

Executive Committee

Tuesday 26th June
2012
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



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- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
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**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
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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

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

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

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

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

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.

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).



Executive

26th June 2012

7.00 pm

Committee

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Bill Hartnett (Chair)	Phil Mould
	Greg Chance (Vice-Chair)	Mark Shurmer
	Rebecca Blake	Luke Stephens
	Michael Braley	Debbie Taylor
	Carole Gandy	

<p>1. Apologies</p>	<p>To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.</p>
<p>3. Leader's Announcements</p>	<p>1. To give notice of any items for future meetings or for the Forward Plan, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; and</p> <p>2 any other relevant announcements.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<p>4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 29th May 2012.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>5. Promoting Sporting Participation Review Councillor Luke Stephens</p>	<p>To consider the final report of the Promoting Sporting Participation Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>(Report under separate cover)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>6. Revision of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 - 2014/15 (Pages 5 - 12) Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)</p>	<p>To consider revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan including the provision of concessionary bus travel prior to 9.30am and free swimming for under 16s / over 60s.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>

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<p>7. Income Management and Payment Card Industry Compliance</p> <p>(Pages 13 - 16)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To seek approval for a bid for capital resources to enable the Council to have an Information Management System that is PCI PA-DSS compliant.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>8. Financial Reserves Statement - 2011/12</p> <p>(Pages 17 - 24)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To advise Members on the earmarked reserves for the year ending 2011/12 and to seek members approval for the movements in reserves.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 4, period ending 31st March 2012</p> <p>(Pages 25 - 36)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider the quarterly performance report, showing indicators which have improved, declined or remained static when compared to the same period in the previous financial year.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>10. Making Experiences Count - Quarterly Customer Services Report</p> <p>(Pages 37 - 60)</p> <p>Head of Customer Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides and update on Customer Services.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>11. Sickness Absence Performance and Health for period ending 31st March 2012</p> <p>(Pages 61 - 74)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides and update on sickness monitoring.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>12. Quarterly Monitoring - Write Off of Debts - Quarter 4 - January to March 2012</p> <p>(Pages 75 - 82)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider the action taken by Officers with respect to the write off of debts during the fourth quarter of 2011/12 and to note the profile of outstanding debt.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>13. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(Pages 83 - 92)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31st May 2012.</p> <p>There are no recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>14. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>
<p>15. Advisory Panels - update report</p> <p>(Pages 93 - 96)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p>16. Action Monitoring</p> <p>(Pages 97 - 100)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p>17. Exclusion of the Public</p>	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to any items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant</p>

	<p>paragraphs <i>(to be specified)</i> of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</p> <p>These paragraphs are as follows:</p> <p>Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Para 1 – <u>any individual</u>;• Para 2 – the <u>identity of any individual</u>;• Para 3 – <u>financial or business affairs</u>;• Para 4 – <u>labour relations matters</u>;• Para 5 – <u>legal professional privilege</u>;• Para 6 – <u>a notice, order or direction</u>;• Para 7 – the <u>prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</u>; <p>may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.</p>
<p>18. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)</p>	<p>To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).</p>



Executive Committee

29th May 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Carole Gandy, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Andrew Brazier and Derek Taylor

Officers:

R Bamford, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley and A Heighway

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Luke Stephens.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Concessionary Rents Policy; and
- Polling Stations – Review.

He also advised that the final report of the Promoting Sporting Participation Task and Finish Group would be dealt with at a alter meeting of the Executive Committee in the light of the rescheduling of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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Chair

The Leader commented on the success of the Halfords Tour Series Bike Race the previous week. Other Members joined in expressing their enthusiasm for the event and it was suggested that any comments or suggestions for future events be fed back to Officers and/or the Town Centre Partnership.

The Leader also commented on the EDL March the previous weekend, noting that it had caused minimal disruption and that he had written to the Chief Constable of the West Mercia Constabulary to thank him and his officers for their assistance in managing the event. Members expressed their pride at the response of local people to the event and proposed that the Council follow through with the success of the counter-demonstration and support by helping in the organization of a community event.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF A PILOT SCHEME TO GATE AN ALLEYWAY BETWEEN CRABBS CROSS LANE AND ST PETERS CLOSE, CRABBS CROSS

The Committee received a report asking it to consider the implementation of a Gating Order made by Worcestershire County Council under s.2 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The Gating Order was in respect of a pathway running between Crabbs Cross Lane and St. Peters Close, Crabbs Cross.

It was noted that a number of alternative solutions had been tried over the years to alleviate this long-standing problem, none of which had proved successful. The five year pilot scheme Gating Order had been developed in consultation with local residents, and the local Ward Members, who were present at the meeting, confirmed that reaction to the move was positive. There was concern expressed at the length of time it had taken for this matter to have been satisfactorily dealt with. The impact of intervening changes in legislative arrangements should measures remain in preparation for an extended period, such as on this occasion, was also commented upon. Officers noted that there were wider lessons to be learned from this issue with regard to the decision-making process and responding to public concerns.

RESOLVED that

the implementation of the Gating Order for the Crabbs Cross Lane pilot scheme be approved, which would have the effect of allowing gates/barriers to be erected between Crabbs Cross Lane and St Peters Close at the location identified on the map attached to the report at Appendix 1.

6. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO STRATFORD-ON-AVON DRAFT CORE STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report setting out the response from Officers to the Stratford-on-Avon Draft Core Strategy for endorsement. Members were informed that it had not been possible for the response to be agreed through the normal decision-making process in time to meet the consultation deadline. The response had been discussed at the Planning Advisory Panel, however.

Members were particularly interested in the possibility of development along the A435 corridor and on the land between Studley and Redditch, noting variously the potential benefits to Studley of industrial use on part of that land and the problems with access from the A435 in the Mappleborough Green area. Officers explained that they regarded the area generally as providing pockets of opportunity for development.

RECOMMENDED that

the Officer response (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) to the Stratford-on-Avon Draft Core Strategy, as submitted to Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SoADC) on 29th March 2012 (in line with consultation period dates), be endorsed.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17th April 2012 be received and noted.

8. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

The Committee received the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Shared Services Board.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 19th April 2012 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals to consider under this item.

10. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members considered the latest version of the report on the Council's Advisory Panels and similar bodies. It was noted that there were meetings of the Grants Panel arranged for 6th June 2012 and the Planning Advisory Panel on 30th May 2012.

11. ACTION MONITORING

Members considered and noted the most recent version of the Committee's Action Monitoring report.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.32 pm

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Chair

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REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 – 2014/15

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards / None specific
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To enable Members to consider the proposed revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan and to recommend approval to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved together with the required virements as detailed at 3.7.2.;
- 2) the scheme identified at 3.7.1 be reduced to £200k and this be amended within the Council's Capital Programme 2012/13;
- 3) that £67k be returned to balances in 2012/13;
- 4) approval to use the General Power of Competence be granted to enable the service to be provided; and

RESOLVE that

- 5) Officers continue to work with colleagues and external partners to ensure the proposed service changes can be implemented as soon as practicable.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan was approved by Members in February 2012 with a 0% increase in Council Tax.
- 3.2 Following change of political control following Council elections in May 2012 and as a result of discussions at Council on 21st May 2012.

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Members have requested Officers assess the funding implications of a number of changes to the original budget as currently approved and to advise Members of the financial impact of these changes. The revisions are to be funded by virement and return of funds to balances to ensure that there is no impact on the 2012/13 Council Tax requirement as approved within the statutory deadline.

3.3 The additional services to be considered for funding include;

- Free Swimming for under 16s and over 60s
- Pre 9.30 concessionary Bus Travel
- Additional Apprentice position

3.4 Free Swimming for under 16's and over 60's

3.4.1 Officers have reviewed the potential of granting free swimming sessions to Redditch residents who are under 16 or over 60. All public sessions would be available for free entrance. It is anticipated that by granting free swimming to those eligible the benefits will include:

- Increased participation in physical activity across the Town
- Encouragement for young children to learn to swim. This is important as swimming is a life skill and can also save lives, should children fall into open water.
- The aim to address health inequalities in the Town, and offers an incentive to prevent residents from smoking and drinking excessively, thus reducing risks of heart disease, diabetes and other serious illnesses
- Breaking down the cost barrier for individuals and families on low incomes
- Encouraging residents to use our Sports facilities thus encouraging them to participate in other activities and increase secondary sources of income such as the purchase of Reddicards
- supporting the schools objective of teaching children to swim as part of the curriculum

3.4.2 Previously free swimming was funded with a £140m Central Government initiative. It was introduced in Redditch in April 2009 for a 16 month period, ending in August 2010. This resulted in significant increase in swimming particularly for Under 16 year olds, where swimming usage compared with the previous year 2008/9, increased by 53%.

3.4.3 Following the opening of the Abbey Stadium facility officers have reviewed the usage of the pool and estimated the potential cost associated with free swimming. Based on the estimated additional

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number of users within the facility it is anticipated that the additional cost would be £71k per annum This reflects the loss of income together with an assessment of annual costs relating to additional staffing and increased maintenance required for the facility. It is anticipated that the service will require funding for approximately 8 months (£47k) for 2012/13 to reflect the period of approval and implementation.

3.5 Pre 9.30 Concessionary Bus Travel

3.5.1 The contract for all concessionary bus travel is now held with Worcestershire County Council and there are currently no concessions for pre 9.30 travel across the County. Officers are in discussion with County Transport colleagues to identify the contractual arrangements that need to be in place to enable our eligible residents to benefit from pre 9.30am concessionary travel.

3.5.2 The anticipated cost associated with the enhanced provision is £86k per annum. This is dependant on County negotiating the contract with the bus companies and the ability to use County passes for our eligible residents.

3.5.3 It is assumed that there will be a period of contractual discussion implementation following member approval with an estimated cost of £43k required for funding in 2012/13. This cost may reduce depending on the time required to implement the service.

3.5.4 The Localism Act includes a General Power of Competence which repeals the well-being powers in the Local Government Act 2000 as far as they relate to England. The power for local authorities equates to those of an 'individual with full capacity', and the only limits or restrictions placed on the power are statutory. The provision of discretionary travel can be provided within these powers.

3.6 Additional Apprentice Position

3.6.1 The Authority currently funds 4 apprentice posts within different roles. It is proposed that a further post be created to be trained to undertake the PAT (electrical testing) for the Council. The trainee would work alongside a qualified electrician and would undertake a formal training programme. The cost of the new post would be £8k which could be more than offset by the current contract for PAT testing of £30k. Officers are currently working with County colleagues to review the contractual arrangement currently in place. This will include an assessment of the training required and a risk assessment to ensure the staff and assets are suitably protected. Any costs associated with

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the transition to the new arrangements will have to be covered by balances.

3.7 Savings to fund budget proposals

3.7.1 It is proposed that a number of budgets be reduced to provide the funding required for the services as identified above. The reductions to revenue budgets 2012/13 – 2014/15 include :

- Reduction in consultancy budget of £89k. This budget is utilised to call on additional professional support and advice when required. The majority of the budget (£65k) relates to the local plan enquiry that has to be undertaken by external advisors. It is proposed that this budget be transferred to fund the new proposals and any requests for consultancy support be presented to Executive Committee and Council to be funded from balances during the year. The £65k budget is only available for 2012/13 and further savings will have to be made in future years.
- The provision of Redditch Matters by online publication to save the budget of £17k. The current production does not raise enough advertising revenue to support the costs and therefore an online edition is to be trialed in July 2012. It is anticipated that any revenue gained in the future can be used to improve access and marketing of the online publication.
- Removal of the budget for the Leisure options appraisal to save £15k. Members have requested that officers look at alternative ways to support the leisure developments in the future. This is a one year budget allocation (2012/13) and therefore additional savings will have to be delivered to enable the proposed services to be continued.
- Reduction of the advertising budget by £10k. Officers will continue to consider all opportunities for online advertising with the aim to target customers with information on events and leisure facilities.
- Reduction by £50k of the funding for the capital repairs of public buildings. This will leave a budget of £200k and will save £2k of revenue costs. In addition officers have confirmed a reduction in the capital costs for the currently approved schemes to provide security fencing at the depot (reduce by £10k) and to improve the footpaths in Morton

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Stanley Park (reduce by £12k). Therefore the borrowing costs which are funded by revenue will reduce by a further £2k.

- 3.7.2 It is proposed that virements be actioned in 2012/13 to support the new services. In addition the proposed savings will deliver a return of £67k to balances in 2012/13. The table below represents the revised funding allocations.

	£'000
Services to be provided:	
Free Swimming (under 16 & over 60)	47
Pre 9.30 Concessionary Travel	43
Apprentice post	8
Total Cost	<u><u>98</u></u>
Funded by :	
Reduction consultancy budget	89
Removal of Leisure option appraisal funding	15
Provide Redditch Matters online	17
Reduction in advertising budget	10
Removal of PAT Testing budget	30
Reduction of capital schemes – saving on revenue borrowing costs	4
Total Savings	<u><u>165</u></u>
Net return to balances	<u><u>67</u></u>

3.8 Impact on Medium Term Financial Plan to 2014/15

- 3.8.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15 as approved in February 2012 included a number of savings that had to be achieved to ensure a balanced budget would be delivered over the 3 year period. The proposed revisions to the plan will reduce the current requirement for a transfer from balances of £259k to £192k. This £67k will therefore increase the current level of balances.
- 3.8.2 In 2013/14 £192k is the revised initial shortfall that has to be funded from savings. In addition there is an assumed cut in Government Grant of £211k, incremental pay increases to staff and the increase in pension

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contributions from the employer. The full year effect of the proposed revisions to budget currently funded from one-off budget allocations will have to be met of £80k. This results in a shortfall of £706k for 2013/14.

3.8.3 In 2014/15 the shortfall of £344k is mainly due to an assumption of a further 5% cut in Government Grant, additional % increase for superannuation and the incremental increases for employees.

