

Executive Committee

Tuesday 15th January
2013
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch



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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.

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Executive

15th January 2013

7.00 pm

Committee

Council Chamber, 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

1. Apologies	To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest	To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.
3. Leader's Announcements	<ol style="list-style-type: none">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; andany other relevant announcements. <p>(Oral report)</p>
4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10) Chief Executive	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 18 th December 2012. (Minutes attached)
5. Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/14 - 2015/16 Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To consider a report on the Capital and Revenue Budgets and on the Council Tax Level for 2013/14. (Presentation on evening) (All Wards)
6. Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 11 - 16) Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To receive an update on the Council Tax Support Scheme following consultation. (Report attached) (All Wards)

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<p>7. Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Base 2013/14</p> <p>(Pages 17 - 24)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a report regarding the setting of the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Base for 2013/14.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>8. Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans</p> <p>(Pages 25 - 32)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a scheme for the distribution of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>9. Joint Working Agreement with Worcestershire Telecare</p> <p>(Pages 33 - 38)</p> <p>Acting Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To consider entering into a joint working agreement with Worcestershire Telecare, in order to submit a joint tender for Supporting People Funding to provide Lifeline across Worcestershire.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>10. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(Pages 39 - 48)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th December 2012.</p> <p>There are no outstanding recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>11. 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>12. Advisory Panels - update report</p> <p>(Pages 49 - 52)</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>13. Action Monitoring (Pages 53 - 54) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p>14. 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 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</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 – <u>the 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 – <u>the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</u>; <p>may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.]</p>

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<p>15. Service Review for Print, Design and Communications</p> <p>(Pages 55 - 88)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider a service review following the print and design teams going through the Business Transformation process.</p> <p>This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 1, 2 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended. For this reason it has been circulated to members and relevant Officers only.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>16. 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

18th December 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 Andy Fry

Officers:

D Allen, R Bamford, M Bough, R Cooke, K Dicks, S Garratt, S Hanley, T Kristunas, J Knott and C Flanagan

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

107. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Luke Stephens.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

109. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader informed the Committee of two recent, sad losses. It was reported that former Councillor and Mayor of the Borough Mrs Joan Tyers had died during the preceding week. Members were also formally notified of the sudden and unexpected death of Mrs Denise Sunman, Democratic Services Officer a week and a half previously. The meeting observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Mrs Tyers and Mrs Sunman.

The Leader advised that the following item of business, scheduled on the Executive Committee Work Programme to be considered at

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Chair

this evening's meeting, has been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Council Tax Support Scheme.

The Leader also advised that he had accepted the following matters as Urgent Business:

- Item 9 – Kickstart Scheme; and
- Item 13 – Matchborough East Community Centre Transfer

as they had not been not on the Committee Work Programme for this evening's meeting.

110. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20th November 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

111. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2013/14 - 2015/16

Officers reported that the final settlement for the 2012/14 financial year from central Government was expected to be communicated to the Council the following day, 19th December, and that a 5% reduction in grant was anticipated.

The Council was continuing to make efforts to close the funding gap in the current financial year. Savings were being achieved through Transformation, the redesign of certain services and through driving out any residual 'waste' in service provision more generally.

112. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Committee received a report advising of the outcome of the recent consultation exercise undertaken with stakeholders in relation to the 2012-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles. It was noted that one response had been received following the formal consultation period and Officers reported that the Council's Licensing Committee had endorsed the Statement as printed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the outcome of the consultation exercise and the views of the Council's Licensing Committee be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **the 2012-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles be adopted from 31st January 2013.**

113. TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 - 2014

The Committee was informed that the authority was required under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013. It was reported that a Tenancy Policy for the Borough would follow in due course. The Strategy set out the major considerations to which registered providers of social housing within the Borough were to have regard in formulating their tenancy policies.

Members broadly welcomed the report, whilst recognising that demand for social housing in the Borough and elsewhere significantly exceeded supply. It was hoped that the introduction of non-secure tenancies might provide some scope for more efficient use of the social housing stock in Redditch. Members were keen that communities should continue to be sustainable and did not wish to see a move towards transient populations and there was an expectation that the Council's forthcoming Policy would mitigate against this. In this regard, there was an acceptance that the model for tenure that had existed for a number of decades was changing across the country, not least because of the present financial situation.

RESOLVED that

the Tenancy Strategy, at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

114. WORCESTERSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Council was required to have a Homelessness Strategy in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002. The draft Countywide Strategy before Members had been created by a Project Team of Officers from across Worcestershire.

The Strategy had been produced during a period of great change, largely as a consequence of the prevailing economic conditions, and it considered how austerity measures might adversely impact on homelessness and the measures that were needed to mitigate the impact of these. The Committee was pleased to note that the Council had been singled out at various points within the report as an example of best practice within the County group.

There was considerable discussion around the relative provision of temporary accommodation within the different Districts of Worcestershire and surrounding areas and instances of families or individuals from outside the Borough being housed in Redditch accommodation. Officers explained that the Borough had the lowest homeless acceptance rates in the County as a result of the proactive steps taken by Officers to prevent homelessness. There were occasions, however, when Redditch accepted homeless people from outside the Borough in exceptional circumstances and this arrangement was reciprocated across the County and further afield. Officers were in the process of developing a Protocol with other Local Authorities to address this issue and offered to circulate it to members of the Committee following the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the Draft Countywide Joint Homelessness Strategy and action plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

115. KICKSTART SCHEME

Members received a report informing them of the closure of the national Kickstart Programme and proposing that the Council take on the management of the existing Kickstart loans made to residents in Redditch. Officers explained that it had taken some considerable time for the scheme to become embedded in the Borough, to the extent that only four loans had been made prior to the closure of the scheme. The Council was in line to receive up to £78,000 in due course as a result of the repayment of these loans, and the income would be returned to the General Fund.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the winding up of the Kickstart scheme be noted and the loans granted to RBC residents (as set out in the Deed of Assignment attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be re-assigned to the Council so that it can deal with enquiries from borrowers, and manage those loans in the future; and**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to enter into the Deed of Assignment on behalf of the Council.**

116. TOWN CENTRE LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The Committee considered a report which provided information on potential landscape improvements that could be undertaken within the Town Centre.

Members were informed that there were five areas that were being considered for improvement and that the area in question on this occasion was the northern edge of Church Green. The bandstand and the fountain were to remain in situ but the work was intended to make the area more attractive, accessible and usable. Capital money had already been set aside to carry out this work. Amended recommendations were tabled which included proposals for a further, final period of consultation on the plans for this part of Church Green.

Members welcomed the proposals and noted the reasons for the additional consultation. It was explained that this consultation would take place in the New Year.

