reported that provision of a service would have to be on a cost-recovery basis and an hourly rate of £13.22 had been proposed for the service.

Officers confirmed that the current proposal did not anticipate any increase in the number of staff required to provide the service.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Home Support Service be extended to the private sector within current capacity;**
- 2) **an hourly rate of £13.22 be introduced to pay for the Home Support Service; and**
- 3) **any proposal to increase staffing or the capacity of the service be brought back before the Executive Committee with a full Business Case.**

175. STREET NAMING POLICY - REVIEW

The Committee received a report which sought approval for a revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering for the Borough.

Officers outlined changes to the report that had been made following pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 14th February 2012.

Officers were asked to notify Ward Members of any post code changes made by Royal Mail within their Wards.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2, be approved and adopted;**
- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Business Transformation or Executive Director, Planning & Regeneration, to carry out all functions relating to the addressing process, as appropriate and as now detailed in the revised Policy;**
- 3) **the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be updated accordingly; and**
- 4) **Mr Norman Neasom, a significant local artist, be added to the list of potential street names.**

176. GRANTS PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Committee received a report which sought approval for the recommendations made by the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2012 – 2013.

The Committee was informed that the Grants Assessment Panel had met on 3 occasions. The total budget available for allocation was £240,000 and that 37 applications had been received totalling £336, 300.

Officers reported that successful schemes would be monitored quarterly.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Section 3.6 of the report; and**
- 2) **the additions to the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy at paragraphs 5.4 and 6.2 be approved (Appendix 3 of the report) - these additions give clearer guidance to fundees as to the type of projects / services suitable to be submitted to Redditch Borough Council's Voluntary & Community Sector Grants programme.**

177. EMPLOYMENT POLICY - REVIEW

The Committee received a report which sought approval of the revised Special Leave policy.

Members were advised that both Corporate Management Team and Trade Union representatives had been consulted and had agreed the revised policy.

RESOLVED that

the Special Leave policy attached to the report at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

178. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February 2012.

With reference to Minute 149 regarding the Petition on Short Stay Parking in the Town Centre, Members were informed that a meeting had been arranged with relevant agencies and stakeholders, including the petitioners, on 1st March 2012.

RESOLVED that

the minutes be noted.

Executive Committee

21st February 2012

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

There were no Minutes / Referrals to consider.

180. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the latest Advisory Panels report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

181. ACTION MONITORING

Members considered the Committee's Action Monitoring report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

.....
Chair

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S

FORWARD PLAN

1st March 2012 to 30th June 2012

(published as at 17th February 2012)

This Plan gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Borough Council's Executive Committee.

(NB: There may be occasions when the Executive Committee may make recommendations to Council for a final decision.
e.g. to approve a new policy or variation to the approved budget.)



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This Plan gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Borough Council's Executive Committee, or full Council, in the coming four months.

“Key Decisions” are ones which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £50,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or**
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in the area comprising two or more wards in the Borough;**
- (iii) involve any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).**

The Forward Plan is available for inspection free of charge at the Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH from: 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays; or on the Council's website (www.redditchbc.gov.uk).

If you wish, you can see or obtain copies of any documents, detailed in the plan, provided they are not confidential, and be kept informed of any additional supporting documents as they become available. You can also arrange to have copies of additional supporting documents. Please ask the Town Hall receptionist to call one of the Committee Services Team on ext: 3269. There is a charge per side of A4. If you wish to make any representations they should be made in writing addressed to the Officer whose name is given as the contact for the relevant item.

The Executive Committee's meetings are normally held every three weeks at 7pm on Tuesday evenings at the Town Hall. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Committee Services Team on (01527) 64252, ext: 3269 to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any other queries, Committee Services Officers will be happy to advise you.

The full Council meets in accordance the Council's Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 7.00pm.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Carole Gandy	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership & Partnership
Councillor Michael Braley	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Councillor Juliet Brunner	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Regulatory Services
Councillor Brandon Clayton	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment & Health
Councillor J Pearce	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development & Transport
Councillor Derek Taylor	Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism
Councillor G Chance	
Councillor M Hall	
Councillor Debbie Taylor	

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATIONS

For **Key Decisions** the summary document appended to the Forward Plan sets out details of any proposed consultation process. Any person / organisation not listed who would like to be consulted or who wishes to make representations on the proposed decision are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided.

Alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, The Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH or e-mail: denise.sunman@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Item No.	Decision Taker	Expected Date of Decision	Original Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Decision	Type of Decision (Key or Non-Key)	Lead Councillor/ Portfolio Holder	Comments
1	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 3 - October to December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
2	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3 - October to December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
3	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Monitoring of the Benefits Service Improvement Plan - Quarter 3 - October to December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
4	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Customer Services Monitoring - Quarter 3 - October to December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
5	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Monitoring - Write Off of Debts - Quarter 3 - October to December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
6	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Quarterly Sickness Monitoring - April - December 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	

Item No.	Decision Taker	Expected Date of Decision	Original Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Decision	Type of Decision (Key or Non-Key)	Lead Councillor/ Portfolio Holder	Comments
7	Council	16 Apr 2012		Constitution - Review	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	* Executive Committee will make recommendations to Council following its meeting on 13 March 2012
8	Council	16 Apr 2012		Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2012	Non-Key	Councillor Brandon Clayton	* Executive Committee will make recommendations to Council following its meeting on 13 March 2012
9	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Property for Compulsory Purchase - Property A	Non-Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
10	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Property for Compulsory Purchase - Property B	Non-Key	Councillor Brandon Clayton	
11	Executive	13 Mar 2012		Tenancy Strategy and Policy 2012 - 2014	Key	Councillor Brandon Clayton	

Item No.	Decision Taker	Expected Date of Decision	Original Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Decision	Type of Decision (Key or Non-Key)	Lead Councillor/ Portfolio Holder	Comments
12	Executive	3 Apr 2012		Concessionary Rents Policy	Key	Councillor Michael Braley	
13	Council	11 Jun 2012	12 Jan 2011	Town Centre Landscape Improvements (including Church Green)	Key	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Councillor Jinny Pearce	* Executive Committee will make recommendations to Council following on its meeting on 24 Apr 2012
14	Executive	29 May 2012		Gating Order - Crabbs Cross Lane	Non-Key	Councillor Juliet Brunner	
15	Executive		21 Feb 2012	Highway Impact and Accessibility Modelling Report - Worcestershire County Council (Halcrow) May 2011	Non-Key	Councillor Jinny Pearce	*Awaiting new date
16	Executive		4 Oct 2011	Housing Allocations Policy - Review	Key	Portfolio Holder Housing and Health, Councillor Brandon Clayton	*Awaiting new date

Item No.	Decision Taker	Expected Date of Decision	Original Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Decision	Type of Decision (Key or Non-Key)	Lead Councillor/ Portfolio Holder	Comments
17	Executive		4 Oct 2011	Roxboro House - Disposal Options	Key	Portfolio Holder Housing and Health, Councillor Brandon Clayton	*Awaiting new date

KEY DECISION

Proposed to be made by the Executive **13 Mar 2012**

LEAD MEMBER / PORTFOLIO HOLDER	ITEM	WARDS AFFECTED
<p>Councillor Brandon Clayton</p> <p>DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DECISION TAKER Joint report of the Head of Community Services and Head of Housing</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR M Bough Housing Policy and Performance Manager</p>	<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>The report will present a Tenancy Strategy and Policy which sets out the considerations for individual social landlords to have regard to in their own policies on the granting and re-issuing of tenancies relating to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kinds of tenancies that they grant; • The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind; • Where they grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of the term; • The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing one. 	<p>All Wards;</p> <p>REASONS FOR BEING ON THE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>The Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to implement a Tenancy Strategy</p>

CONSULTATION DETAILS	Method of Consultation	Consultation Period or Dates
Consultation Events	Stakeholders District Councils Registered Local Landlords Adult and Community Services Voluntary and Community Sector	Ongoing since December 2009

DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Not applicable

Item No. 12

KEY DECISION

Proposed to be made by the Executive
on **3 Apr 2012**

<p>LEAD MEMBER / PORTFOLIO HOLDER Councillor Michael Braley</p>	<p>ITEM Concessionary Rents Policy</p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED (No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DECISION TAKER Report of the Head of Finance and Resources</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR T Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>SUMMARY To consider a policy regarding granting concessionary rents in respect of the Council's commercial property portfolio.</p>	<p>REASONS FOR BEING ON THE FORWARD PLAN</p>
<p>CONSULTATION DETAILS</p>	<p>Method of Consultation Relevant Officers and representatives from the Voluntary Sector.</p>	<p>Consultation Period or Dates February / March 2012</p>

DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

KEY DECISION

Proposed to be made by the Executive on 24 Apr 2012

<p>LEAD MEMBER / PORTFOLIO HOLDER Councillor Brandon Clayton, Councillor Jinny Pearce</p>	<p>ITEM Town Centre Landscape Improvements (including Church Green)</p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED (Abbey Ward);</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DECISION TAKER Background Papers: none specified</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR C Walker, L Hadley Landscape and Countryside Services Manager, Planning Officer</p>	<p>SUMMARY To consider a report detailing proposed options for Town Centre Landscape Improvements (including Church Green).</p>	<p>REASONS FOR BEING ON THE FORWARD PLAN</p>
<p>CONSULTATION DETAILS</p>	<p>Method of Consultation Relevant Officers.</p>	<p>Consultation Period or Dates</p>

DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

KEY DECISION

Proposed to be made by the Executive (date to be identified)

<p>LEAD MEMBER / PORTFOLIO HOLDER Councillor Brandon Clayton</p>	<p>ITEM Housing Allocations Policy - Review</p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED (No Specific Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DECISION TAKER None. REPORT AUTHOR L Tompkin, Head of Housing</p>	<p>SUMMARY To consider a review of the Housing Allocations Policy.</p>	<p>REASONS FOR BEING ON THE FORWARD PLAN</p>
<p>CONSULTATION DETAILS</p>	<p>Method of Consultation</p>	<p>Consultation Period or Dates</p>
<p>DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH</p>		

Item No. 17

KEY DECISION

Proposed to be made by the Executive (date to be identified)

<p>LEAD MEMBER / PORTFOLIO HOLDER Councillor Brandon Clayton</p>	<p>ITEM Roxboro House - Disposal Options</p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED (Central Ward);</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE DECISION TAKER Report of the Head of Housing</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR Daniel Russell Housing Enabling Officer</p>	<p>SUMMARY To consider the options for disposal of Roxboro House. [The report may contain exempt information as defined in S.100 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as they may contain information relating to financial or business affairs. In view of this it is anticipated that discussion of these matters may take place after the exclusion of the public.]</p>	<p>REASONS FOR BEING ON THE FORWARD PLAN Committee decision required</p>

CONSULTATION DETAILS	Method of Consultation	Consultation Period or Dates
	RSL Partners, Property Agents and other Officers.	N/A

DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
N/A



Overview and Scrutiny

No Direct Ward Relevance

Committee

6th March 2012

WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	Minutes of previous meeting Consideration of the Forward Plan Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny Actions List Referrals from Council or Executive Committee, etc. (if any) Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS Quarterly Performance Report Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report Annual Update on the Implementation of the Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Relevant Lead Heads of Service

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

6th March 2012

	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Update on fly tipping and progress with the Worth It campaign</p> <p>Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>Updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Updates on the outcome of quarterly meetings of the Leader and Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Petitions (as and when received)</p> <p>Bi-Annual Recommendation Tracker Reports – Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Bi-Annual Recommendation Tracker Reports - Petition Recommendations</p>	<p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>Redditch Borough Council representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
<p>OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED</p>		
<p>6th March 2012</p>	<p>Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Parliamentary Seminar Series Training – Update</p>	<p>Councillor Luke Stephens</p>
<p>6th March 2012</p>	<p>Communications Task and Finish Group – Update Report</p>	<p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
<p>6th March 2012</p>	<p>Performance report for services within the remit of the portfolio for Community Leadership and Partnership</p>	<p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>

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6th March 2012	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Portfolio for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport, Councillor Pearce	Councillor Pearce
6th March 2012	Gritting Short, Sharp Review Group – Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
27th March 2012	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Portfolio for community Leadership and Partnership, Councillor Gandy	Councillor Gandy
27th March 2012	Improving Recycling Rates Short, Sharp Review – Final Report	Councillor Hopkins
27th March 2012	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 – Consideration of Draft Report	Councillor Mould
27th March 2012	Quarterly Budget Report – Quart 3 – October – December 2011	Relevant Lead Head of Service
27th March 2012	Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 3 – October – December 2011	Relevant Lead Head of Service
27th March 2012	Youth Employment at Redditch Borough Council – Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
17th April 2012	Access for Disabled People Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Mason
17th April 2012	Youth Services Provision Task Group – Final Report	Councillor S Chalk

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17th April 2012	War Memorial Petition - Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
17th April 2012	Annual Update on the Implementation of the Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme	Relevant Lead Head of Service
22nd May 2012	Promoting Sporting Participation Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Stephens
22nd May 2012	Work Experience Task Group – Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
19th June 2012	Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker – Year End Report 2011/12	Relevant Lead Head of Service
August 2012	Update Report – Promoting Redditch Task and Finish Group	Relevant Lead Head of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		
	Energy Consumption – Submission of a Scoping Document	Councillor Anderson
	Equalities and Diversity – Submission of a Scoping Document	Councillor Fry
	Highway Impact and Accessibility Modelling Report – Worcestershire County Council (Halcrow) – May 2011 – Pre – Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service

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	Housing Allocations Policy Review – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Overview and Scrutiny Member Training on Pre-Scrutiny.	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy	Relevant Lead Head of Service