3.8.4 The savings to be delivered over the 3 year financial plan are :

2012/13	£192k (to be funded from balances)
2013/14	£706k
2014/15	£344k

3.8.5 This does not take into account any additional costs relating to the changes to Council Tax benefit or other welfare changes which may require additional funding from the Borough.

3.8.6 Balances are currently £1.160m. With the reduced requirement of release in 2012/13 of £192k to meet the revised budget requirement in 2012/13 the Council will be left with £968k to meet future one off commitments. The prudent level of balances to be held for an organisation the size of Redditch Borough Council is £750k.

Legal Implications

3.9 The Council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget and a Council Tax for each financial year. The proposed amendments to the budget do not change the Council Tax levels or the total budget requirement and therefore can be proposed as virements during 2012/13.

Service / Operational Implications

3.10 The proposed changes to service provision as detailed above will have a number of operational implications to include:

- Ensuring access is limited to eligible residents who are under 16 and over 60. Officers are currently considering the most effective way to achieve this in line with the previous system.
- Ensuring access is available for the pre 9.30am bus travel. Officers are working with County colleagues and JMP transport advisors to ensure the contractual arrangements are in place for implementation of the scheme.

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- Redditch Matters online publication. The trial in July will be monitored and actively marketed with partners to ensure access is available and that our residents are aware of the new publication.
- Reduction in advertising and capital programme bids. Officers will consider alternative advertising opportunities and ensure risks associated with the reduction in capital bids be mitigated.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 The additional services will provide greater access to Council swimming facilities for the young and over 60s which as detailed in the report should improve the health and well being of our residents. Discretionary transport will ensure that eligible residents can access services at a time convenient to them.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Officers have considered the risks associated with the proposed changes and will look to mitigate the following risks identified:
- 4.2 **Reduction in capital programme for Public Building repairs to £200k:**
- Risk –deterioration of public buildings and additional costs associated with inability to repair when required.
 - Mitigation – officers to work with County colleagues (property services) to assess priority works to ensure these are undertaken with budget allocated and therefore mitigate the risk as identified above..

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Medium Term Financial plan – supporting documents

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Jayne Pickering
Executive Director – Finance and Resources
j.pickering@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
01527-881207

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**INCOME MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND PAYMENT CARD INDUSTRY
COMPLIANCE**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

There is a need to upgrade/replace the current income management system in order to ensure that the system used by the Council is PCI PA-DSS compliant. This will require investment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Executive Committee is requested to RECOMMEND that

- 1) prudential borrowing of up to £35k (revenue impact £3.6k p.a.) and additional maintenance costs of £5k to be met from revenue balances, be approved for the upgrade/replacement for the Northgate PARIS system in order to achieve compliance with the PCI PA-DSS standards; and**
- 2) a joint procurement exercise be undertaken with Bromsgrove District Council and extend the invitation to participate to other authorities in the County.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1** The Council needs to make changes to their income management systems in order to comply with the Payment Industry Data Security Standard (PCI PA-DSS). The Standard relates to the environment in which card transactions take place in particular the storage and accessibility of card details. It will no longer be appropriate for organisations to hold card details on site. Therefore, going forward, the Council will be required to use either a bureau service for card transactions or consider a hosted solution. A decision on the way forward needs to be made by July 2012, although implementation can be much later. Due to the number of customers that need to make changes, migration to a new solution could take another 18 to 24

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months. The consequences of not upgrading could result in a fine or the withdrawal of the facility to accept card payments.

- 3.2. The Council currently uses Northgate's PARIS system for income management. In addition to making changes to become PCI PA-DSS compliant the Council needs to introduce Chip and Pin functionality.
- 3.3. Discussions have taken place with Northgate regarding their readiness to enable their product to become PCI PA-DSS accredited. Northgate have entered into an arrangement with a third party, Logic Group to provide a bureau solution but, at the time of writing, this had not been accredited. The Logic Group are the largest provider of gateway solutions in the UK. In terms of a hosted solution Northgate will be implementing the first hosting arrangement for a local authority in June. There are 5 further authorities due to go hosted during 2012.
- 3.4 Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Worcestershire County Council have recently tendered for a shared hosted solution for income management that will deliver enhanced functionality and be PCI PA-DSS compliant. The new contract with Civica will deliver ongoing revenues savings for each authority.
- 3.5 Based on the current position Northgate, that their product is currently not PCI PA-DSS accredited and the hosted solution is not tried and tested and the outcomes achieved by the authorities named above it may be beneficial for the Council to tender its requirements for a compliant income management system.
- 3.6 Bromsgrove District Council are in a similar position to Redditch in that they need to move to a bureau or hosted service in order to have an income management system that is PCI PA-DSS compliant. Bromsgrove currently use Civica's ICON system. Entering into a joint procurement exercise could be beneficial to both authorities.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 There is a need to upgrade/replace the Northgate PARIS income management system in order to be PCI PA-DSS compliant and this will require capital investment estimated to be in the region of £35k. There will also be a revenue impact in term of borrowing costs and ongoing maintenance estimated to be in the region of £9.0k. This will be met from revenue balances for 12/13 and addressed as part of the budget process for future years.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no legal implications identified.

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Service/Operational Implications

- 3.9 If card payment facilities were to be withdrawn this would impact on service delivery and have operational implications. A number of Council services are based on being able to accept card payments.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 Not being able to accept card payments would have implications for customers.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is risk of card payment facilities being withdrawn or a find if the Council does not move to either a bureau or hosted solution that is PCI PA-DSS compliant.

5. APPENDICES

None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers have been identified in respect of this report.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT – 2011/12

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	✓
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To advise Members on the earmarked reserves for the year ending 2011/12 and to seek members approval for the movements in reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to RECOMMEND that

- 1) the movement in reserves as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) additional General Fund Reserves of £490K be approved;**
- 3) the use of General Fund Reserves of £498K be approved;**
- 4) additional HRA Reserves of £10K be approved; and**

the Executive Committee is requested to RESOLVE that;

- 5) Heads of Service be requested to undertake a review of the earmarked reserves within their service areas and provide a report, including a justification for the maintenance of these reserves, for submission to the Committee alongside the budget monitoring report for the second quarter of the 2012/13 financial year.**

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3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The accounts for 2011/12 are in the process of being prepared and as part of the closedown process a review of reserves and provisions has been undertaken.
- 3.2 In discussion with Heads of Service and in considering the future plans of the Authority, a number of new reserves have been proposed, together with the release of funds currently set aside.
- 3.3 The new reserves that are proposed are included at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 If approval is granted to the proposed reserves as identified above, the revised position for General Fund will be £2.6Million to fund future plans of the Authority. The full schedule including the new reserves is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The level of reserves is significant and therefore it is proposed that officers review individual balances and report the justification of the continuation of the reserve.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require billing and precepting authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
- 3.6 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a specific personal duty on the Chief Financial Officer to report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of the budget.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.7 The Council currently sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. In addition the Council has specific provisions for liabilities or losses that result from past events.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The adequate provision of reserves will ensure the Council has appropriate funds in place to meet future demands of its customers.

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4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The closedown of the accounts and the relevant accounting treatment of provisions and reserves is contained within the Financial Services Risk Register and monitored on a quarterly basis

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Statement of Reserves 2011/12

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Final Accounts working papers 2011/12

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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		2011/12			APPENDIX 1
		2010/11 Bal b/fwd £	Contrib. in year £	Used in year £	2011/12 Bal c/fwd £
1	Shopmobility Donations	-54,906		22,643	-32,263 Public donations specific for purchase of mobility equipment
2	Crematorium Donations	-5,747			-5,747 To fund improvements and enhancements to the cemetery grounds - project currently identified but reserve requires additional donations prior to scheme being financially viable.
3	Forge Mill Museum Donations	-2,534			-2,534 To be transferred to revenue balances in 2012/13
4	Heming Road Units	-44,768			-44,768 To be used for repairs & maintenance 2012/13
5	Car Loan Insurance Fund	-6,416	-208		-6,624 Deductions from borrowing to pay off employee car loans on death in service.
6	Community Safety(BSC)	-65,795			-65,795 To support specific service costs in 2012/13
7	Taxi licensing	-6,291			-6,291 To support specific service costs in 2012/13
8	Mercury emissions	-302,250	-73,070		-375,320 To part fund the installation of mercury abatement equipment, new cremators and general refurbishment of crematorium buildings
9	Job Evaluation	-755,000			-755,000 Costs associated with the implementation and pay protection for Job Evaluation - awaiting implementation
10	Land Drainage	-7,924	-11,670		-19,594 Creation of North Worcs Water Management Service meant that some projects relating to land drainage were not undertaken in 11/12 and the Management Board agreed that this money be carried over (in all partner districts) to complete works.
11	Planning	-57,000	-27,440		-84,440 To fund future local plan enquiry
12	Town Centre Grant	-55,722	-15,000	18,902	-51,820 To support specific Town Centre projects in 2012/13
13	Charles Henry Foyle Trust	-4,354			-4,354 To be used for future exhibition costs
14	Action Sport	-51,292	-27,310	11,172	-67,430 To support specific service costs in 2012/13

15	Homelessness Grant	-135,824	-54,563	37,270	-153,117	Grant to fund specific projects c/fwd
16	Mort rescue	-39,979		2,638	-37,340	Funds available for mortgage support not fully utilised
17	Social hsg fraud	-9,105		9,105	0	Fully spent in 2011/12
18	Risk	-14,600	-6,600		-21,200	To fund specific risk mitigation projects in 2012/13
19	Health & Well Being	-36,803		10,043	-26,760	To support specific service costs in 2012/13
20	Redditch Partnership	-5,000	-5,000		-10,000	Police grant c/fwd (B'grove & Redditch network)
21	Arts	-26,687	-7,135	16,802	-17,020	Grants received to fund future projects
22	Benefits	-15,887	-7,263		-23,150	Admin grant for benefit changes (rec March 2012)
23	Economic Development	-9,750		9,750	0	Transferred to Economic Development service
24	Family Learning	-4,955		1,025	-3,930	To support specific service costs in 2012/13
25	Areas of Highest Need	-226,070		65,250	-160,820	Carried forward balance of 3 year grant from WCC
26	Recycling	-26,050		16,840	-9,210	Balance of WCC funding to be used for route optimisation / all green all grey project that will improve the efficiency of the waste collection rounds and save money.
27	Land charges	-100,000			-100,000	To fund potential legal claims in respect of land charge payments received
28	Sure Start	-9,903			-9,903	Carried forward balance of 3 year Sure Start contract grant.
29	Lifeline	-24,342			-24,342	To be used in future years to cover shortfall in service.
30	Community Safety	-168,337	-2,561	75,311	-95,587	Grants received to fund future projects
31	Shared services/transformation	-250,000		200,000	-50,000	To fund costs associated with shared service and transformation

32	Reg, Services balance	-70,802		802	-70,000	To fund costs associated with the future restructures of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
33	Customer Services	0	-20,000		-20,000	To fund the queue management system in customer services from staff savings
34	PCT	0	-156,000		-156,000	Grant from Clinical Commissioning Group to fund specific projects
35	Warmer Homes	0	-1,000		-1,000	WCC funding to be used for insulation
36	Elections		-6,000		-6,000	To support the legal requirement to undertake an Absent Voters review and to fund all associated costs in January 2013.
37	Grants to Vol Bodies		-12,660		-12,660	Jubilee Events in 2012/13/Batchley Support Grp to be paid in2012/13
38	Strategic Housing		-1,250		-1,250	DCLG Revenue contrib to Hsg R&D
39	Boulders Play Area		-23,670		-23,670	Play area work -income from insurance claim for fire damage
40	Elections		-16,000		-16,000	Following a change in funding allocations the reserve is required to fund replacement ballot booths and boxes in the future.
41	Planning transformation		-10,000		-10,000	Backfilling of posts during transformation
42	Countryside Centre		-6,000		-6,000	drainage system
	GF Earmarked Reserves	-2,594,094	-490,400	497,553	-2,586,941	
43	Supporting People(HRA)	-19,166	-10,341		-29,507	Funding for post not all used in year
	HRA Earmarked Reserves	-19,166	-10,341	0	-29,507	
44	Capital Reserve- Vehicles & Plant	-260,495			-260,495	To fund vehicle & plant programme
45	Planning grant	-71,595			-71,595	Transferred to Balances in 2012/13
46	Capital Reserve-HRA	-5,450,000			-5,450,000	To fund future housing capital programme
47	Major Repairs Reserve	-3,843,949	2,267,815		-1,576,134	To fund future housing capital programme
	Capital Reserve	-9,626,039	2,267,815	0	-7,358,224	
	TOTAL BALANCES	-8,395,350	1,767,074	497,553	-9,974,672	

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**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT -
QUARTER 4, PERIOD ENDING 31ST MARCH 2012**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould, Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes – At Portfolio Holders' meeting
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1 This report also provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council's performance for quarter 4 of the 2011/12 financial year and to comment upon it.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update on key performance indicators for the period ending 31st March 2012 be considered and commented upon.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Poor financial performance will be detrimental to any Council assessment and overall performance. Specific financial indicators included in the 2011/12 set for quarter 3 are listed below:
- Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events;
 - Percentage of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms;

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Government announced that the former National Indicator set was to be reduced. At present there is no legal requirement for the local authority to produce specific performance data.