RESOLVED that

the proposed spend of a proportion of the agreed budget and the intended timescales for the phasing of the project be endorsed, subject to;

- i) a 4 week consultation period being undertaken with regard to the Bandstand element of the project (such consultation to make it clear that the Bandstand will remain in current location); and**
- ii) the results of the consultation being discussed with the appropriate Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillors and, if significant, reported back to the Executive Committee.**

117. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - REVIEW OF POLICY

The Executive Committee's approval was sought to a small revision to the existing policy on Street Naming and Numbering in Redditch and to the addition of a new street name to be added to the official list.

Members were informed that the revision to the Policy was a result of the previous item on the Town Centre landscape Improvements and related to changed specifications for the Street Name Plates in the Town Centre.

The addition to the official list was in memory of a young engineer who had unfortunately lost his life during construction of a development within Redditch.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendices 1 and 2, be approved and adopted; and**
- 2) **'Handford', a young man who was killed during construction of a development within the Redditch area, be added to the list of potential street names.**

118. POLICY FOR LEASES OF COUNCIL LAND AND PROPERTY AT A CONCESSIONARY RENT

A report was considered which detailed a draft policy for the granting of rent relief / concessionary rents to voluntary sector organisations.

The new draft Policy aimed to deal with the lack of consistency which had been applied in the past, owing to there being no criteria against which to judge individual applications for rent relief. In addition, it sought to establish a link between the granting of concessionary rents and the grants process. By so doing, the voluntary sector would have a clearer idea at the outset of how much they might be expected to pay in rent for any Council-owned premises. There was to be a three-year transitional period and a proposed maximum concession of 70 % on the market rent. At present the Council provided in excess of £100,000 in rent relief but this was not reflected in the Council's accounts; the new system would provide much greater transparency

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had established a small Task Group to consider the matter but it had been unable to access the final version of the draft Policy until following the preparation of its report. As a result, its recommendations were not able to address a number of the points in the draft Policy. Given these problems, it was agreed that the Portfolio Holder should give these recommendations further consideration following the meeting, although the Committee did not feel it appropriate to adopt them

Members were keen to have the Grants Panel take responsibility for this matter. There was some discussion as to the proposed length of leases under the new Policy and it was agreed that the wording of the final Policy document be amended to clarify that the three-year period referred to within the report was the period for the granting of a concessionary rent and not for the lease itself. There was also considerable debate over the provision of a final appeal process to the Executive Committee by organisations who did not consider that the maximum 70% concession would allow them to remain viable. It was agreed that it be made clear that organisations

would need to fulfil all the criteria for gaining a 70% discount and that this provision was merely to allow some flexibility to deal with very exceptional cases.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Draft Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to the wording being amended in line with the comments of the Executive Committee, and implemented with immediate effect for new tenancies;**
- 2) transitional arrangements be introduced with effect from 1st April 2013 to allow the policy to be fully implemented over a three year period taking into account the terms of existing leases;**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources in conjunction with the Council's Voluntary Sector Grants Co-ordinator to approve concessionary rents/rent relief in line with the draft policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and**
- 4) the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and determine whether aspects of its recommendations might be incorporated into the Policy in due course.**

119. MATCHBOROUGH EAST COMMUNITY CENTRE TRANSFER

Officers provided an explanation of the background to this item, explaining that the Matchborough East Community Centre had been declared surplus to requirements in 2009 but had not subsequently been disposed of as the new Shared Service had considered that there were possibilities for making use of the premises.

The Council had subsequently been approached by a Community Interest Company, Your Ideas, to ascertain if the Community Centre would be available for lease. The organisation currently occupied a shop unit at Matchborough Centre.

Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club had expressed an interest in taking up the potentially vacant unit currently occupied by Your Ideas and an adjacent vacant unit in order to retain grant funding which they had obtained from the Inspired Facilities Fund through Sport England. There were time constraints in that the Boxing Club needed to secure a premises by the end of March 2013 or it would lose its grant funding.

Members were pleased to support the recommended course of action as they recognised the good work that was carried out by both Your Ideas and the Boxing Club. In addition, this proposal would lead to the Council making significant savings.

There was concern at the prospects of the existing users of the Community Centre finding alternative provision, but assurances were given that Officers were making considerable efforts to ensure that a satisfactory outcome might be achieved for all parties. There was, in any event, an acknowledgement that the Council would not be in a position to replace the existing soft play facilities once they had reached the end of their life in around one year's time.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Property Services be instructed to assist Leisure and Cultural Services to transfer the MECC to Your Ideas on a Full Repairing Lease basis for a period of seven years; and**
- 2) **Property Services be instructed to work with Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club to explore a lease option for the shop unit vacated as a result of 1), above, on a Full Internal Repairing Lease basis for a minimum period of seven years.**

120. QUARTERLY SICKNESS MONITORING - QUARTER 2 - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

The Committee considered the latest quarterly report setting out performance in relation to sickness absence.

It was reported that performance was improving over time and active steps were being adopted to improve the situation further. The Employee Assistance Programme was in place and the Council was in the process of employing a Well-being Officer.

The most significant cause of sickness absence was stress, depression and related conditions although Officers reported that there was only one work-related case of stress contained within these figures, with other cases being primarily the result of external factors such as bereavement.

RESOLVED that

the data relating to the quarter be noted.

121. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November 2012.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November 2012 be noted.

122. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes arising from the most recent meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 22nd November 2012 be noted.

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

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

124. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the most recent report on the activity of the Council's Advisory panels and similar bodies.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

125. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee received the latest Action Monitoring report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

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

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report advises members of the proposals for the Localisation of Council Tax Support and of additional funding made available to lessen the impact of these changes from 1st April 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) the default scheme be agreed as the replacement scheme for Council Tax Benefit from April 2013; and**
- 2) the financial impacts and the requirement for a more fundamental review of local Council Tax support from 2014/15 be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1. From 2013/14 the Council will have to administer a local replacement for the existing national Council Tax Benefit scheme. Funding for the scheme will be restricted to a grant based on 90% of forecasted subsidised Council Tax expenditure for 2013/14. For Redditch this is estimated to be a reduction of around £650k, based on total CTB expenditure of £6.5 million. For Redditch Borough Council the shortfall would be around £90k which would have to be met through other savings. However an additional grant can also be claimed if certain criteria are met by the replacement scheme. The changes to funding mean that billing authorities are required to adopt a new scheme for Council Tax Support by 31st January 2013 to come into operation for 2013/14.

3.2. Council Tax support will be made available as a discount rather than a benefit and therefore will reduce the Council Tax Base. The grant, funding 90% of a forecast level of demand, will be paid to billing and major precepting bodies (County, Police and Fire) to offset reductions in the Council Tax Base. Any increase or decrease in expenditure will have to be met locally unless the grant allocation is reviewed.

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- 3.3. Although a local scheme, the Government has decided that pensioners must receive the same level of support as now and that other vulnerable groups should also be considered for protection. The schemes should also avoid discouraging local people from taking up employment where possible. However the impact of the changes will fall on working age claims as they will have to contribute more to them collection fund to offset the reduction in funding.
- 3.4. Concurrent with these changes is a reduction in the number of mandatory exemptions offered in Council Tax. Changes to these exemptions will reduce the impact to these individuals by generating increases in Council Tax to offset the grant reduction. The County and the other major precepting authorities have accepted the fact that only 50% of the deficit will be met through these proposals.
- 3.5. Officers from across Worcestershire authorities have been working together to help to mitigate the impact of the changes on residents and agree a framework for a Worcestershire wide scheme by 31 January 2013. Whilst the financial target of half of the financial gap was set as an aspiration, the way in which each District Council may choose to alter their local scheme may be different.
- 3.6. There is a mandatory requirement to undertake a public consultation on the proposed local scheme for Council Tax Support and the Executive agreed on the 18/09/2012 the proposals to be consulted on. These were:

Change	Implications	Additional council tax
1. Limiting support to Band D Council tax levels	For working age claimants only but need to consider impact on other vulnerable groups	£8,000
2a. Short term (up to 6 months) empty property Class C exemption - reduce from current 100% to 50%	This will apply to all taxpayers. Council tax is based on 50% property and 50% persons, so there is some logic for this proposal.	£224,000

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2b. Short term (up to 6 months) empty property Class C exemption - reduce from current 100% to 60%	As an alternative to 2a.	£179,000
3. Reduce discount on second homes to nil	Currently second homes qualify for a discount.	£33,000

- 3.7 Similar proposals and consultation are being undertaken in the other Worcestershire billing authorities with the exception of Wyre Forest District Council who are proposing wider changes to Council Tax and Council Tax support from 2013/14.
- 3.8 The Council's consultation period ended on the 30/11/2012 and there was only 1 response.
- 3.9 During the consultation period the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced that additional funding of £100 million was available for 2013/14 to help mitigate the impact on working age claims. The grant has to be applied for after 31/01/2013 and will only be payable to authorities that implement local schemes that meet certain criteria.
- 3.10 The criteria are:
- Working age claims that are currently entitled to 100% support under the Council Tax Benefit pay no more than 8.5% of their net Council Tax liability.
- The taper rate does not exceed 25%
- There is no sharp reduction in support for those entering work.
- 3.11 If Redditch Borough Council designs a scheme that meets the above criteria a grant of £22,005 can be claimed, with additional grant, as below, available for the precepting authorities.

RBC	Worcestershire County Council	West Mercia Police Authority	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
£22,005	£109,148	£18,774	£7,736

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- 3.12 It is understood that the current proposals to restrict Council Tax support to Band D will not meet the criteria and therefore the extra grant could not be claimed.

Financial Implications

- 3.13. The Council needs to decide to either reduce the funding gap by way of the proposals consulted on or to adopt the default scheme to qualify for the additional grant. A new scheme could also be designed to meet the criteria to qualify for the additional grant, however it is likely that a separate consultation will be required.
- 3.14. The impact for Redditch and the collection fund as a whole is shown below.

£k	Financial impact for Collection fund (£000)	Financial impact on RBC (£000)
Estimated cost of Government cut to funding	650	90
<u>LESS</u>		
Council Tax exemption changes (based on 50% Class C and 0% for second homes)	224	31
Restriction of support to Band D	8	1
Total financial impact based on consultation changes	418	58

£k	Financial impact for Collection fund (£000)	Financial impact on RBC (£000)
Estimated cost of Government cut to funding	650	90
<u>LESS</u>		
Council Tax exemption changes (based on 50% Class C and 0% for second homes)	224	31
Additional Grant	158	22
Total financial impact with extra grant but no Band D restriction	268	37

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- 3.15. Bad debt provision has not been increased. There is a potential increase in bad debts due to the recovery of the debts but this would be shared across all preceptors and a 5% increase to reflect the gap of £650k is £32k across all agencies.
- 3.16. The Government has granted financial support of £84k to implement a revised scheme which will be utilised to fund software changes and staff training.

Legal Implications

- 3.17 The Council is required to have a new scheme in place before the 31/01/2013 or the Government designed default scheme is applied.
- 3.18 The powers under which the council will decide a scheme for council tax discounts are in section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as substituted by section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012. Section 10(4) requires a scheme to be adopted by 31 January 2013. Section 11 provides a power for councils to decide the discount for second homes, while section 12 inserts section 11B into the 1992 Act which allows councils to set a council tax of up to 150% for long term empty properties.
- 3.19 Schedule 4 to the 2012 Act inserts Schedule 1A in the 1992 Act. Among other things, this requires the Council to consult major precepting authorities and such other persons as are likely to have an interest in the scheme. Paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 1A provides that the fact that the requirement was not in force when councils undertake consultation is to be disregarded in determining whether there has been compliance with the requirement.
- 3.20 In reaching final decisions on the scheme, the Council will have to have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council will also have to have regard to any legislation issued by the Secretary of State as a consequence of the Local Government Finance Act as it may constrain the options that are available; and consideration will need to be given to other relevant legal requirements, such as the duty to co-operate in reducing child poverty in accordance with section 21 of the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.21. There will need to be changes made to the software to implement these changes. As the additional grant is only for 2013/14 a new scheme will be required to address the deficit caused by the restriction of the grant to 90%.

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Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.22 Some property owners will face increased bills.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are a number of risks concerning the changes to be implemented in a relatively short timescale. There is a concern as to recovery of debt from residents following the increase in liability for Council Tax. The Council Tax team will monitor this regularly to ensure residents are supported in making payment.

5. APPENDICES

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Various consultation documents issued by the DCLG available from the DCLG website.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

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COUNCIL TAX BASE & NNDR BASE 2013/14

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

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To enable Members to set the Council Tax Base for 2013/14 and approve the NNDR1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 1) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2013/14, as detailed in the Appendices to the report, be approved;**
- 2) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2013/14 be 23,787.62 and for the parts of the area listed below be:**

Parish of Feckenham	362.08
Rest of Redditch	<u>23,425.54</u>
	<u>23,787.62</u>

- 3) the Calculation of the NNDR1 as detailed in Appendix B to this report be approved.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 With the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme the base has been calculated and adjusted by the estimated amount of Council Tax Support discounts awardable.**

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- 3.2 The Council Tax support is estimated using data as at 30th November 2012. Any changes to the amount payable will have a direct impact on the chargeable amount of Council Tax. The authority will receive a grant for the financial year for an estimated 90% of Council Tax Support payable; this will be set and not varied with changes in the number of discounts awarded under the Council Tax Support.
- 3.3 Members are also asked to approve the NNDR1 return for 2013/14; any likely changes to the base have been estimated by Officers. Local Authorities will now benefit from improved collection and prompt billing and any variation to the NNDR base will directly affect the cash flow of the authority.