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- 3.3 As the Council progresses with the transformation programme, Members and Senior Management Team may wish to challenge data requirements placed upon the Council by external organisations if it is felt that they do not contribute to the purposes of the organisation.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 The current reduced number of indicators allows Officers to focus on the areas that are of greatest importance and still require management for the remainder of the financial year.
- 3.5 The corporate performance report compares the year to date outturn with the same period last year and shows those indicators from the Council Plan which were agreed by CMT for corporate reporting for quarter 3 and quarter 4, 2011/12 and whether they have improved, declined or remained static in performance.
- a) In total, data has been provided for 18 indicators for quarter 3. Of these, 11 have improved in performance and 7 have declined compared with the same period last year.
 - b) Of those indicators which have declined, there are two which may require further analysis (see section 3.5.4).
 - c) This report shows that of the 18 indicators reported this quarter, 61.1% have improved when compared to the same period last year (April to March). By way of example:
 - i. The time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events continues to demonstrate a positive direction of travel as the length of time to process the claims has reduced by 3.15 days when compared to the same period last year, falling from 11.35 days to 8.20 days;
 - ii. The amount of time lost to the organisation due to sickness absence has reduced from 9.68 days to 7.95 days. It is hoped that the current review of the sickness absence policy will result in continued improvement in this indicator;
 - iii. There has been approximately 15kg reduction (per household) in the amount of residual household waste collected. Falling from 569.17 kgs, April – March in 2010/11 to 554kgs for the same period in 2011/12;
 - iv. There continues to be a reduction in the amount of rent owing from Council tenants, falling from 2.65% of the rent roll for April – March in 2010/11 to 2.37% for the same period in 2011/12.

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- d) There are two indicators highlighted as showing relative concern:
- i. The number of households requiring temporary accommodation in the period April to March has increased from 3 households in 2010/11 to 14 households in 2011/12. With the exception of quarter 2 (Jul – Sep) each quarter throughout 2011/12 has seen a comparative increase in the number of households requiring temporary accommodation; there is concern this will continue with an upward trend due to changes in affordability and housing benefit entitlement. Some reasons for this are: there are fewer private properties available for rent as some private landlords have been forced to sell properties, and due to changes in housing benefit (which is now paid directly to the applicant and not the landlord); fewer private landlords are prepared to rent to people in receipt of benefits due to fear of non-payment.
 - ii. The number of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt has remained relatively static for the last 8 quarters with the average percentage of invoices being paid at 92.16% (this does not include disputed invoices). Works is being undertaken with Heads of Service to target areas where prompt return of invoices continues to be a particular issue; support will be provided if necessary.
- 3.6 To maintain data quality, the Council uses an electronic data collection (EDC) spread sheet. This shows current and historic performance against selected performance indicators.
- 3.7 The Council's current Council Plan makes a clear commitment to improve the way in which priority actions are planned and to improve the way in which performance is managed. Appendix 1 reports on the 2011/12 performance indicators agreed for by CMT for corporate reporting in quarter 4. These indicators have been extracted from the Council Plan. The performance data contained in the attached report relates directly to the Council's priorities and objectives.
- 3.8 The performance indicator set includes one which reports on the number of working days / shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per full time equivalent staff member. Quarter 4, 2011/12 shows a decrease in the amount of time lost due to sickness absence compared to the same period last year (April – March).
- 3.9 There are a total of 2 performance indicators that relate to air quality and climate change within the list of National Indicators all of which are included in the corporate set.

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Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 Customer service performance indicators included for 2011/12:
- a) Percentage of complaints handled within the agreed time frames.
 - b) Performance for this indicator can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.11 Enhanced performance will assist to improve customer satisfaction.
- 3.12 Information contained in the attached appendix will be communicated to both internal and external customers via the intranet/Internet following approval at committee.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Assessing the Council's performance forms part of the Council's approach to risk management.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Quarter 4, 2011/12 Corporate Performance Report, period ending 31 March 2011

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by the Policy Team and on the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) system.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report
Quarter 4, 2011/12 - Period Ending March 2012

The following pages provide a report for all corporate performance indicators which are contained in the Council Plan, for which data was expected and provided in quarter 4 (January - March) 2011/12 and where there is comparative data available; the data relates to a year to date (April - March) comparison.

	Finance & Corporate Resources (FR)		Leisure, Environmental & Community Services (LEC)		Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory & Housing Srvs (PRRH)		Total	
Total number of corporate performance indicators providing outturn data for quarter 4 where comparative data is available	3	%	9	%	6	%	18	%
Total number of indicators showing improvement compared to the same period last year ☺	2	66.7%	6	66.7%	3	50.0%	11	61.1%
Total number of indicators showing a decline compared to the same period last year ☹	1	33.3%	3	33.3%	3	50.0%	7	38.9%
Total number of indicators showing no change compared to the same period last year ☹	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Key Findings for Quarter 4

This report shows that of the 18 indicators reported this quarter, 61.1% have improved when compared to the same period last year. By way of example, the time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days) has continued to improve with the number of days taken falling from 11.35 days to just 8.2 days. Likewise, the amount of household waste collected (kilograms per head) has fallen from 90.19kgs to 84.55kgs showing a drop of 5.64 kilograms per head. There has also been an increase of over 30,000 people using leisure centres in the town. However there are indicators which give rise to some concern; for example, the number of households living in temporary accommodation has increased from 3 in 2010/11 to 14 for 2011/12 (this is a snap shot taken on 31 March each year).

The table below shows a key to terms and symbols used throughout this report.

<u>Key to Terms and Symbols</u>			
Improving performance compared to same period last year	☺	Positive Trend	+ve
Worsening performance compared to same period last year	☹	Negative Trend	-ve
No change in performance compared to same period last year	☹	To be confirmed	TBC
No data available for the period	#	Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey	(WVP)
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	Customer Service Centre	CSC
Data is provisional	*	West Midlands	WM

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)	
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 March 2011	1 Apr 2011 - 31 March 2012	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11
Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days)	11.35	8.20	☺	13.40	11.35
% of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt	92.39%	92.16%	☹	93.55%	92.39%
Number of working days / shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per FTE (full time equivalent) staff members (days)	9.68	7.95	☺	9.02	9.68
% of complaints handled within the agreed time frames	81.25%	72.55%	Contextual	NA	81.25%

Comments

More claims decided while the customer is in the Town Hall has resulted in faster claim processing. There is also an increase in the automation of external agency (Dept. of Works and Pensions and HM Revenues & Customs) data - data excludes end of year batch processing.

There has been an increase in processing time due to a delay in officers signing invoices and returning them in a timely manner to accounts payable. Officers are being asked to return invoices more promptly and work is being undertaken with Heads of Service to target areas where this is a particular issue so the matter can be addressed and support provided if necessary.

There has been a decrease in sickness absence over the 12 months to March 2012 compared to the same period in 2010/11, falling from 9.68 days to 7.95 days. A review of the sickness absence policy is a priority for Human Resources in the coming months. The implementation of shared services has impacted on the comparative data.

The number of complaints recorded has increased in comparison to the same time last year, and we are seeing a general upward trend. This does not necessarily reflect that customers are less happy with our service but that we are getting our message across about ensuring complaints are logged and making it easy for customer to make a complaint if they need to. There is a drop in the percentage of complaints dealt with within agreed timescales compared with the same period last year but these cases were complex and the customers were kept informed of the need to take a little longer to complete investigations.

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 March 2011	1 Apr 2011 - 31 March 2012	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Number of affordable homes delivered	100	24	Contextual	111	100	5 flats delivered via Kickstart at Windsor Heights plus an additional mortgage rescue under reported from quarter two.
Number of British Crime Survey comparator crimes reported	3,241	3,296	☹	3,469	3,241	The number of BCS crimes in Redditch has decreased this quarter compared to Q3, however, the end of year outturn is up 2% (55 crimes) compared to 2010/11. This increase is mainly due to a slight spike in offending in the beginning of the year (Apr 2011) around dwelling burglary offences and violence against the person. After this the level of offending has been generally decreasing.
Number of people using the Dial-A-Ride service	35,196	34,720	☹	32,865	35,196	There has been a decrease in year end figures of 476 which is due to unplanned maintenance and downtime of vehicles, however new registrations are up by 10% on last years figures and it is anticipated that this will be reflected in an increase in next quarter 1 figures.
Number of people using the Shopmobility service	16,252	16,844	☺	19,238	16,252	A good end to the year with an increase of 592 customers when compared to the end of last year.
Visitors to the Palace Theatre	53,015	53,060	☺	44,857	53,015	Due to an increase in the number of performances hosted at the Palace Theatre, the number of visitors in the 4th quarter also increased, up by 3,006 when compared to same period of previous year.
Visitors to leisure centres	569,187	599,207	☺	565,157	569,187	There has been an increase of over 30,000 visitors when compared to the same period last year. This is due to the opening of the new Abbey Stadium. Increase in Health & Fitness Usage due to new equipment, increased advertising, large scale events, new exercise to music programme delivered through consultation and competitor analysis. In addition, there has been an increase in swimming lessons due to due to advertising, successful/well managed transfer of lessons from other sites, re-organisation of lessons through consultation and benchmarking. Likewise, there has been an increase in public swimming due to new programme delivery, through consultation and benchmarking.
Visitors to Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitors Centre	21,347	21,562	☺	15,068	21,347	Although the venue was closed during January, there has been an increase in the number of visitors over the year. The wedding fayre in March increased the number of visitors in quarter 4 (Jan-Mar).
Household waste collection (kg per head)	90.19	84.55	☺	86.59	90.19	There has been a small decrease in the amount of waste collected over the 2011/12 period - reducing by 5.64 kg per head. This is an improvement when compared to the last 2 years.

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 March 2011	1 Apr 2011 - 31 March 2012	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Residual waste per household (kgs)	569.17	*554.00	☺	574.94	569.17	There has been a reduction in the amount of residual household waste of more than 15kg per household when compared to the same period last year. A final audited figure from Waste Data Flow is expected within 6 months of the year end.
% of household waste re-used, recycled or composted	28.73%	*28.69%	☹	28.30%	28.73%	There appears to be a minimal reduction in the amount of household waste re-used, recycled or composted. A final audited figure from Waste Data Flow is expected within 6 months of the year end.

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 March 2011	1 Apr 2011 - 31 March 2012	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Number of households living in temporary accommodation (Snapshot)	3	14	☹	7	3	The use of temporary accommodation continues to increase due to private rented sector becoming more difficult to obtain and subsequently sustain due to affordability.
Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days)	19.55	21.33	☹	22.92	19.55	Quarter 4 (Jan-Mar) showed the length of time taken to re-let local authority housing was 23.44 days which was considerably higher than quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) which was 20.75 days. This increase in re-let time was as a result of high maintenance in January due to a particularly heavy workload and staff shortages. Although the annual figure of 21.33 days shows re-let times have increased, they are still within the in-service target of 25 days.
Rent arrears as a percentage of rent roll	2.65%	2.37%	☺	3.57%	2.65%	There has been a reduction in the amount of arrears owing at the year end due to the emphasis changing to prevention rather than enforcement. Due to this shift in emphasis, there has been a reduction in the number of cases being referred to court which has in turn allowed staff the time to concentrate on prevention.
Processing of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	76.92%	77.78%	☺	100%	76.92%	There was only 1 major application in quarter 4 (Jan-Mar) and this was determined within the designated time frame. In 2011/12 a total of 9 major applications were received of which 7 were determined within time resulting in a slight improvement in performance when compared with the same period last year. Staff in planning are currently involved in transformation and there is a more relaxed approach to targets with a view to improving customer service in the round. The role of targets in the planning system will be considered as part of the transformation process.
Processing of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	100%	95.76%	☹	95.24%	100%	Of the 22 applications received in quarter 4 (Jan-Mar), 2 were determined out of time, which is lower than the same period last year. The number of actual applications received and determined has increased over the past 12 months, however the number of applications determined within the designated time frame has fallen slightly. The slightly lower outturn is as a result of a combination of factors including staff involved in transformation and a more relaxed approach to targets with a view to improving customer service in the round. The role of targets in the planning system will be considered as part of the transformation process.

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Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 March 2011	1 Apr 2011 - 31 March 2012	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Processing of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	95.40%	96.55%	☺	98.16%	95.40%	Of the 174 applications received in 2011/12 a total of 168 were determined in time, equating to 96.55%, a slight increase when compared to 2010/11. In quarter 4 specifically, a total of 2 applications were determined out of time (the same as Q4, 2010/11). Staff in planning are currently involved in transformation and there is a more relaxed approach to targets with a view to improving customer service in the round. The role of targets in the planning system will be considered as part of the transformation process.

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**MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICE
REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor P Mould - Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	✓
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda de Warr – Head of Customer Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides Members with some key information in respect of customer service, including an update on progress against the Every Customer Every Time customer experience strategy and customer feedback data for the fourth quarter of 2011/12.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update for the period 1st January 2012 - 31st March 2012 be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The report, attached at Appendix 1, sets out some information against our measures within the Customer Service Centres. These are to be used for information and are not targets. The report also sets out volumes of customer feedback, including Local Government Ombudsman complaints and information on how well we have handled these against our agreed timescales. There are no targets in respect of numbers of complaints and compliments as enforcing targets can lead to complaints not being recorded and compliments being solicited in order to meet targets which are have little meaning. Instead we will focus on learning from the feedback we receive.