Legal Implications

- 3.4 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 require a billing authority to notify its major precepting bodies (and its parishes, if required) of the Tax Base, for the whole or part of the area for the following financial year. The precepting bodies - Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority - need this information in order to calculate and notify the Borough Council of their precept requirements for 2013/14. This will enable tax setting resolutions to be finalised and bills to be produced early in March 2013.
- 3.5 The legislation also requires a billing authority to calculate the tax base for any "special areas" within its boundary. There are no such areas in the Redditch Borough.
- 3.6 It is necessary to outline the method by which these calculations have been carried out so that the Council can formally adopt them for the purposes of the 1992 Regulations.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.7 In October 2012, form CTB1 was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government. This analyses the draft Valuation List of properties into the various bands and then provides further details of those properties which are subject to the full charge, those entitled to discounts and those which are exempt.
- 3.8 This report is a summary of that return updated to include any known changes since November. It also makes provision for anticipated changes which could arise for a variety of reasons such as appeals, new properties or properties falling off the list. An allowance of 1.00% has been made for non-collection of the tax.

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- 3.9 The Council is required to set a Council Tax Base each year, this forms part of the process of setting the following year budget. Failure to do so will result in the Council not being a Well Managed Organisation.
- 3.10 Members are also asked to approve the NNDR1 return to Central Government; this is a new requirement of the Local Government Finance Bill 2012.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 The Tax Base for 2013/14 has been calculated to be 23,787.62. Once this has been agreed, the County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire Authority will be notified and the figures will be used in the setting of the Council Tax to be presented to the Executive Committee and approved by the Council on 18th February 2013.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is no identified risk associated with the proposal contained in this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Council Tax Base – Redditch
Appendix 2 NNDR 1

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

CTB1 (October 2012) Return.

7. KEY**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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E Mail: sam.morgan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3790.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****Appendix 1****15th January 2013**

		Changes in base	1% Non- collection	Tax base
Number of Band D equivalent dwellings:	28,099.39	-4,071.49	-240.28	23,787.62
Feckenham	366.89	-1.16	-3.65	362.08
Rest of the Borough	27,732.50	-4,070.33	-236.63	23,425.54



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

**NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES RETURN 1
NADR1 2013-14**

Please e-mail to : nadr.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please enter your details after checking that you have selected the correct authority name.

Please check the figures shown in the cells with a blue border and enter your own figures if you disagree with those suggested.

**A provisional version of the form should be returned to the Department for Communities and Local Government by
Monday 7 January 2013**

The final version of this form, including a signed copy, must also be sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government by
Thursday 31 January 2013

Select your local authority's name from this list:

Reading
Redbridge
Redcar and Cleveland
Redditch
Reigate and Banstead
Ribble Valley

Check that this is your authority : **Redditch**

Check that this is your E Code : **E1835**

Local authority contact name : _____

Telephone number of local authority contact : _____

Fax number for local authority contact : _____

E-mail address of local authority contact : _____

Ver 1.1

1. Number of hereditaments on the rating list on 30 September 2012	2,416
2. Aggregate rateable value on the rating list on 30 September 2012	£ 85,520,416
GROSS CALCULATED RATE YIELD	£
3. Enter line 2 x small business non-domestic rating multiplier (0.462)	39,510,432.19
MANDATORY RELIEFS	
Small business rate relief	£
4. Additional yield generated to finance the small business rate relief scheme	692,167.11
5. Cost of small business rate relief for properties within billing authority area	1,182,494.61
6. Net cost of the small business rate relief (Line 5 minus Line 4)	490,327.50
7. Cost of relief to charities	1,092,787.83
8. Cost of relief to Community Amateur Sports Clubs	12,784.71
9. Cost of relief for rural general stores, post offices, public houses, petrol filling stations and food shops	1,342.35
10. Cost of relief for partly occupied premises	60,000.00
11. Cost of relief for empty premises	837,323.46
12. Total mandatory reliefs (Sum of lines 6 to 11)	2,494,565.85
DISCRETIONARY RELIEFS	
13. Cost of relief to charities	46,947.41
14. Cost of relief to non-profit making bodies	39,612.58
15. Cost of relief to Community Amateur Sports Clubs	3,196.18
16. Cost of relief for rural general stores, post offices, public houses, petrol filling stations and food shops	1,342.35
17. Cost of relief to other rural businesses	0.00
18. Other Section 47 reliefs (Localism Act discounts)	0.00
19. Total discretionary reliefs (Sum of lines 13 to 18)	91,098.52
20. Gross Rate Yield after reliefs (Line 3 minus lines 12 & 19)	36,924,767.82
21. Estimate of 'losses in collection'	369,247.68
22. Allowance for Cost of Collection	111,657.00
23. Special Authority Deductions - City of London Offset	0.00

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES RETURN 1 2013-14		Redditch
Ver 1.1		
Section 2		
Enterprise Zones		
24. Estimated level of discount to be awarded in 2013-14		£ 0.00
25. Estimated value of non-domestic rates in the Enterprise Zone area in 2013-14	0.00	
26. Enterprise Zone baseline	0.00	
27. Total estimated value of business rates to be retained in 2013-14 (Line 25 minus line 26)		0.00
New Development Deals		
28. Estimated value of non-domestic rates in the New Development Deals area in 2013-14	0.00	
29. New Development Deals baseline	0.00	
30. Total estimated value of business rates to be retained in 2013-14 (Line 28 minus line 29)		0.00
Renewable Energy Schemes		
31. Total estimated value of business rates to be retained in 2013-14		0.00
32. Net Rate Yield excluding transitional arrangements and rate retention (Line 20 minus the sum of lines 21 to 23, 27, 30 & 31)		36,443,863.14
Rate retention adjustments		
33. Estimate of the change in rateable value between 1 October 2012 and 30 September 2013		
34. Estimate of the change in receipts as a result in the change in rateable value (line 33 times the multiplier)		0.00
This equates to a percentage change of	%	0.00
35. Local authority's estimate of adjustment due to appeals		731,347.00
36. Net Rate Yield excluding transitional arrangements but after rate retention adjustments (Line 32 plus lines 34 and minus line 35)		35,712,516.00
Section 3		
Transitional arrangements		
37. Addition revenue received because reduction in rates have been deferred	17,011.53	
38. Revenue foregone because increase in rates have been deferred	41,212.29	
39. Net cost of transitional arrangements (Line 38 minus line 37)		24,200.76
40. Net Rate Yield after transitional arrangements and rate retention (Line 36 minus line 39)		35,688,315.00

NNDR Summary for : Redditch	
These figures show the percentage shares of the NNDR you estimate your authority will collect in 2013-14. They are based on line 36. See the <i>Tier Split</i> tab for full information	
Amount of NNDR to be paid to central government	£ 17,856,258.00
Amount to be retained by Redditch under the rates retention scheme	14,285,006.00
Amount to be passed to Worcestershire	3,214,126.00
Amount to be passed to Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	357,125.00

Certificate of Chief Financial Officer

I certify that the entries in lines 3, 12, 19, 20, 36, 39 and 40 of this form are the best I can make on the information available to me and that the figures given in lines 1 and 2 used in the calculating the amount shown in lines 36 and 40 are, to the best of my knowledge and belief those shown in the rating list for my authority as at 30 September 2012, subject to any order made before 15 January 2013 under the Local Government Act 1972 implementing boundary changes. I also certify that the authority has made proper arrangements for securing efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the collection of non-domestic rates. I also certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that any amount included as legal costs in line 22 and discretionary relief in line 24 meet the conditions set out in the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013.

Chief Financial Officer :

Date :

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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COMMUNITY CARE GRANTS AND CRISIS LOANS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Phil Mould
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering (Exec Director)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To enable Members to consider the proposed new arrangements for the administration of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 1) **the request for delegation of this scheme from the County Council to the District be approved; and**

RESOLVE that

- 2) **Officers develop a detailed scheme for individuals to access the scheme and that this be reported to be Members in March; and**
- 3) **Officers report the level of funding available to Members once the final allocation is made available.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 As part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 the Government have replaced elements of the discretionary Social Fund with "local assistance schemes".
- 3.2 The Social Fund is a scheme currently administered by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) to help people with needs that are difficult to meet from regular income. It is made up of two distinct parts:
- a **Regulated** scheme which provides entitlement to maternity, funeral, cold weather and winter fuel payments for people who satisfy certain qualifying conditions.
 - a **Discretionary** scheme under which people may be eligible in certain circumstances for a budgeting loan, a community care grant or a crisis loan to meet, or help to meet an immediate short term need.

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- 3.3 The Act abolishes community care grants and crisis loans for living expenses from 1 April 2013. Instead a non-ringfenced grant is to be paid to unitary and upper-tier local authorities in England to enable them (under existing powers in the Local Government Act 2000) to provide new locally-administered assistance to vulnerable groups.
- 3.4 The expectation is that local authorities will be able to manage the funds available and "take into account local knowledge and target the most vulnerable individuals". The grant for administering the scheme will be paid to County Councils.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the Borough Council requests delegation from the County Council for the provision of this service to be undertaken by its officers and that the funding be allocated to meet the requirements for those accessing the grants and loans. It is understood that the North Worcestershire Councils are requesting this delegation to provide a local service. The benefits of a local provision are :
- The Borough defines a local policy on how the money is spent, within the broad principles
 - All decision making on spend taken by the Borough
 - The Borough manage the budget
 - Application, decision making/assessment, payment and monitoring carried out by the Borough
 - Gives the Borough total independence and flexibility on how any support is provided, in line with the policy principles
 - Allows the Borough to reflect local needs and integrate with existing current local arrangements such as hardship funds, housing support, Care & Repair agencies, food voucher schemes, furniture schemes etc
 - Allows the Borough to consider flexible use of resources

3.6 Purpose of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses**Community Care Grants**

- 3.6.1 Community Care Grants (CCGs) were primarily intended to help vulnerable people live as independent a life as possible in the community. They were awarded to households receiving means tested benefits.

Crisis Loans

- 3.6.2 Crisis Loans (CLs) were intended for applicants who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster. They were awarded for immediate living

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expenses in order to avoid serious damage or serious risk to the health or safety of the applicant or a member of the family.

3.7 Funding for Scheme

- 3.7.1. It is anticipated that the exact level of funding to be allocated from the DWP for the scheme will be available in late December 2012. The funding is to be available for 2 years (ending March 2015) and therefore any delegation to the Borough will be on the basis of this period. An indicative allocation has been advised to the County Council and this represents a 11% reduction on the levels of expenditure in 2011/12. It is anticipated that the final allocation will reflect a similar reduction.
- 3.7.2. To obtain an estimate of the funding that could be passed to the Borough for the scheme the levels of expenditure have been analysed for 2011/12.

2011/12 ACTIVITY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

Crisis Loans (Items & Living Expenses)	Number of applications	Successful applications	Expenditure 2011/12
Bromsgrove	720	540	£30,800
Redditch	2,020	1,540	£100,800
Malvern Hills	600	490	£31,100
Worcester City	2,270	1,780	£95,500
Wychavon	770	590	£35,200
Wyre Forest	1,980	1,490	£86,300
TOTAL	8,360	6,430	£379,700
Community Care Grants	Number of applications	Successful applications	Expenditure 2011/12
Bromsgrove	370	180	£82,500
Redditch	570	270	£127,300
Malvern Hills	320	150	£68,500
Worcester City	840	390	£175,000
Wychavon	460	190	£95,000
Wyre Forest	730	300	£137,000
TOTAL	3,290	1,480	£685,300

TOTAL	Number of applications	Successful applications	Expenditure 2011/12
Bromsgrove	1,090	720	£113,300
Redditch	2,590	1,810	£228,100
Malvern Hills	920	640	£99,600
Worcester City	3,110	2,170	£270,500
Wychavon	1,230	780	£130,200
Wyre Forest	2,710	1,790	£223,300
TOTAL	11,650	7,910	£1,065,000

- 3.7.3. It is proposed that the scheme funding be allocated pro-rata to the 2011/12 expenditure, and that it is all allocated to the District Councils (ie none is left with the County Council). This is on the basis that the Districts would be incurring all the programme expenditure and that there would be no additional costs to the County Council. The indicative funding allocation, based on the 2011/12 expenditure levels, would be as follows:

ALLOCATION OF REDUCED FUNDING BASED ON 11/12 ACTIVITY

2013/14 Indicative Funding Allocation	% based on expenditure 2011/12	Programme Funding Allocation
Bromsgrove	10.64%	£100,786
Redditch	21.42%	£202,906
Malvern Hills	9.35%	£88,599
Worcester City	25.40%	£240,624
Wychavon	12.23%	£115,820
Wyre Forest	20.96%	£198,637
TOTAL	100.00%	£947,372

- 3.7.4. In addition to the scheme funding as detailed above there is an element of Administrative Funding which will be made available. It is proposed that this grant will be allocated to the Districts to enable them to administer the scheme using internal resources funded by the grant available. The final details of this grant will be available in late December and will be for 2 years.
- 3.7.5. It is proposed that the grant be allocated to the Districts on the basis of the number of applications, less £5,000 to be retained by the County.