Financial Implications

- 3.2 There are no direct financial implications.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report. Any legal issues arising from complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

26th June 2012

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.4 The Every Customer Every Time Customer Experience Strategy was launched in March 2011 and sets out our vision for excellent customer service provision and improve the customer experience when having contact with the Council.
- 3.5 Quarterly reporting is intended to ensure Members are aware of progress and updated in respect of customer feedback, especially complaints made in respect of service provision.
- 3.6 Good customer service improves value for money by reducing failure demand. Improvements to the way we handle complaints has resulted in less officer time spent chasing responses and re-investigating.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 It is important to monitor aspects of customer service to ensure that we are improving and developing. Customers need to know that we respond properly to complaints, act on the issues raised and report on them. Customer feedback is a valuable tool for understanding what is going well, and what not so well, within the organisation. These are form vital information for all transformation reviews.
- 3.8 Measures provide us with useful information about what is happening in our organisation and help us to understand where changes may impact.
- 3.9 Although led by the Head of Customer Services, the customer experience strategy applies to all services and progress against the action plan involves offices from many services working together to the benefit of customers.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 It is important to analyse the Council's complaints or compliments and for the Council to identify whether there are any trends which need to be addressed and any lessons learned in order to improve the Council performance and service to the Customer. The Customer Service Centre data is important for monitoring service delivery and identifying areas for change or improvement.
- 4.2 Failure to monitor actions in respect of the customer experience strategy could result in failure to progress.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

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5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Making Experiences Count, Quarterly Customer Service Report Quarter 4 2011/12.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Head of Customer Services.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st January - 31st March 2012



Introduction

This report provides some of the key customer service information for the organisation, including:-

- analysis of the complaints and compliments received during this quarter and any other relevant feedback, as well as an overview of the year;
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics;
- customer satisfaction; and
- progress highlights in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy;

Customer Feedback Analysis

Compliment and Complaints Received

The following table sets out the numbers of complaints and compliments received during the fourth quarter of 2011/12.

Department	Compliments	Complaints	Complaint target met	Complaint upheld or partially upheld	Complaint not upheld	Still open
Community Services	8	4	4	3	1	
Chief Executives Office	0	1	1	0	1	
Customer Services	4	1	1	1	0	
Environmental Services	14	8	8	5	3	
Housing	15	30	20	21	8	1
Leisure and Culture	14	5	2	5	0	
Planning and Regeneration	1	4	3	0	3	1
Resources	0	3	3	2	1	
Totals	41	56	42	37	17	2

These compare with the following statistics from last year:

	Total compliments	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time	Total complaints upheld as the Council made a mistake or could have done better
2010/11	NOT RECORDED	80	65	20
2011/12	177	204	145	102

As expected this shows that there has been a shift in our reporting of complaints. There has been an increase in complaints reported in Housing Repairs this quarter since they started their transformation, not because the service has got worse but because there is now a greater understanding of the need for this information. Work is continuing to support staff and managers to create a culture where complaints are used for positive effect and reporting complaints is not seen as detrimental.

What did we learn from the Complaints received?

The major trends in the complaints are:-

- not keeping the customer informed;
- giving customers the wrong information;
- delays in dealing with customer requests; and
- not treating the customer with respect.

This is in line with the rest of the year and is also echoed through the findings of the transformation reviews where we have seen significant amounts of customer demand for similar reasons.

Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days. 75% of complaints were dealt with within that timeframe during this quarter, and an average of 71% of cases were responded to within the target time over the whole year.

Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, customers were informed that there would be a delay in all cases. We are learning that sometimes the timeframes can restrict our ability to properly respond to complaints and when we review the process using systems thinking methodology we may find that the timescales need to be more flexible depending on the nature of the problem. The priority during the period between receiving the complaint and being able to fully respond to it is communicating and liaising with the customer. This is often better done over the phone or face to face rather than by letter.

Complaints Received	Number handled within target	1-2 days after target	3- 10 days after target	11- 21 After target
	42	3	7	2
Reason		This is due to users not entering the correct date when closing cases.	Complex and varied investigations- Leisure x 2 Repairs x 5	Complex and varied investigations- Housing Services

Details of complaints and actions taken

It is important that we understand the scope of complaints received and what action was taken to address the issue. We categorise complaints as:-

- ‘upheld’, where we are totally in the wrong, have made a mistake or could have done something better;
- ‘partially upheld’ where we can see that we were partly in the wrong but that there are also issues over which we either had no control or could not have acted differently; and
- ‘not upheld’ where our investigation shows that we have acted appropriately, or could not have done anything more.

The following table provides some detail on upheld or partially upheld complaints.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken/Improvement Action
Dial a Ride	Dial a ride bus wasn't on time, making the group late for the meal they had booked and the driver didn't seem to know the addresses of the pick up.	Apology given to customer. The bus was late because some of the passengers had walking difficulties so the tail lift had to be used. Dispatchers will in future ensure they find out which passengers are booked in so they can take this in to account for the timings. Driver did know the addresses but the house numbers were hard to find.
Children's Centres	Users of Children Centre parking on grass verges opposite causing damage.	Apology given and action taken to inform users to be considerate to community when parking via newsletter, on boards outside centre and facilitators of sessions.
Children's Centres	Baby time session has been cancelled.	After consultation with users of this session it has been re instated.
Customer Services	Customer unhappy with the way his call was handled at the contact centre and felt he was being constantly interrupted by advisor.	Apology given- the contact centre was experiencing sound quality problems with the new Shoretel telephone system, which would account for the customer's perception of the call. Advisors asked to inform customers of the problems we are having until it is rectified.
Waste	Customer unhappy that despite informing the Council of the death of his mother he is still receiving correspondence about her bin.	Apology – investigation found that there was confusion on the form returned as it didn't give address of his mother. However care will be taken in future to ensure that details are thoroughly checked.

Waste	Customer is unhappy about the state of the bins from the communal refuse collection. They are overflowing, have broken lids and cats are getting into the bins strewing the rubbish everywhere.	Changes made to alleviate problems - recycling bin changed to a domestic bin and bin lid now fixed. Waste Supervisor will monitor site weekly and Cleansing team will check area and undertake any cleansing required.
Waste	Customer is on an assisted collection of baskets, and yet again, crew came and did not return his recycling baskets to his bin cupboard, instead they were left strewn across the public pathway and he had to go out in the rain and retrieve them.	Recycling boxes are returned to the bin cupboard as agreed, however, on this occasion there were agency staff on the crew, not aware of procedure Supervisor will ensure this doesn't reoccur.
Waste	Customer reported that the green bin collection had been missed from the previous Monday and was informed that the bins would be collected within 48 hours but they are still there awaiting collection.	Apology given and bin emptied.
Waste	Customer unhappy that her request to replace her stolen grey bin has not been listened to and feels stressed by the amount of rotting food and rubbish she has in her home.	Apology given and bin replaced.
Street Cleaning	Customer alleged that damage to his fence was caused by Council pathway sweeper. He was referred to Council's Insurance Company but as operative has denied causing damage, claim has been rejected.	Operative stated that no damage caused and claim was refused by our insurance company; however minor repair work undertaken to fence as a gesture of goodwill.
Countryside Centre	Customer visited Countryside Centre and was appalled at the very poor state of the restaurant. Dirty windows, food all over the floor, tables not cleared. She is a frequent visitor and was very upset to see this. Also she has noticed a lack of seating around the lake for older people.	Apology given. Regular inspections are undertaken and no cleanliness issues have arisen. However, this may not have been the case at the time of her visit. She has been given the contractors details so that she can contact direct and has been offered a meeting with team to discuss seating.

Leisure	Customer would expect more public swimming time at Abbey Stadium, but taken over by too many clubs and lessons and feel these should be held elsewhere.	Apology given. Leisure Team will be reviewing the pool timetable over the next 2 months or so and making further changes from feedback we receive.
Leisure	Customer unhappy about public swimming timetable at Abbey Stadium. Feel it is very poor and swimming lessons/clubs need to take place at Hewell Road or Kingsley with gala's and competitions only taking place at the Abbey. Object to paying £25 membership to include pool use when you can't get good swimming times.	Apology given. Leisure Team will be reviewing the pool timetable over the next 2 months or so and making further changes from feedback we receive.
Leisure	Customer unhappy about the management of the new Abbey Stadium. He has encountered several problems- no welcome sign, only a sign saying planning to be approved, Reddicards ran out in first week, shower temperature too high, lights left on at all hours wasting electricity, pool temperature very low and time not put aside for disabled swim sessions.	Apology given, Non removal of sign was an oversight and have arranged for this to be removed. There was unexpected delay in Reddicard delivery due to contractor issue. New mixer valve on poolside to control shower units was installed. Thermostatic settings to be reviewed urgently. Pool - low water temperature caused by pool plant failure, which has now been remedied and water temp has remained constant over last few weeks. Acknowledge that during early stages of a new facility there would be some operating issues but working hard to rectify these and provide high quality leisure facility.

Council Tax	Council Tax had been notified someone was moving into customers address as a new tenancy and ended his account. When we found out the address given was incorrect we re-instated his account but his d/debit was missed out in November due to the mix up causing the next 2 payments to rise from £117.00 to £176.00 which is a lot more money to pay monthly on a pension and not due to his fault at all. No written explanation or apology was given.	Apology and explanation given.
Council Tax	Customer unhappy that he has been refused charitable relief for NNDR and the time it has taken for the Council to make this decision.	Apology given. Case was initially held pending receipt of information. Information was not forwarded and case progressed, however the delay was not acceptable, there was then a further delay from the challenge of the decision to notification of outcome.
Capital	Customer unhappy about continual breakdown of boiler and no resolution, and attitude of a member of staff at Contractors.	Apology given. It was unfortunate that the boiler kept breaking down with different problems, but contractor responded on each occasion. The heating is now in full working order.
Capital	Customer unhappy that after speaking to a member of the team who promised to attend and have a look at the problem with the earth bonding on the meter, he didn't hear anything and his subsequent calls were not responded to.	Apology given, gas supervisor had failed to make contact.
Capital	Customer sent in complaint card about lack of communication and action to some proposed remedial work to outhouses.	Apology and update given. Team reminded to keep residents informed.

Capital	Customer had repair done to boiler in January which meant that her hot water and heating were on one switch. This was due to the contractor waiting for a new control for the boiler. Customer is still waiting for this part and is anxious as the warmer weather is coming and she doesn't want her heating to come on when she uses hot water.	Apology given. Delay was due to sourcing problems and gas contractor not picking up referral. This will be monitored.
Housing Options	Agent for customer unhappy about lack of response to letter about homeless application.	Apology given, customer was re-housed before complaint was received.
Housing Services	Customer unhappy that he has received no contact re his report about neighbours not putting out their bins and build up of rubbish in communal areas. The tenants of these properties are using other people's bins. Letters were sent to all tenants about the problem some time ago but some tenants are not adhering.	Apology given as the Tenancy Officer did not keep in contact with the tenant. An alternative option of refuse collection has been proposed.
Housing Options	Worcester CAB complained on behalf of customer about the lack of response from Housing .	The case was being dealt with by the Team; however, the initial approach to the CAB was not dealt with correctly. The member of staff has been advised and will deal with it in a different way in the future.
Housing	Customer going a mutual property exchange which has been turned down has not heard from Housing Officer about how to appeal.	Apology given as wrong information was given. Housing Team now working closely with customer to try and resolve long term problems.
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about information given about her mother to the Pension Fund.	Apology given and member of staff given further training.

Housing Services	Customer unhappy about the time it has taken to action her friends succession application after the death of her husband. A Housing Officer had made a home visit a month ago and promised to action the application but nothing has been heard since.	Apology given and application will be backdated.
Repairs	Customer is unhappy about the delay to complete repairs to her property. She has reported this several but feels like she is talking to a brick wall as nothing gets done.	Apology given as there had been a delay in attending to refit the radiator, although contractor had tried to contact the tenant.
Repairs	Customer unhappy that despite three visits to her property about a mould problem, nothing has been done.	Apology given - this has now been rectified.
Repairs	Customer unhappy that despite a visitor from an inspector about his leaking ceiling, nothing has been done and he had to chase this up several times.	Apology given - although there were some delays in getting the work completed, there were also access issues when the contractor made appointments with the tenant.
Repairs	Complaint about ongoing problem with mould in property and that it is not being addressed.	Apology given and action taken to remove mould.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about damage to plants by contractors which he feels was caused by them rushing to finish the job before it gets dark.	Apology given. Scaffolding company told to be mindful of time of day to ensure enough daylight to complete the job.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about delays to plastering work in her property	Apology given. Delay in getting works done - service improvement to action requests sooner and communicate at all times with our tenants.
Repairs	Complaint about inspectors calling at the property and the works not being recorded and then not completed properly.	Apology given, General delay in diagnosing problem in property. This is now being resolved.

Repairs	Customer unhappy with problem with fencing in back garden at property and the Inspector did not call him back and she had to keep reporting the repair.	Apology given for the delay which was caused by uncertainty of the ownership of the fencing.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about an ongoing problem with his fence not being resolved.	Apology given and chain link fence ordered– all Inspectors will be contacted to reiterate that they need to address issues and communicate with tenants.
Repairs	Customer unhappy with the attitude of a repairs inspector – he was very rude.	The Supervisor has been spoken to and his conduct will be monitored.

Complaints recorded as not justified are generally those where no error was found on the part of the Council, or there was nothing more that could have been done. Nonetheless the issue is still important to the customer which is why we record them and they can result in a change in practice where a trend can be identified.

In future we are planning to categorise complaints in greater detail. Here are details of some of the complaints reported as not upheld by the investigating Officer.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Reasons for case
Anti Social Behaviour Team	Customer feels that the ASB team did not act in a timely and professional way in response to her complaint about a noisy neighbour	After investigation it was found that officers followed the correct process, and through their interventions did everything possible under the circumstances to attempt to solve the problems including installing noise recording equipment for 2 months which on play back showed no evidence of noise and installing noise pads on kitchen drawers and cupboards of her neighbour.
Engineering and Design	Unhappy with how resident's car parking problem is being dealt with.	Although Eng & Design Officers have no authority to restrict parking in this area, they have tried to help by providing signs and written to local residents asking that vehicles are parked elsewhere. Unfortunately this had no effect. Work is ongoing with the Housing Tenancy team to try to resolve.