ALLOCATION OF INDICATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

2013/14 Indicative Funding Allocation	% based on number of applications	Administrative Funding Allocation
Bromsgrove	9.36%	£18,270
Redditch	22.23%	£43,390
Malvern Hills	7.90%	£15,420
Worcester City	26.70%	£52,095
Wychavon	10.56%	£20,612
Wyre Forest	23.25%	£45,400
TOTAL	100.00%	£195,187

- 3.7.6. Officers will ensure that the maximum resource can be funded from the allocation in accessing support within the shared service across Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils.

3.8. Legal Implications

As referred to at para 3.1 above changes are being introduced through the 2012 Welfare Reform Act to end the previous practice of crisis loans administered through the DWP and replace them with a locally administered system of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. From a governance point of view, as Worcestershire is a two tier authority the starting point would be for the new scheme to be administered by the County Council. However, it is being proposed that this function be delegated by the County Council to the District. This will be a decision for Full Council as set out in recommendation 2.1.

Service / Operational Implications**3.9 Localised Support Scheme**

- 3.9.1. The purpose of the scheme is to assist vulnerable people in meeting their needs for subsistence or financial support where they are unable to meet their immediate short term needs or where they require assistance to maintain their independence or re-integrate within the community. The scheme will replace those elements of the Social Fund which will no longer be administered by the DWP.
- 3.9.2. The formal notification from the DWP states that Local Authorities *"need to be able to flex the provision in a way that is suitable and appropriate to meet the needs of your local communities... we expect funding to be concentrated on those facing greatest difficulty in managing their income, to enable a more flexible response to unavoidable need, perhaps through a mixture of cash or goods and*

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aligning with the wider range of local support local authorities/devolved administrations already offer. In short, the funding is to allow you to give flexible help to those in genuine need." This will be taken into account when considering potential options for localised support.

- 3.9.3. Officers within the Housing and Benefits services are working together to ensure that the final scheme will meet the needs and requirements of our community. It is anticipated that this be presented to Executive in March 2013.
- 3.9.4. There is a risk that the grant will not be enough to manage the demand. This will be a challenge given that the indicative level of grant available is lower than expenditure under the current scheme. However, it is clear that the budget needs to be managed to a limit of the grant available to avoid impacting on other areas of Councils' budgets. Given that the funding is only clear for the first two years, it is proposed that any scheme only covers this period.
- 3.9.5. It is proposed that broad principles be adopted when considering a local scheme to include:
- Be Clear
 - Be Responsive
 - Target the most vulnerable and those in need of immediate support
 - Issue vouchers rather than cash, where appropriate
 - Minimise cost of administration (Avoids loans)
 - Separate application/decision making from face to face customer contact, subject to local requirements
 - Have one single route of appeal/review
 - Have a system for Monitoring and Reviewing the use of the grant
 - Have effective budgetary control
 - Be resilient
- 3.9.6. Officers will continue to work together and with the community to develop a scheme that suits local needs with local knowledge and support. This will be presented to Executive in March 2013.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 It is proposed that by receiving delegation to provide the scheme locally the community will benefit from the internal officers support and knowledge. Any proposed scheme will be subject to a period of consultation with the community.

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4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that funding levels will not meet demand however officers will work to ensure that the resource available is maximised to support those in need whilst managing the prescribed level of budget.

5. APPENDICES

N/A

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT WITH WORCESTERSHIRE TELECARE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Debbie Taylor - Portfolio Holder for Local Environment and Health.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes.
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis - Acting Head of Community Services.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A.
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To seek Members approval to enter into a joint working agreement with Worcestershire Telecare and a further equipment provider, if required, in order to submit a joint tender for Supporting People Funding to provide Lifeline across Worcestershire.
- 1.2 To seek Member approval to adopt a lead contractor / sub-contractor arrangement with Worcestershire Telecare and if necessary a further partner, to deliver services, should the Supporting People Tender be successful.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) the Council, through its shared service with Redditch and Bromsgrove, should enter a joint working agreement with Worcestershire Telecare and an equipment provider partner if required in order to bid for a contract with Worcestershire County Council for the provision of Telecare Services across Worcestershire;**
- 2) if successful to enter into an agreement with Worcestershire Telecare and an equipment provider if required , one of which will take the lead role in the arrangement;**
- 3) authority to be delegated to the Acting Head of Community Services and to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to finalise the terms of the above agreement and enter into them; and**

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- 4) **authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to make any consequential changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Worcestershire County Council have contracted with Redditch Borough Council for a number of years, through the Supporting People programme, to provide a Lifeline Call Alarm service. This contract is expected to April 2013. This contract has the annual value of £202,000 to Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.2 There is a second contract that will come to an end. That is the Adult and Community Services Telecare contract. This has an annual income of around £10K.
- 3.3 The provision of both of these services will be within the new contract to be tendered in 2013.
- 3.4 The County Council aim is to contract with one service provider to deliver services across all 6 areas within the County.
- 3.5 At this stage there is no indication what the specification will require and therefore the financial implications are undetermined. The Supporting People contract arrangements have been under review at the County Council for a number of years, but it is clear that changes are now imminent.
- 3.6 If the RBC tender submission is unsuccessful there is a potential loss of revenue of £212,000, however there are multiple scenarios that could apply and Officers will assess the options when the actual implications are known.

Legal Implications

- 3.7 A legal agreement will be required to set up a joint arrangement for the parties to make a bid for the contract with Worcestershire Telecare or a further partner if required as the lead party. If successful further agreements will be required both between the County Council and Worcestershire Telecare, and to sub-contract services to the Borough Council, which will be binding on the parties. Legal Services have been involved in the drafting of the previous Contracts and would be involved in any future Contracts.

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- 3.8 The Principal Solicitor has been consulted with regard to the legal arrangements and agreements.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.9 At present there are 26 separate housing providers across the County, which receive funding from Supporting People for Call Alarm provision. In the new contract they aim to contract with one Telecare provider that can deliver services across the whole of the County.
- 3.10 These housing providers all currently contract their monitoring services to either Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council or Worcestershire Telecare, so all of the monitoring within the County is actually provided by Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire Telecare.
- 3.11 Redditch Borough Council is the host authority under Shared Service arrangements, to provide the service across Redditch and Bromsgrove districts, but does not currently have the resources to provide services across the whole of Worcestershire alone. The other four districts are serviced by Worcestershire Telecare.
- 3.12 Like Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire Telecare is accredited to the Telecare Services Association Code of Practice, passing the stringent annual audit requirement.
<http://www.worcstelecare.org/about/>.
- 3.13 Worcestershire Telecare is hosted by Wyre Forest Community Housing Trust, it is answerable to a board;
<http://www.communityhg.com/boards/wtc.php>.
- 3.14 The content of the County Council specification has not yet been announced but is likely to include various elements such as; equipment supply, equipment maintenance, equipment installation and monitoring. These are all elements currently provided by Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire Telecare.
- 3.15 Whilst it has not been confirmed, this contract may also include the requirement to supply Telecare equipment in addition to the monitoring and installation services. If this is the case Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire Telecare would need to include an equipment provider within the joint working agreement.

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- 3.16 In view of the fact that Worcestershire County Council will be looking to let only one contract to cover the whole County, it is proposed that Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire Telecare and a further partner (if required in respect of the equipment) make a joint bid as it is not viable for Redditch Borough Council to stand alone and submit a bid.
- 3.17 It is proposed that Worcestershire Telecare or the equipment provider are the lead organisation in arrangements. This is because they currently provide services to two thirds of the County geographically, they have significantly more connections and more administrative resources than Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.18 The proposal to be decided is for Redditch, on behalf of the Redditch and Bromsgrove shared service, to enter into a **joint working agreement** with Worcestershire Telecare and if necessary an equipment provider to submit the tender. If the bid is successful an additional agreement can be made to invoke a lead contractor / sub-contractor arrangement. The lead contractor being either Worcestershire Telecare or the equipment provider, entering into the agreement with Worcestershire County Council, and subcontracting elements of the contract to Redditch Borough Council. Each party would keep their own existing legal identity and no new legal entity is created.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.19 The Lifeline services provide an emergency contact service for elderly and/or vulnerable adults and those living with disability. It enables them to live independently in their own homes, providing peace of mind to them and their families. The services provided promote safeguarding and welfare of service users, in particular vulnerable adults.
- 3.20 The new contract arrangements should see services become more accessible to residents, additional equipment resources to meet the changing needs of service users, and a fairer allocation of resources.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 If a joint tender is not submitted or is unsuccessful, the delivery of Alarm call, Lifeline and Telecare will be led by another commissioned organisation rather than at a local level through the Borough Council.
- 4.2 This will have funding implications and may invoke a service review resulting in the need to reduce staff numbers.

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5. **APPENDICES**

None.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Countywide Strategy for Telecare.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 11th December, 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), Councillor Simon Chalk (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andrew Brazier, David Bush, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Pat Witherspoon, Roger Bennett, Michael Braley and Carole Gandy

Also Present:

Councillors Roger Bennett, Michael Braley and Carole Gandy.

Officers:

C Felton, T Kristunas and J Staniland

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and M Craggs

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES – MINUTE 113

109. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

111. MINUTES

The Committee noted that at the previous meeting Members had discussed the appropriate level of detail to include in minutes of a Committee meeting and it had been suggested that further detail could have been added to the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2012. However, Officers were not required to take a verbatim record of proceedings and it had been concluded that no additional detail could be added to this set of minutes.

Officers suggested that in future if it was considered to be appropriate to minute a particular item of the Committee's debate in

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Chair

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detail a specific request to this effect should be made by Members during the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November 2012 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

112. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 - JULY - SEPTEMBER 2012

Officers provided an overview of the report which detailed the Council's financial position for the period April to September 2012.

Members sought clarification on a number of figures contained within the report and related issues, including the present arrangements for receiving Section 106 income, and what was being done to reduce the number of empty industrial units within the Borough. Officers explained that efforts were continuing to be made to attract new tenants to empty properties. However, the prevalence of vacant properties was reflective of difficult economic times and was not an issue restricted to Redditch. It was agreed that additional information on this subject should be presented for the consideration of the committee in due course.

Having noted the capital budget figures for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Members requested an update on the introduction of more informal games opportunities in open spaces across the Borough, especially the installation of table tennis tables, as recommended by the Promoting Sporting Participation Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

113. CONCESSIONARY RENTS - PRE-SCRUTINY SHORT, SHARP REVIEW

Before Members considered the final report of the Pre-Scrutiny Short, Sharp Review, Officers delivered a presentation on the Council's draft new policy for granting concessionary rents to voluntary sector organisations (VSOs). This explained that a policy was being introduced to ensure that the Council's approach to offering rent relief to VSOs was fair, transparent, equitable, and consistent.

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It was anticipated that the introduction of the new policy would accelerate the process for suitable VSOs to obtain grants. Members heard that VSOs would be able to apply for rent concessions up to a 70 per cent ceiling if they met certain criteria. Applications for concessionary rents would need to be submitted via the Council's Grants Panel which would then make recommendations to relevant Officers to make a final decision on whether rent relief was appropriate. VSOs were not necessarily required to submit full business cases unless they were appealing for a concession in excess of the 70 per cent ceiling.

Concern was expressed that the issue of rent reliefs could give some VSOs an unfair competitive advantage within in the Borough as costs would be reduced. Officers explained that the Council would mitigate this by not allowing two competing businesses to be positioned in the same Council owned business centre.

The Committee then received a summary of the final report of the pre-scrutiny review which was undertaken by Councillors Brunner and Brazier. Members were referred to the eight recommendations within the report and were provided with a rationale for each proposal.

The Councillors on the pre-scrutiny review commented that all VSOs should be required to provide a business case to explain why they were applicable to receive rent relief. It was thought that this would be beneficial to all parties involved, as it would strengthen the applications that were made. It could also give VSOs at the outset of the process a much clearer idea of whether they should proceed with an application.

It was also suggested that VSOs should be able to apply for five year leases rather than be restricted to a three year lease as proposed within the new policy. This would make some applications more viable for the VSO involved. However, on the other hand it was noted that other VSOs would not require a lease for a five year period.

The pre-scrutiny review had referred to a charitable organisation that provided comprehensive advice to VSOs on property issues. It had been suggested that the expertise held by the organisation could be utilised at a minimal cost to strengthen the overall concessionary rents process. However, while the principle behind the recommendation was accepted, concern was raised that the Council should not necessarily endorse any specific independent organisation without further examination of its operations. It was

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therefore agreed that the recommendation should be made more generic so that assistance could be obtained from a wider field of independent organisations.

The Committee felt that communicating the new policy effectively was extremely important, especially to VSOs that currently did not pay any rent at all on Council owned property. Members were generally supportive of the recommendation that workshops be held to promote and publicise the policy, although concerns were expressed about the potential costs involved.

There was general support amongst the Committee that a review should be undertaken of the new policy after its inception. However, the appropriate timeframes for this review were debated and it was suggested that the Council could monitor the policy on a more regular basis.