Waste	Customer unhappy that he is receiving 180L grey bin to replace 240L grey that fell into back of wagon. He feels that he should not have to pay the same as his neighbours who all still have 240L bins and it will cost him to get rid the 60l of rubbish he will have left over each fortnight.	Smaller bin provided within RBC policy as 240 bin is old stock, but customer has been asked if he would like a visit from a Waste Management Officer to discuss his needs.
Development Control	Customer very unhappy about planning application and feels very strongly that he has been treated appallingly and with no courtesy at all. Nobody at all has actually had the confidence or courage to explain why the permission wasn't granted.	Planning Policy was followed. Customer was informed of how he can submit an appeal.
Development Control	Customer unhappy about the garages to the side of her property being demolished which would make her garden less private and also cause safety issues with the road behind.	Consultation was carried out and customer took part in this. A new fence has been erected along with some higher kerb stones on the road.
Council Tax	Customer received a summons with £50 charges. She has been paying every month and states did not get a reminder and not happy about attitude from people that she spoke to. She was not advised about direct debits and doesn't think we are treating people fairly.	Customer was late paying and arrangement was cancelled so summons issued correctly. She did not like the members of staff's attitude as we refused to remove the costs.
Capital	Customer unhappy that Council failed to fit a window lock when she was renting the property and had new windows fitted part of an upgrade.. She contacted the Council and was told that it is her responsibility. She owns the property now but believes that it is still the council responsibility because the work was not completed correctly.	As the property was sold in 2004, the Council is not responsible for repairs.

Housing Options	Customer unhappy about the way her parents have been treated whilst going through the process to be re housed due to special needs.	Customers had been given the correct advice based on their circumstances and the existing allocations policy. Unfortunately the Council cannot meet their expectations regarding the property they want <i>* This complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about the inconsistency of information and lack of response to further phone calls about her complaint of ASB from a tenant living above The situation is that bad she is staying away from her property.	The Tenancy Officer was unable to contact the tenant as she was off sick. On her return she made contact. The Allocations Policy was explained and investigations are ongoing into her neighbour. <i>* This Complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services/ASB	Customer unhappy about a neighbour using his home as a business and riding his quad bike dangerously. He has reported this issue before and thinks the Council is not willing to help.	Ongoing work has been carried out on this case between two owner occupiers. The issue concerning parking of vehicles on housing land is being pursued via Legal. Advice has been given that any incidents which occur should be reported to the Police <i>* This Complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about a security door not being repaired as she was a victim of abuse and problems with her neighbours not being dealt with. She also is unhappy about not being offered an alternative property.	Door being repaired after vandalism and customer offered help with housing needs. Help has been offered on previous occasions. <i>* This complaint should probably have been recorded as partially upheld.</i>
Repairs	Customer unhappy that the planned repair to his door frame has not been carried out and that he has made several calls and emails to the repairs team which have not been returned.	When double glazing is fitted to Council houses, this includes all windows and one door front and back. In this instance, the front door was replaced. The tenant requested a plastic door to his porch, which is not possible. Remedial work to take place to the porch. <i>* This complaint should have been recorded as partially upheld.</i>

Repairs	Customer unhappy about the lift in the block that is constantly breaking down.	Not upheld by RBC's R&M Team as the lift is the responsibility of the County Council, who will undertake the necessary repairs/replacement. <i>*Complaints is justified but action not required by RBC</i>
St David's House	Customer unhappy about staff member saying that she could not push her in her wheel chair to the table at the luncheon club but other people were being helped this way.	Apology given but the policy is that people attending the luncheon should be able to push themselves. This was discussed with customer and arrangements have been made.

** Comments of Head of Customer Services added after the complaint had been dealt with.*

“You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

We aim to use complaints as a mechanism for making improvements to our services and changes have been made as result of complaints in the following services:-

Leisure- the swimming timetable at Abbey Stadium will be revised based on customer feedback

Repairs – Inspectors will improve the consistency of communication with customers to keep them updated on planned work. Improvements will also be made to the repairs request system so that they can be actioned sooner. Training on how to handle complaints better is also to be provided.

Capital – Team looking at how they can improve communication with Customers.

Customer Services – work is ongoing to improve the quality of the phone lines.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There were three complaints escalated to the Head of Customer Services, for further investigation or action.

Housing Options - The customer was unhappy about the response to complaint on behalf of her parents who had special housing needs. After investigation it was found that communication could have been better through out the case and the response to the original complaint did not clearly deal with the issues raised. However, the investigation suggests proper process had been followed with regard to the housing allocation. The Head of Customer Services met with the customers, along with a Housing Officer and the outcome of this was positive, with the customer being satisfied with the outcome and the response to their complaints.

Housing Options – The customers were unhappy about the response to their complaint which related to the inconsistency of information and lack of response to phone calls to the ASB team. The investigation found that although there was no failing on the part of the Council in carrying out our duties in accordance with current systems, there was lack of customer care and consideration. The Head of Customer Services met with the customers along with a number of other officers and the customers in question have been helpful in sharing their experiences to help improve service delivery.

Housing Services – The customer was unhappy about the response to his complaint about a parking issue. After investigation it was found that all possible action has been taken by the Council and the problem reported is not currently occurring, therefore no further action could be taken.

What did we learn from the compliments received?

From the range of compliments received it is apparent that customers appreciate when we take the time to listen to their concerns and take prompt action. Here are some of the compliments we have received.

Team	Compliment Details
Lifeline	Customer sent in a comment card to say that he has been very satisfied with all the contact he has had with the Lifeline Service. The staff are very polite and friendly and make him feel at ease.
Children’s Centres	Customer was grateful for being able to express her views and ideas at the Cherry Trees Parents Forum.
Dial a ride	Customer visited office as she wanted to meet the office staff and thank them personally for all their help and care when she is making her bookings over the telephone. She said Dial-A-Ride is a wonderful service.
Customer Services	Customer would like to thank us for the excellent service provided when she phoned the Contact Centre concerning her door repair which had not been completed. She said the member of staff was very respectful whilst attending to the enquiry.
Customer Services	Customer appreciative of the compassion shown and efforts made by Head of Customer Services on their behalf.
Landscaping	Thank you for the prompt response to a fallen tree. It fell last night and the crew was out at 8am this morning and had it cleared away before the children started making their way to school.

Waste	Resident would like to thank the waste collection crew that returned her wheelie bin to her front door, even though her footpath was completely snow covered. This would have taken quite a lot of effort and this was not expected as this property does not have an assisted collection.
Street Cleaning	Would like to say thank you for removing the graffiti off the sign, it's a great help for the taxi drivers to see where they are going. Big thank you.
Sports Development	Just a quick email to say how well the awards evening went, a credit to your organisation as ever.
Theatre	Thank you for once again assisting us with our production to ensure that we had a successful show. The expertise of the theatre stage staff and front of house staff makes all the difference.
Development Control	Just a quick note to thank you for your efforts in helping with my application. Much appreciated.
Housing Services	Customer wishes to thank Home Support Officer for all the support she has given to their mum, and the support she has given to the family, whilst their mother has been very unwell, she has been visiting daily, it was very re-assuring to know that someone was there when they were unable to go.
Repairs	Carpenter has been out today to carry out works to the fence post to the side of his property and customer would like to say a big thank you and a job well done, very tidy and took time to clean up.
Repairs	Customer called and would like to pass on his gratitude regarding the work carried out on his property; in his own words he said it was a brilliant job. It was regarding kitchen units and the work was carried out today.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints

There were three LGO complaints received during this period.

Complaint 1 related to a planning matter. This was responded to in 22 days. We have not yet received the outcome from the LGO.

Complaint 2 related to a landscape matter and took 25 days to respond to. The LGO found no evidence of maladministration by the Council.

Complaint 3 – was in relation to the administration of a benefits claim and information is currently being gathered in response.

A total of 23 complaints were made to the LGO during 2011/12. Of these 9 were considered to be premature complaints and referred back to the customer to contact the Council. In 6 cases the LGO gave advice but the complaint was outside their jurisdiction.

7 cases were passed to the Investigation Team, 3 of which were resubmitted complaints, because the customer was unhappy with the outcome of the result of the LGO investigation.

Of the cases passed to the Investigation Team, it was found that in 1 case the LGO had no powers to investigate and 2 were not taken any further because the LGO found that it was not justified.

This resulted in 4 cases which were investigated. The Council responded to requests for information regarding these complaints in 24.5 days, which is within the target time. The LGO made the decision in 2 cases that there was no, or only minor injustice and did not pursue the matter further. In the other 2 cases the LGO found that the injustice had been remedied during enquiries. The complaints investigated related to landscaping and Housing.

Customer feedback in respect of complaint handling

Since April 2011 we have been asking customers for feedback on how their complaint was handled. The response to this was extremely low in this quarter with only three feedback cards being returned. Of these 2 were satisfied with how the complaint was handled and the third was not and was referring the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Customer Service Centre Information

The section gives members useful information in respect of the service provided at the Customer Service Centres (CSC) and One Stop Shops (OSS). The purpose of the Customer Services team is **to help resolve customer's problems or requests**. We use measures rather than targets to assess what is happening in the service and this section includes some of the headlines.

The number of customers now being dealt with through transformed ways of working or trials of redesigned service delivery is increasing and therefore some of this data will not be provided in future. The new ways of working are having a fundamental impact on how the CSC's and OSS's operate and as a result a full service review will be necessary in due course. In the meantime the service is supporting a number of other services through interventions and many customer service staff are now operating in other teams.

Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer enquiries dealt with by the Customer Service Team:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	Totals for 2011/12
Face to face enquiries	20,955	17,724	15,840	18,266	72,785
Telephone enquiries	19,333	19,261	16,946	21,273	76,813
Email enquiries	725	469	882	1,014	3,270
Payments	32,454	31,958	30,383	23,781	118,576
Total customer contacts	73,467	69,412	64,051	64,334	271,444

Waiting Times

Our average waiting times for seeing or speaking to a member of staff who could help the customer (not including payments) were:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter
Face to Face (not including payments)	33 seconds	5 minutes 28 seconds	3 minutes 35 seconds	4 minutes 6 seconds
Telephones	1 minute 30 seconds	1 minute 7 seconds	1 minute 8 seconds	47 seconds
Email	We always respond to emails within 1 working day of receipt.			

We are now seeing a fairly consistent service in respect of answering the telephones and this is not the full picture as in fact 70% of all calls answered were answered in less than 8 seconds. As I am now confident that the timescale in which we deal with customers is reasonable, although we will continue to monitor the performance this data will not be reported unless there is an issue to advise or update on.

Failure and Value demand

Failure demand is customer contact that is a result of the organisation not doing something, or not doing something right and for the purposes of transformation it is necessary to establish the rate of failure demand within a service. The CSC's deals with customer demand for a range of services and records the failure demand received.

During the 4th quarter of 2011/12 the CSC recorded an average of 23% failure demand.

This is a reduction since the last quarter, and appears to be a direct result of redesigned service delivery through systems thinking transformation.

A study of value and failure during this period shows the variation of value and failure demand in the following services. The data is starting to show that systems thinking interventions are significantly reducing failure demand.

Service	Failure demand (% overall for quarter)
Housing Repairs	56% but dropped to 19% by March due to changes in service delivery brought about by transformation
Environmental Services	37%
Council Tax	36% but dropped to 7% in March due to changes in service delivery brought about by transformation.
Benefits	30% this is reducing as a result of changes to service deliver through transformation.
Housing Options	28%

Cost of service

The average transactions costs based on the total cost of the service for 2010/11 were:

Face to Face	Telephones	Payments
£2.80	£3.29	£0.98

I do not yet have the outturn figures for 2011/12 but expect to have seen a reduction in our transactional costs. As we are now seeing a considerable shift through transformation in how we deal with customers I have many staff in transformation teams and therefore these costs will not be an accurate reflection of transactional costs until we reach a period of stability and have implemented all the changes. For this reason I will not be reporting on this information in future, although the budget will continue to be closely monitored, through the normal budget process.

Customer Satisfaction

The majority of problems or requests received by Customer Service Staff are handed over to someone else within the organisation to resolve. We have established a scheme to gain feedback from customers who have recently made contact with us on how well the organisation (or a part of it) responded to customer's problems and during this quarter we made contact with 54 customers, who had made contact with us with issues relating to Environmental Services. We received the following responses to our questions:

How was your enquiry handled by the Customer Services Adviser?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	1	2	18	33

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the Council?

Yes	No
43	10

If not why not?

- If Dog mess bins were provided the service would be even better

- Smaller grey bin arrived – very dirty
- Trees have not been cut back, no one has contacted to say what is happening
- Not heard from anyone
- Rubbish is still there, it's an ongoing problem.

Customers who were pleased with the service made comments:

- Received smaller grey bin, thank you
- Excellent service

All call back information has been provided to Environmental Services who will be using this to identify improvements and to continue to provide the service to the customer's satisfaction.

Strategy Action Plan Progress

Work has progressed well in respect of meeting the aims set out in the Every Customer, Every Time, Customer Experience Strategy. The vast majority of the action plan has been completed and where we have deferred actions this is because systems thinking is now informing our developments making some of the actions irrelevant.

Some of the areas where more work is still needed include:-

- improving information that we provide to customers, especially letters and on the web,
- further improving how we handle complaints, and ensuring the i-case system is used to capture data about customer concerns not just as a means for responding to complaints,
- use of customer demand information to inform on customer satisfaction.

The action plan has recently been reviewed and here are some of the actions agreed for 2012



Work with the new 4th tier Managers to identify blockages to providing excellent customer service, remind of expectations and provide support for managers who need it in managing performance in respect of customer care provision.



Provide further guidance and support the staff to ensure that customer concerns about service are appropriately escalated and reported as a complaint – even if the customer has not expressly said they want to make a complaint.



Further work with departments to help them improve the quality of responses to customer's complaints, and identifying exactly what the issues are.



.Put in place training for all service managers on advanced customer centric writing skills, managing customer service performance, and handling customer complaints.



Update all staff on progress to date and highlight some of the great work that is going on, whilst also reminding all staff of our expectations in respect of customer care, through staff briefings.