Finally, Members commented that the final recommendation within the pre-scrutiny report was superfluous as it was essentially covered by the first recommendation. Councillors Brunner and Brazier accepted the suggestion.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Draft Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved, and implemented with immediate effect for new tenancies, subject to the further recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being approved (as listed below in recommendations 4 to 10);**
- 2) transitional arrangements be introduced with effect from 1st April 2013 to allow the policy to be fully implemented over a three year period taking into account the terms of existing leases;**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources in conjunction with the Council's Voluntary Sector Grants Co-ordinator to approve concessionary rents/rent relief in line with the draft policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- 4) that any Council policy on concessionary rents ensure that a consistent, fair, clear and transparent approach is applied to dealing with applications from third sector organisations;**

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- 5) that any third sector organisation looking to obtain a concessionary rent from the Council be required to submit a detailed business case outlining their plans for a particular property;
- 6) that Officers facilitate a series of workshops to advertise and promote the new policy to the third sector in Redditch;
- 7) that the Council work with the local media and utilise social networks and its own website to publicise the new policy to the third sector in Redditch;
- 8) that each approved concessionary rent agreement be for a minimum five year duration, include a three year break clause, and be monitored on an annual basis;
- 9) that the Council undertake a review of the approved policy twelve months after its inception;
- 10) Officers further investigate suitable organisations to which third sector groups could be signposted with regard to obtaining independent advice on renting and managing properties; and

RESOLVED that

the reports be noted.

114. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE FUNCTION

Officers provided an overview of a report which enabled Members to review the Committee's achievements during the first six months of the 2012/13 municipal year and to consider whether any improvements could be made to the process.

In particular, Members were advised to consider whether the current approach to holding Portfolio Holders to account via an annual report process was the most effective form of accountability. Concern was raised that the process had become especially onerous for Officers and was lengthening the duration of Committee meetings quite considerably. Furthermore, during the previous five years the Committee had only made six recommendations as part of the process.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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The Committee was therefore advised to consider how it might better direct its resource and expertise more effectively. It was suggested that Members could place a greater focus on undertaking thorough and comprehensive reviews on the current performance and operation of the Council. It was also proposed that the effect of Transformation and Shared Services on the Council's performance could be a suitable area for the Committee to review. It was suggested that the Committee was far more effective when Members were given sufficient time to carry out a full investigation.

Members were very much supportive of the proposed changes as included within the report. However, Members remained to hold Portfolio Holders to account for the work that they did. It was commented that Portfolio Holders should only be called before the Committee when this was timely, rather than as part of an overly bureaucratic process. As part of this process the Portfolio Holders could be invited to present information and answer questions during scrutiny of service Transformation and Shared Services by the Committee.

RESOVED that

- 1) **the Portfolio Holder Annual Report process be discontinued with immediate effect;**
- 2) **the Committee focus on investigating the effects of service Transformation and Shared Services on the Council's current performance; and**
- 3) **the report be noted.**

115. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - WRITTEN REPORT - LEISURE AND TOURISM

Having taken the decision under the previous item to discontinue the Portfolio Holder Annual Report process, Members took no further action with the report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

116. ACTIONS LIST

Members noted that information regarding apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the Borough had recently been provided. In addition, following publication of the agenda pack,

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 11th December, 2012

Officers had provided further information about allotments situated in the town.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Actions List be noted.

117. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20th November 2012 and considered the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme.

The Chair commented that the Executive Committee had endorsed all of the recommendations within the Sickness Policy Pre-Scrutiny Short-Sharp Review Final Report and congratulated the two members of the review group, Councillors Fisher and Witherspoon, on the outcome.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 20th November 2012 and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.

118. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents.

119. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

a) Arts and Culture Centre – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Members were informed that the group had recently undertaken a number of visits to locations in and outside the Borough.

The group had already received a considered number of responses to its public consultation on the possible introduction of an arts and cultural centre in Redditch. It was expected that the final figure would be in excess of 300 responses. Councillor Pattie Hill was thanked for her help in

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 11th December, 2012

distributing copies of the group's questionnaire amongst local residents.

On behalf of the group, Councillor Hopkins requested that the Committee defer its consideration of the final report by four weeks to allow sufficient time for the review to be completed.

b) Redditch Market – Chair, Councillor Andrew Brazier

Councillor Brazier explained that the review group had recently visited Bromsgrove Market to speak with customers and, primarily, traders about what they considered to constitute a successful market. It was expected that a visit to Kidderminster Farmers Market would take place in the New Year.

The group had also been undertaking consultation work, the initial findings of which would be discussed at their forthcoming meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **due to a delay in starting the review the deadline for the Arts and Cultural Centre Task Group be extended to Tuesday 2nd April 2013; and**
- 2) **the update reports be noted.**

120. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Witherspoon, the Committee's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), informed the Committee that no meeting had taken place since the previous update provided.

Members were instead referred to a number of relevant forthcoming dates, including: a meeting of the Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on 12th December; a Joint Services Review (JSR) meeting on 18th December; and a meeting of the Worcestershire NHS Trust Board on 19th December 2012.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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121. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

122. WORK PROGRAMME

In line with the Committee's earlier decision to focus on scrutinising service Transformation and Shared Services, Members requested training on both subjects.

Members were also reminded that a scrutiny training session, to be provided by an external facilitator, would take place on Thursday 17th January at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.01 pm
and closed at 9.15 pm

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

15th January 2013

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	Next meeting – Mid-late January 2013
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr John Fisher John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Next meeting – 21st January 2013.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

15th January 2013

3.	Housing Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Mark Shurmer</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Pat Witherspoon Liz Tompkin	Next meeting – Date to be established
4.	Planning Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Rebecca Blake</u> John Staniland / Ruth Bamford	Next meeting – 23 rd January 2013

B. OTHER MEETINGS

5.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Sheena Jones	Next meeting – Date to be established.
6.	Member Support Steering Group	Chair: <u>Cllr John Fisher</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Phil Mould</u> Sheena Jones	Next meeting – 18 th January 2013.
7.	Grants Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr David Bush</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Donna Hancox	Next meeting – January 2013.
8.	Procurement Group	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Jayne Pickering / Teresa Kristunas	In abeyance pending Transformation.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

15th January 2013

9.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair: Mr R Key / Sheena Jones	Last meeting – 12th December 2012
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AUTHOR OF REPORT

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

15th January 2013

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.
18th September 2012		
Cllr Mould / Jayne Pickering	Council Tax Support Scheme Officers were requested to prepare a further report at the end of the 8 week consultation period.	This report will be presented to the Executive Committee on 15 th January 2013.
18th December 2012		
Cllr Shurmer/ Derek Allen / Matthew Bough	Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy Officers were in the process of developing a Protocol with other Local Authorities to address the provision of accommodation for homeless people and offered to circulate it to members of the Committee following the meeting.	

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

15th January 2013

<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 18/12/12
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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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