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services
April 2012

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**SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE AND HEALTH FOR PERIOD
ENDING 31ST MARCH 2012**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Non-Key Decision	

1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To report to Executive Committee on Redditch Borough Council's performance for the last quarter (January – March 2012) and the final year outturn for 2011/2012 in relation to sickness absence.
- 1.2 To agree the format for future sickness performance reporting with reference to the format used in this report as a presentation exemplum.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to RESOLVE that

- 1) **the new report format be agreed as an improved way of presenting the data; and**
- 2) **the data relating to the last quarter / full year end be noted.**

3 KEY ISSUES

Analysis of the monthly statistics for the last quarter

Statistics for the Last Quarter (January – March 2012) compared to the same quarter last year

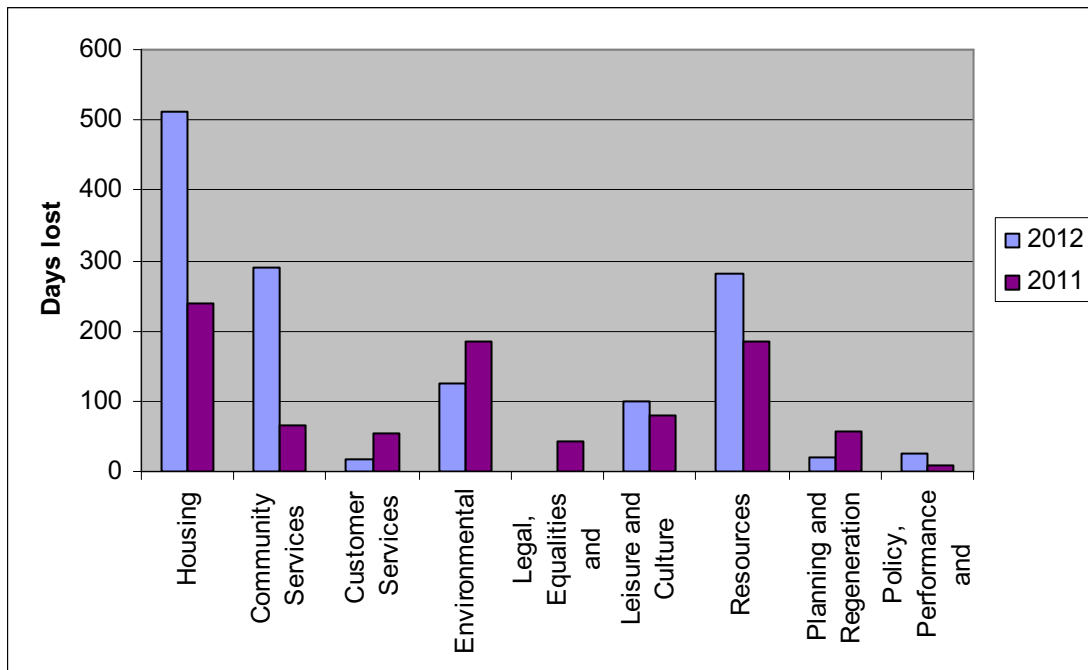
- 3.1 The table and graph below shows performance in the last quarter, compared to the same quarter in the previous year (2010 – 2011). As the staff within Legal & Democratic Services have transferred to Bromsgrove as part of shared services, these figures are reported in Bromsgrove.

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3.2 Future shared service reporting is referred to in 3.7 below.

Service Area	Jan - March 2010 / 2011	Jan - March 2011/ 2012	Average days per employee based on FTE for quarter
Housing	237.5	513	3.9
Community Services	64.8	289	3.91
Customer Services	54.8	18	0.55
Environmental	185.9	124.6	1.20
Legal and Democratic	44	0	0
Leisure and Culture	79	100	1.29
Finance and Resources	183.7	281	2.91
Planning and Regeneration	58	20.3	1.11
Policy, Performance and Partnerships	7.2	25.7	1.01
	914.9	1371.6	2.36



3.3 This shows an increase in the total number of days lost for the quarter. The increase is significant in Housing, Community Services and Resources.

3.4 The figures for this quarter have been exasperated by an increase in the number of long-term sickness absence cases in these areas. The HR Advisors are working closely with managers to identify underlying causes and address specific areas of concern. A number of these cases have since been resolved.

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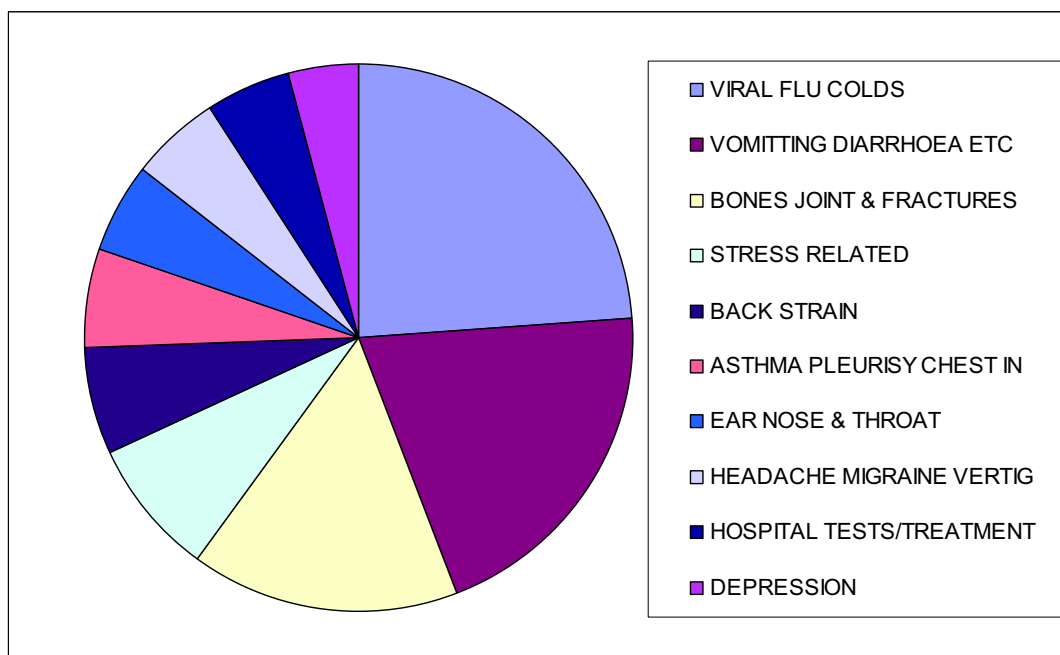
- 3.5 The average days lost per person for this quarter is 2.36 days per person.
- 3.6 From April 2012 issues with comparing “like for like” will present inconsistencies within the statistics until the timescale of the introduction of Shared Services across the year has passed, and the services are in the right authority to be compared on a direct basis.

Implications of Shared Service

- 3.7 Historically data has been collected across service areas and reported accordingly. As part of the Shared Service work statistics for absence will be reported under a “Shared Service” heading where these are across both Councils, and will be reported alongside each Councils figures. This is to ensure the impact of staff who are absent on one Council’s payroll is measured appropriately within the Shared Service for the other Council.

Breakdown of absence by sickness type

- 3.8 The graph below shows the top ten absences broken down by sickness type for the last quarter (January to March 2012).
- 3.9 This reflects 188 of 236 days lost for the quarter, which is 80% of the total sickness days.



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- 3.10 In this quarter the highest number of absences are attributed to viral infections (flu), and vomiting and diarrhoea as may be expected during the winter months. There is some impact on the statistics for this quarter through some accidents (non work related) resulting in fractures causing long term sickness.
- 3.11 Areas that may be a concern to the organisation from a health and safety / occupational health perspective include 15 instances of stress and 8 of depression although these are not necessarily work related.
- 3.12 For the upcoming year 2012 / 2013 a series of training events has been arranged for managers to help them to understand and deal with mental health issues in the workplace. The aim of this is not primarily to improve sickness absence, but to improve the mental wellbeing of staff in a period of change, with the expectation that there will be a knock on effect both in terms of improved attendance but also in managing “presenteeism” at work from employees who are struggling to cope.
- 3.13 The first of these sessions held in May has been positively received with excellent feedback from those who attended. The HR & OD team are looking to identify further initiatives to support this work.
- 3.14 Within the new reporting format it is recommended that the standard Local Government Sickness categories be used, to support consistent collection of information and appropriate action from a health and safety or occupational health perspective when information suggests there may be a problem. These categories are given at appendix 2. The data has not been collected in this format historically so the full year data is not available for 2011 / 2012.
- 3.15 For future reports it is suggested that this information is reported 6 monthly.

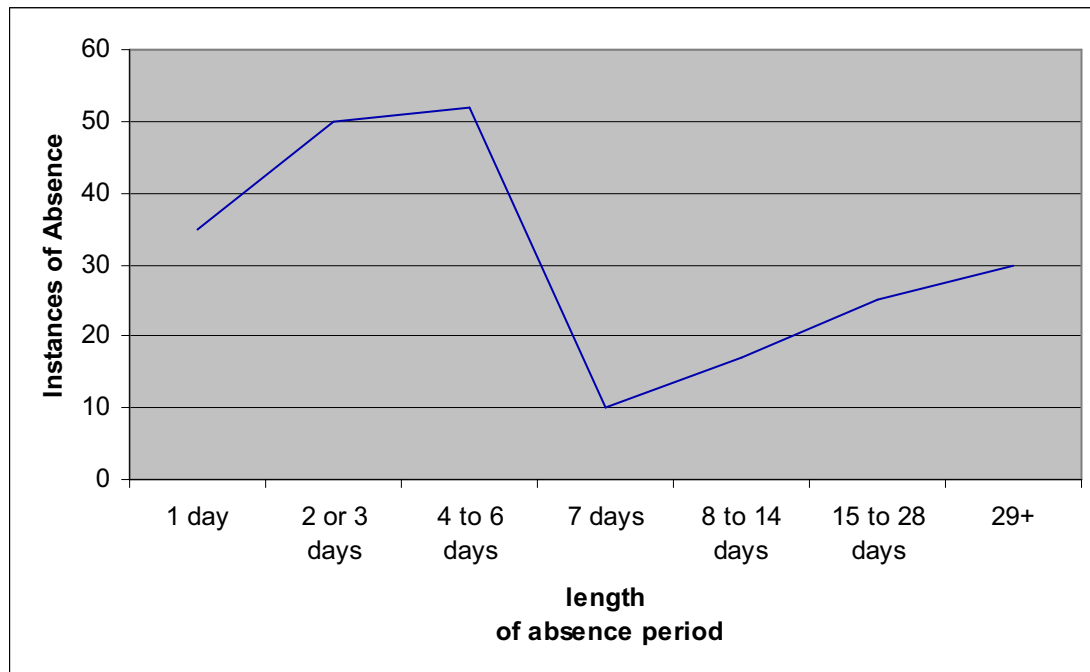
Incidences of absence by duration

- 3.16 An additional piece of information requested for reporting is the number of incidences of absence by duration. This shows there are significant peaks in duration of absence time as 2 to 3 days and 4 to 6 days.

Instances of absence (last quarter)	
1 day	35
2 or 3 days	50
4 to 6 days	52
7 days	10
8 to 14 days	17
15 to 28 days	25
29+	30

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- 3.17 HR Advisors are continually working with managers to identify patterns of absence and the causes of sickness in order to address the underlying issues.

Statistics for the full year 2011 to 2012

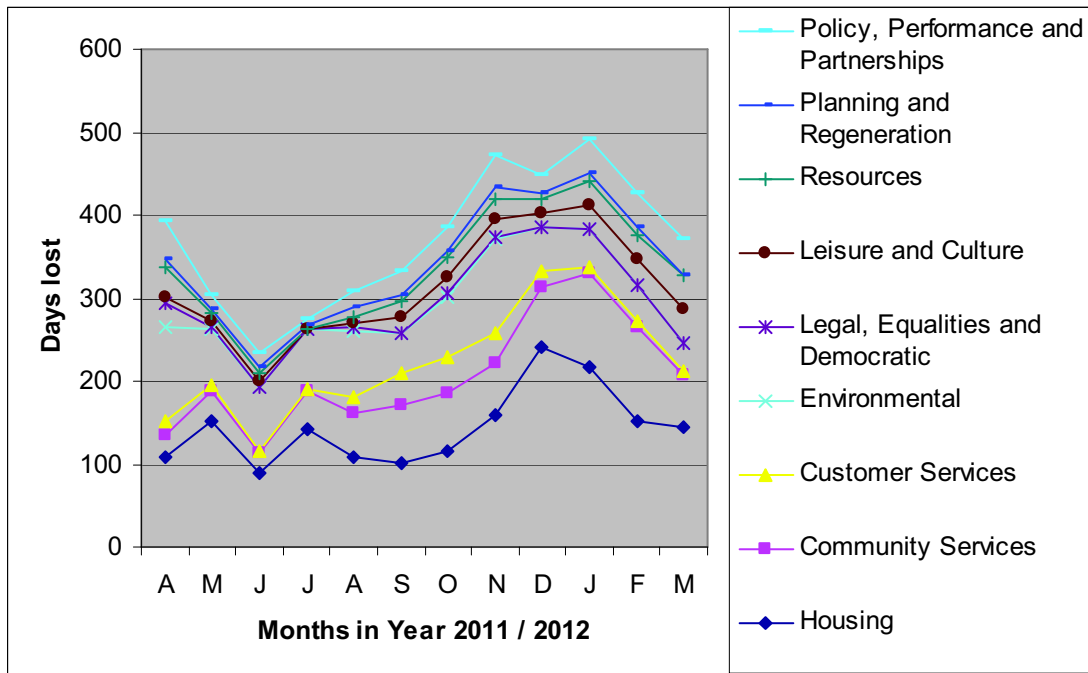
- 3.18 The full year figure shows an average of 7.95 days lost per employee. This is below the corporate target of 8.75, and is below the most recently available statistics relating to the public sector average of 9.6 days (from the CIPD absence management report 2010).

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Days lost by service for the full year 2011 / 2012

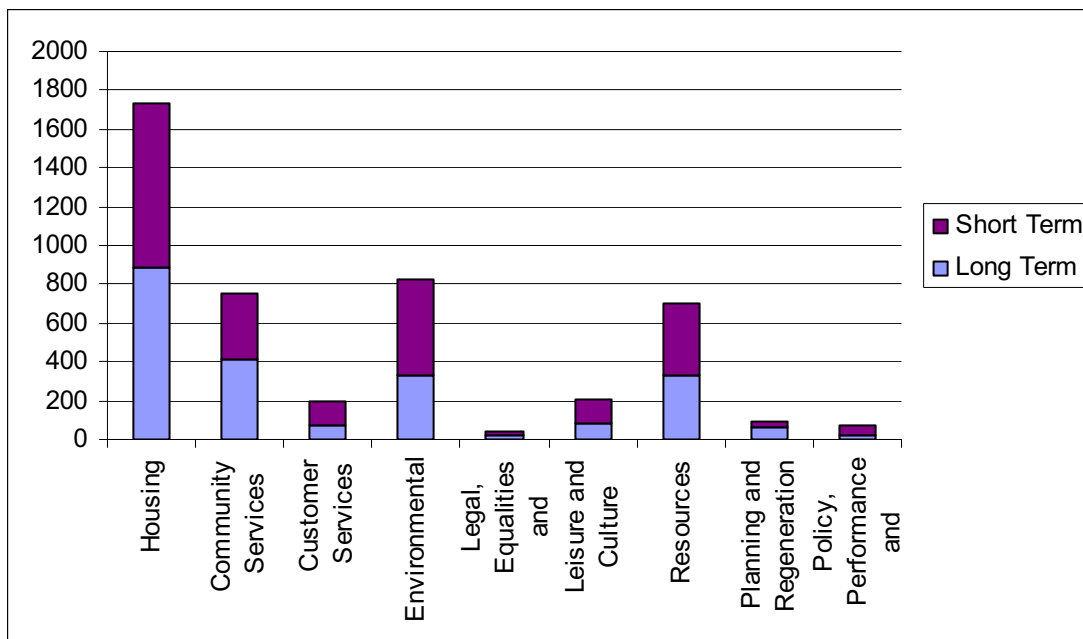
3.19 The background data for this graph is shown at appendix 1.



3.20 The graph above shows peaks from expected seasonal illnesses in the Winter months. Advice and support may be needed to managers to help in managing sickness where other factors may impact on the amount of time taken off, for example from the small peak showing in July across a number of services. For example are more sick days taken during school holidays when childcare may be an issue for some staff.

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Long term Absence compared to short term – full year 2011/2012.

3.21 Short term absences were only marginally more prevalent across the year as a whole, (2201 days long term compared to 2374 days short term), and the distribution of short term absence compared to long term as a percentage of days available is not statistically significant within any particular service.

3.22 Long term absences are slightly higher in Housing and Environmental, as may be expected from the physical nature of the work and resultant illness types, such as muscular and skeletal problems, within these working environments. There is therefore a higher occurrence of long-term absences due to the roles within these services.

	Long Term	Short Term	Short term days lost as % of total available days	Long term days lost as % of total available days
Housing	891.0	837.0	2.95%	3.14%
Community Services	415.0	336.0	1.98%	2.45%
Customer Services	75.0	126.0	1.75%	1.04%
Environmental	334	486	2.09%	1.43%
Leisure and Culture	81	124	0.71%	0.47%
Resources	325	379	1.70%	1.46%
Planning and Regeneration	58	35	0.85%	1.40%
Policy, Performance and Partnerships	22.0	51.0	0.90%	0.4%
	2201.0	2374.0		

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Targets for 2012 year

- 3.23 As part of the process of reviewing sickness reporting, the way in which targets are set has also been reviewed. There is no longer a requirement to report absence in a format specified centrally as part of BVPI reporting, however the benefit of having targets remains, in that Managers and staff have a reference point by which they can measure their performance against a benchmark.
- 3.24 Historically targets have been set centrally by HR, based on previous years targets, but with some method of distributing the total Council target so that services with particular types of workforce where sickness absence is associated with the type of work being undertaken are recognised (traditionally outdoor, manual work and work involving higher risk environments).
- 3.25 For the coming year it has been determined that targets should be set by individual services, in discussion with Human Resources and Senior Management Team. This will ensure ownership of the targets, and specifically ensure they are suited to the workforce they cover.

Financial Implications

- 3.26 There are no financial implications identified.

Legal Implications

- 3.27 There are no legal implications identified.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.28 The Sickness Management Policy for Bromsgrove and Redditch are currently part of the work programme for review, and are due to be completed for consultation after the first quarter (September 2012).
- 3.29 The format of this report has been passed to the Health and Safety Committee for comment.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.30 There are no customer, equalities and diversity implications identified.

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4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are none identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Sickness Figures month on month for full year
Appendix 2 - Sickness Reasons Standard format

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Appendix 1

Month on Month Cumulative days lost by Service

	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	Total
Housing	108.32	151.82	88.53	141.72	108.78	100.69	115.42	159	240.69	216.65	151.15	145.56	1728.33
Community Services	26.40	36.74	24.40	46.86	52.60	69.92	69.99	63.40	72.76	113.49	113.57	61.83	751.96
Customer Services	16.54	6.4	3.72	2.98	18.25	38.78	42.7	34.37	19.22	6.74	6.74	4.57	201.01
Environmental	113.46	67.58	76.26	71.64	80.6	47.74	72.54	113.21	52.08	45.26	45.26	34.1	819.73
Legal, Equalities and Democratic	28.52	1.86	0	0	5.14	1.55	4.34	4.09	0	0	0	0	45.5
Leisure and Culture	7.75	7.59	7.96	0.00	3.69	18.60	20.63	20.48	17.77	29.51	29.51	41.42	204.91
Resources	36.27	9.45	7.96	0.00	8.83	20.15	24.97	24.57	17.77	29.51	29.51	41.42	250.41
Planning and Regeneration	9.29	5.81	8.85	5.19	10.77	6.89	5.19	14.33	5.19	10.15	10.15	0.00	91.81
Policy, Performance and Partnerships	45.56	15.26	16.81	5.19	19.60	27.04	30.16	38.90	22.96	39.66	39.66	41.42	342.22

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Appendix 2

From the Local Government Employers Organisation Guide to Absence Management

A-Z of Causes of Sickness Absence**Instructions**

These guidance notes explain how to record the different causes of sickness absence for monitoring purposes

It is recommended that all absences in an authority should be self-categorised or categorised by either HR personnel, or line managers, but not a mixture of these groups, so as to reduce inconsistencies. It is recognised that different authorities will have different procedures for recording absence and so different groups will be responsible for categorising the causes of sickness absence. Where possible, however, it is recommended that self-categorisation be permitted as this will encourage employees to provide meaningful information.

In selecting which types of absence to include, authorities should:

Exclude absences for dental and medical appointments, maternity leave and disability leave
Absence for fertility treatment and cosmetic surgery should only be included when the absence was taken as sickness absence and not some other form of leave (e.g. annual leave, unpaid leave etc.)

All instances of sickness absence to be included as outlined above, should be allocated to one of the following groups:

Back & neck problems

Other musculo-skeletal problems

Stress, depression, anxiety, neurasthenia, mental health & fatigue

Infections; to include colds and flu.

Neurological; to include headaches and migraine.

Genito-urinary; to include menstrual problems.

Pregnancy related

Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion; to include gastroenteritis.

Heart, blood pressure & circulation

Chest & respiratory; to include chest infections.

Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental; to include sinusitis

Other

- For all absences allocate where possible to the category containing the part of the body affected. For example, absence due to back pain should be allocated to the category "Back & neck problems".
- For infections, allocate where possible to the part of the body that is infected, otherwise allocate to "Infections". For example, an ear infection should be allocated to the category "Eye, Ear, Nose and Mouth/Dental" rather than to the category "Infection", whereas shingles should be allocated to "Infections" as it is not specific to any one part of the body.
- Absences caused by more than one illness should be allocated to the illness that predominates
- If absences are not being self-categorised and the employee has provided a number of causes, use the first item listed.
- Any musculo-skeletal problem that effects the back or neck must be assigned to the "Back & Neck category". If it effects any other part of the body it should be assigned to the "Other musculo-skeletal problems" category. This is why there is a choice of the two categories by some conditions on the A-Z list.

There are 36 following pages which provide an alphabetical list of possible causes of absence and the group to which they should be allocated. There then follows an alphabetical list of possible causes of absence for each of the different absence categories used in this classification.

If there is a situation where a medical note is **illegible** it should be noted that the patient has a right to ring the medical centre or doctor to clarify what is says.

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QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE OFFS – 1ST APRIL – 31ST MAR 2012

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mould, Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Resources
Wards Affected	All

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are requested to consider the action taken by Officers with respect to the write off of debts during 2011/12 and to note the profile and/or level of outstanding debt.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is requested to RESOLVE that:

Subject to any comments, the contents of the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1. During the last financial year Members approved a revised Write Off Policy which changed the process for the reporting and approval process for the writing off of debts due to the Council. The revised Policy requires Officers to report to Members of the actual level of write offs and the profile of outstanding debt.

3.2. The current bad debts provisions are as follows:

	£
Council Tax	265,000
Housing Revenue Account	701,000
Sundry Debtors	<u>358,000</u>
Total	<u>1,324,000</u>

Financial Implications

3.3 The current bad debt provisions are adequate in relation to level of write offs and the level of outstanding debt.

Legal Implications

3.4. There are no legal implications.

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Service / Operational Implications

3.5 No direct implications.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.6. No direct implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risks identified.

5. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Write offs 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012
- Appendix 2 - Aged Debt Profile for Sundry Debts and Former Tenant Arrears.
Council Tax Arrears and Business Rates Arrears as at 31st March 2012.
- Appendix 3 - Write off of Overpaid Housing Benefit 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers with this report.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

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Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3295

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Appendix 1**Write Offs of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates****1st April – 31st March 2012**

Council Tax	Reason	01/04/11 - 31/03/12 £
CT - 01	Gone away	106,932.86
CT - 02	Deceased no funds in estate	6,908.57
CT - 03	Bankruptcy	30,533.68
CT - 04	Statue Barred	605.20
CT - 05	Remitted by Court	0.00
CT - 06	Uneconomical to pursue	32,459.97
CT - 07	Committal Sentence	0.00
CT - 08	Admin Order/IVA	-337.44
CT - 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	-0.13
CT - 10	Balance under £5.00	430.80
CT - 11	Other	8,207.31
CT - 12	Credits - unable to refund	-26,858.91
	Total	158,881.91

NDR	Reason	01/04/11 - 31/03/12 £
NDR - 01	Gone away	27,708.03
NDR - 02	Encon	0.00
NDR - 03	Liquidation/Winding up	331,246.29
NDR - 04	Statue Barred	0.00
NDR - 05	Remitted by Court	0.00
NDR - 06	Uneconomical to pursue	97.94
NDR - 07	CVA	0.00
NDR - 08	Discretionary/Hardship	19,408.79
NDR - 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	-0.01
NDR - 10	Ratepayer deceased	0.00
NDR - 11	Credits - unable to refund	-38,290.62
	Total	340,170.42

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Write Offs of Sundry Debts and Former Tenant Arrears (HRA)
1st April 2011– 31st March 2012

Sundry Debts	Reason	01/04/11 - 31/03/12 £
SDR – 01	Gone away	47,014.63
SDR – 02	Encon	0
SDR – 03	Liquidation/Bankrupt	7,118.56
SDR – 04	Statue Barred	26,752.64
SDR – 05	Remitted by Court	0
SDR – 06	Uneconomical to pursue	103,753.35
SDR – 07	CVA	0
SDR – 08	Discretionary/Hardship	0
SDR – 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	0
SDR – 10	Ratepayer deceased	5,584.96
SDR – 11	Credits - unable to refund	0
	Total	190,224.14

Former Tenant Arrears	Reason	01/04/11 - 31/03/12 £
FTA – 01	Gone away	44,694.17
FTA – 02	Encon	0
FTA – 03	Liquidation/Bankrupt	15,726.15
FTA – 04	Statue Barred	10,164.44
FTA – 05	Remitted by Court	0
FTA – 06	Uneconomical to pursue	95,154.27
FTA – 07	CVA	0
FTA – 08	Discretionary/Hardship	0
FTA – 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	0
FTA – 10	Ratepayer deceased	14,543.63
FTA – 11	Credits - unable to refund	0
	Total	180,282.66

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Appendix 2**Aged Debt profiles for Sundry Debts and Former Tenant Arrears
1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012**

Age	Sundry Debts	Former Tenant Arrears
	£	£
0 - 3 months	1,563,250.23	16,920.44
3 - 6 months	114,205.56	36,047.07
6 - 12 months	254,168.40	46,155.58
12 - 24 months	267,802.47	73,312.40
24 months and over	663,549.04	201,306.76

Council Tax Arrears

Year	Arrears Total as at 31/03/12 £
1996/97	784.68
1997/98	1,188.11
1998/99	2,794.83
1999/00	7,294.49
2000/01	12,250.16
2001/02	22,084.07
2002/03	28,536.01
2003/04	42,493.54
2004/05	68,859.28
2005/06	93,686.23
2006/07	145,017.07
2007/08	187,734.13
2008/09	230,341.46
2009/10	289,098.98
2010/11	397,932.22
2011/12	757,930.08
Total	£2,288,025.34

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Business Rates Arrears

	Arrears Total as at 31/03/12
Year	£
2000/01	600.50
2001/02	2,222.72
2002/03	11,756.10
2003/04	9,729.66
2004/05	12,813.26
2005/06	24,308.66
2006/07	46,958.83
2007/08	124,218.72
2008/09	154,406.41
2009/10	96,160.34
2010/11	241,754.17
2011/12	344,509.68
Total	£1,069,439.05

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Appendix 3**Write off of Overpaid Housing Benefit****1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012**

Housing Benefit Write-Offs 2011/12		
Reason	Amount £	No. of cases
Possible Write back	9,774.76	7
Deceased	4,057.89	25
Debt Relief Order	3,731.24	7
Bankruptcy	3,119.94	4
Person Abroad	2,335.81	4
Hardship/Compassion	2,133.02	2
Not reasonable to recover	2,038.57	5
Uneconomic to recover	1,185.61	22
Debt matching	269.56	1
Cannot trace	234.50	2
No prospect of recovery	34.00	1
Totals	£28,914.90	80

Level of Overpaid Housing Benefit.

	£	Linked to weekly recovery from ongoing HB £
Outstanding overpaid HB at start of year	1,272,373	220,891
Overpayments identified during year	672,466	
Overpayments recovered during the year	554,034	274,170
Outstanding overpaid HB at end of year	1,390,805	
Total HB expenditure 2011/12	23,138,270	



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), and Councillors Simon Chalk, Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Gay Hopkins, John Fisher, Pattie Hill and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillors Luke Stephens and Mark Shurmer

Officers:

A De Warr, J Heyes, and L Kerrigan.

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and M Craggs

228. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andy Fry.

229. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

230. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17th April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

231. PROMOTING SPORTING PARTICIPATION TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

Councillor Luke Stephens, Chair of the Promoting Sporting Participation Task Group, provided a presentation which helped to explain the findings of the review and the recommendations of the final report.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

He explained that the review's initial focus was on how the expected increased interest in sport before and during the Olympics could be fully utilised to help increase overall levels of sporting participation in Redditch. However, the review soon evolved to begin to take a wider look at the quality and quantity of existing provision for sporting participation in the Borough. The Group soon realised that while Redditch possesses many excellent facilities for sport, the level of information about where and when people could play sport in the town needed to be publicised more widely.

Cllr Stephens ran the Committee through all of the five recommendations of the report and explained the reasoning behind each. In particular, it was felt that the development of a prospective new website was very important as it could give independent sports clubs the opportunity to promote their activities to a wider audience free of charge. It was also thought that more clubs would choose to register their activities once the website began to develop. Members heard that the Officers could utilise a database of contacts for all of the accredited sports clubs in the town.

Regarding the recommendation that new branding for sport in Redditch be developed to compliment the new website, the Committee suggested that a competition could be launched for local students to design the branding. It was suggested that this could help raise young people's awareness of sport in the Borough and also of the prospective new website. The Group agreed to include this proposal as part of recommendation two.

In terms of the recommendation that the Council look to maximise the benefits of parks and green spaces in Redditch by introducing more informal games areas in these places to increase sporting participation and physical recreation in the town, Members were keen to ensure that there was sufficient provision for older people. In particular, it was suggested that there should be increased provision for chess in public places. The Group agreed to include this proposal as part of recommendation three.

RECOMMENDED that

further to the re-wording of recommendations two and three as detailed above, all of the final recommendations of the review be approved; and

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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232. JOINT WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SCRUTINY REVIEW - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

Officers provided a monitoring report on the Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Report which was jointly undertaken by all of the local authorities in the county. The report provided an update on the recommendations that required action in Redditch.

The Committee returned a number of positive comments about how customer service arrangements at the Borough Council had greatly improved and the Customer Services Team were praised for the services they delivered. Members were especially pleased that more face to face customer service was being provided for local residents rather than self-service as encouraged in the report. It was subsequently proposed that the Chair of the Committee issue a letter to the Chair of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board outlining Redditch Members' satisfaction with the customer services at the Council, the beneficial impact of transformation on customer services in and the potential for the wider hub to learn from best practice in Redditch.

Elsewhere, Members proposed that blue badge holders should be issued with automatic reminders before their permit expired. It was suggested that enclosing these reminders alongside the annual Council Tax information packs could be cost-effective. Officers agreed to review the proposal.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a letter be issued from the Committee to the Chair of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board explaining its support for the customer service approach at the Borough Council; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

233. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Members were informed that out of 54 recommendations that had been made by the 2011/12 Committee, 47 had been approved by the Executive Committee, 6 and a half had been rejected, and half a recommendation was still pending a final decision. Members very much welcomed these figures and felt it proved that the Committee makes a real contribution to the overall work of the Council.

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RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

234. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING - FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a number of potential scrutiny reviews that had initially been suggested at the Overview and Scrutiny Training session on Monday 14th May 2012. The Chair welcomed all of the suggestions yet explained that it would be impossible to accept all of the proposals for scrutiny reviews. It was therefore suggested that the Committee focus on reviewing issues that clearly fell within the Council's remit. Members were also keen to avoid undertaking reviews that had recently been scrutinised. It was the Chair's clear intention that no scrutiny review would take longer than six months to complete.

Of the 17 topics identified as possible scrutiny reviews, three were shortlisted as being appropriate for either a short-sharp or task and finish review. The initial proposers were invited to complete a scoping document outlining the terms of reference for the review to be considered by the Committee at a forthcoming meeting. The shortlist included the following topics:

- Arts Centre – to identify whether there is a suitable venue in Redditch that could be utilised as an Arts Centre.
- Management of Redditch Trees – to focus on ongoing maintenance requirements for trees in Redditch and the Council's criteria for felling trees.
- Regeneration in the Town Centre – to focus on actions that could be taken to re-use and reclassify property and land in the town centre, including Council properties, to regenerate the town centre.

For a number of topic areas that were not shortlisted, it was agreed that relevant Officers would be invited to provide the Committee with further information to enable Members to consider whether the topic warranted further scrutiny, potentially as part of a scrutiny review. These issues included: dog fouling in Redditch; taxi vehicles' road worthiness; proposed plans for advertising on the roundabouts located in Redditch; and on current policy for sales of vehicles on grass verges.

In addition, Members requested a monitoring update report outlining the impact of recommendations made by a Scrutiny Group that

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reviewed ASB (completed in 2006), and proposed that the annual update report on civil parking to include information about work that could be undertaken to help residents living in areas outside the enforcement zone.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) **relevant Members and Officers meet to develop scoping documents for the proposed reviews for consideration at forthcoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2) **Officers to arrange to deliver a monitoring update report on the impact of the ASB review recommendations during the year;**
- 3) **Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of the dog fouling campaign and the impact that this campaign has had locally;**
- 4) **Officers to arrange to deliver a report on parking enforcement at a forthcoming date of the Committee;**
- 5) **Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of taxi vehicles' road worthiness and potential requirements for further work which could be facilitated by scrutiny;**
- 6) **Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the proposed uses for roundabouts in Redditch;**
- 7) **Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of the sale of vehicles on grass verges; and**
- 8) **the report be noted.**

235. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee requested that an update on the outcomes of transformation and the implications for recommendations detailed in the final report of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review be delivered at a forthcoming meeting for its consideration.

Members received a verbal update concerning the £250,000 variance that had been paid from the Housing Revenue Account to

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the General Fund. It was confirmed that all other outstanding actions had very recently been completed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Committee receive an update report on the outcomes of transformation and the implications for recommendations detailed in the final report of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review at a suitable future meeting; and**
- 2) **the actions list be noted.**

236. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 24th April 2012 and considered the latest edition of the Forward Plan.

Members noted that the vast majority of recommendations contained within the final report of the Youth Service Provision Review had been endorsed by the Executive Committee. The Chair of the Review, Councillor Simon Chalk, explained that the report had also been presented to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership at the invitation of Worcestershire County Council.

Members noted that reports on the subjects of the revised Medium Term Financial Plan, and on the Concessionary Rents Policy, were scheduled to be presented for the Executive Committee's consideration during forthcoming meetings. Members agreed that these reports were suitable for pre-scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan be added onto the Committee's Work Programme for its meeting on 19th June 2012 for pre-scrutiny;**
- 2) **the report on the Concessionary Rents Policy be added onto the Committee's Work Programme for its meeting on 17th July 2012 for pre-scrutiny; and**
- 3) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th April 2012 be noted.**

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237. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no scoping documents.

238. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

a) Access for Disabled People

The Committee was informed that Councillor Andy Fry had been appointed as the new Chair of the review.

At the Group's first meeting since the local elections in May the Group agreed to: interview relevant Planning Officers to discuss car planning in the town centre; review the Shopmobility base for the Kingfisher Centre; and write to the Highways Department at County Council regarding the potential locations for mini-bus passengers to disembark.

b) Redditch Market

Members appointed Councillor Andrew Brazier as the new Chair of the Redditch Market Task and Finish Group. The previous Chair, Councillor Brenda Quinney, was no longer a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and therefore had to relinquish her position.

The Committee heard that the membership of two Labour representatives onto the Group was still outstanding. The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Bill Hartnett, would therefore be contacted to appoint two Labour members.

c) Promoting Sporting Participation

There was no update as the final report had already been considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the update report be noted.

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239. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received a verbal update on the most recent meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that took place on 22nd May 2012, from the Council's new representative on the Committee, Councillor Pat Witherspoon.

Councillor Witherspoon explained that she had expressed concern that no community meetings had yet been set up in Redditch to discuss the proposed re-organisation of health services across the county. While it was understood that arrangements were being made to facilitate such meetings in the Borough, it was felt that these meetings should have been held earlier in the consultation period.

During a discussion on changes to ambulance service provision in the county, Councillor Witherspoon also raised concern that a second ambulance hub to service Redditch had not been proposed, especially as most of the other districts already possessed two ambulance hubs.

Finally, Members heard that under an item to discuss the Acute Stroke Services in Worcestershire, concern was raised that many residents in Redditch would struggle to access the Stroke Unit at Worcester Royal Hospital, especially as it was thought that many of the patients and their relatives would be elderly and would not have access to a car. Members therefore queried whether the existing Stroke Unit in Bromsgrove could be enhanced so that more local patients could be treated.

The Chair thanked Councillor Witherspoon for her report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

240. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

241. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that dates had now been set for each of the seven Portfolio Holders to deliver their annual reports to the Committee.

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It was noted that the submission of a scoping document for a potential scrutiny review on equalities and diversity issues relating to staff employed by the Council remained outstanding. The initial proposer would therefore be contacted to establish whether it was their intention to bring the proposal forward for the Committee's consideration.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.02 pm

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26th June 2012

ADVISORY PANELS, WORKING GROUPS, ETC - UPDATE REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Mould
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To provide, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels, and similar bodies which report via the Executive Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

3. UPDATES**A. ADVISORY PANELS**

	<u>Meeting :</u>	<u>Lead Members / Officers :</u> (Executive Members shown <u>underlined</u>)	<u>Position :</u> (Oral updates to be provided at the meeting by Lead Members or Officers, if no written update is available.)
1.	Climate Change Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Debbie Taylor</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Andy Fry Kevin Dicks / Ceridwen John	Last meeting – 7th February 2012.
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr John Fisher John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Next Meeting – 18th June 2012.

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3.	Housing Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Mark Shurmer</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Pat Witherspoon Liz Tompkin	Last meeting – 22nd March 2012.
4.	Planning Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Rebecca Blake John Staniland / Ruth Bamford	Next meeting – 19th June 2012

B. OTHER MEETINGS

5.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Greg Chance Steve Skinner	Next meeting – Date to be established.
6.	Member Support Steering Group	Chair: <u>Cllr John Fisher</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Phil Mould Steve Skinner / Trish Buckley	Next meeting Being arranged for July 2012.
7.	Grants Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr David Bush</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Greg Chance Angie Heighway	Last Meeting – 6th June 2012 Next meeting – to be set in September 2012
8.	Procurement Group	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Greg Chance Jayne Pickering / Teresa Kristunas	In abeyance pending Transformation.
9.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair: <u>Mr R Key</u> / Sheena Jones / Ivor Westmore	Last meeting – 9th May 2012

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ACTION MONITORING

Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer	Action requested	Status
27th January 2010		
Cllr Hartnett / R Dunne	Single Equalities Scheme Members requested that a report/action plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee or Council detailing what the Council, as Community Leader, expected to receive in terms of education provision for the Borough and its children and young people.	Officers to update at future meeting. The LSP action plan in respect of this issue is under consideration at present. The Single Equalities Scheme itself is no longer extant.
21st May 2011		
Cllr Mould / T Kristunas	Review of Lease - 21 and 21a Salters Lane Officers to prepare a report on a policy regarding the granting of concessionary rents.	Policy to be submitted to meeting of the Committee on 24th July 2012.
13th September 2011		
Cllr Mould / T Kristunas	Review of Lease - Unit 1, Matchborough Centre Alongside consideration of the terms of the lease Members requested that a policy be developed to determine appropriate rents for voluntary sector organisations.	Policy to be submitted to meeting of the Committee on 24th July 2012.

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20th February 2012		
Cllr Mould / S Skinner	Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils - Annual Report and Recommendations for 2012-13 Member Support Steering Group to consider the apportionment of Special Responsibility Allowances to determine whether they are set at the appropriate levels and targeted at the appropriate posts.	Members' allowances have been updated for the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Council – meeting of the MSSG being arranged.
21st February 2012		
Cllr Shurmer / Cllr Mould / L Tompkin / T Kristunas	Housing Revenue Account - Outcome of Review 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.	Pending submission of a report to the Executive Committee – discussions underway with new administration.
24th April 2012		
Cllr Stephens / J Godwin / A Heighway / J Willis	Youth Services Provision Task Group Officers were requested to explore the option of Dial a Ride vehicles being used to transport young people to local events and festivities and submit a report to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	This report will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11th September 2012.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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<u>Note:</u>	<i>No further debate should be held on the above matters or substantive decisions taken, without further report OR unless urgency requirements are met.</i>	Report period: 27/01/10 to 29/05/12

