

Executive Committee

Tuesday 12th March
2013
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Access to Information - Your Rights

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

Your main rights are set out below:-

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

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

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

Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

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

Chair

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

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

Members of the Public

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

Special Arrangements

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

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

Further Information

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

Fire/ Emergency instructions

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

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

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

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

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.



Executive

12th March 2013

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
Carole Gandy Debbie Taylor

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 Executive Committee Work Programme, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; andany other relevant announcements. <p>(Oral report)</p>
4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14) Chief Executive	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 12 th and 18 th February 2013. (Minutes of the meetings on 12 th and 18 th February 2013 attached)
5. Redditch Market Task Group - Final Report (Pages 15 - 50)	To consider the final report of the Redditch Market Task and Finish Group. (Report attached)

All Wards;

Executive

Committee

12th March 2013

<p>6. Redditch Growth and Local Plan No.4 Public Consultation</p> <p>(Pages 51 - 62)</p> <p>Head of Planning and Regeneration</p>	<p>To consider approval for public consultation to be carried out between 1st April 2013 the 13th May 2013 on proposed Housing Growth alongside a deferred consultation for Local Plan No.4.</p> <p>(Report and Appendix 4 attached – Appendices 1, 2 and 3 available via the website and to Members in Group Rooms)</p> <p>All Wards;</p>
<p>7. Grants Programme 2013-14</p> <p>(Pages 63 - 74)</p> <p>Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To consider the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2013 – 2014.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards;</p>
<p>8. Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)</p> <p>(Pages 75 - 90)</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services</p>	<p>To consider a report on the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) and the Green Deal.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards;</p>
<p>9. Local Welfare Assistance</p> <p>(Pages 91 - 98)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider the operational arrangements for the delivery of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards;</p>
<p>10. Quarterly Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3 - October to December 2012</p> <p>(Pages 99 - 106)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a report setting out the budget position at the end of the third quarter of the 2012/13 financial year.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>11. Quarterly Customer Service Monitoring - Quarter 3 - October to December 2012</p> <p>(Pages 107 - 122)</p> <p>Head of Customer Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides an update on Customer Services.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</p>

Executive

Committee

12th March 2013

<p>12. Quarterly Sickness Monitoring - Quarter 3 - October to December 2012</p> <p>(Pages 123 - 128)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides an update on sickness monitoring.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</p>
<p>13. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(Pages 129 - 138)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5th February 2013.</p> <p>There are no outstanding recommendations to consider, aside from those contained separately within the report from the Redditch Market Task and Finish Group earlier on this Executive Committee agenda.</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 139 - 142)</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 143 - 144)</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>

17. Exclusion of the Public

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:

“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 paragraphs (*to be specified*) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”

These paragraphs are as follows:

Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:

- Para 1 – any individual;
- Para 2 – the identity of any individual;
- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;
- Para 4 – labour relations matters;
- Para 5 – legal professional privilege;
- Para 6 – a notice, order or direction;
- Para 7 – the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime;

may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.

18. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)

To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).



Executive Committee

12th February 2013

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

Officers:

E Baker, R Bamford, C Flanagan, J Godwin, S Jones, T Kristunas, S Morgan, J Pickering and M Bough

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

140. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Luke Stephens.

141. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hartnett declared an interest in Item 10 (Disposal of Hewell Road Swimming Baths and Adjacent Play Area for Affordable Housing) as detailed separately at Minute 149 below.

142. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

143. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15th January 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

144. REDDITCH GROWTH CONSULTATION

Officers introduced a report that was seeking approval for consultation to be carried out between 25th February and 8th April 2013 on proposed Redditch Growth. The consultation was to be carried out jointly with Bromsgrove District Council as the potential housing growth was to be contained within Bromsgrove District.

The meeting was informed that the proposed growth was to meet the need which had been identified in a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This work suggested that the housing requirement for Redditch to 2030 was 6,380 dwellings. A second assessment, a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had demonstrated that there was the capacity to accommodate around 3,000 dwellings within Redditch Borough, leaving a balance of around 3,400 dwellings to be accommodated cross boundary. Local authorities were required to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, based on their housing requirement, and Redditch was unable to fulfil this requirement within its own boundaries.

Twenty potential sites around the borders of the Borough of Redditch were initially assessed and, of these, five were progressed to focussed site appraisal. The outcome of this second stage was the identification of sites at Foxlydiate and Brockhill East as the most suitable options for housing growth.

Some Members did not accept the need for an additional 6,000 houses. A site visit undertaken the previous Saturday had provided an insight into the impact of the proposed growth. It was suggested that there should be an opportunity for Members and other consultees, including residents, to consider further areas of land. It was noted that, during the consultation on Local Plan No. 3 the public had been presented with choices and the thought was expressed that consultation was not particularly meaningful in the absence of choice. It was further suggested that there were additional pieces of land which were not being considered for development because of the potential impact upon Bromsgrove District. Officers were asked how many houses had built since the Regional Spatial Strategy had been released in 2009 and whether these could be offset against the current housing need.

Officers explained that not having sufficient land available to meet the current housing need left the Borough vulnerable to losing at appeal over applications for development, all other things being equal. An undertaking was made to provide Members of the Committee with the numbers of the houses built each year within the Borough since 2009.

The contention that increased housing alongside existing housing developments made an improvement in public transport more likely was questioned. It was suggested that the proposed growth would impact significantly on Webheath and Headless Cross whilst failing to meet the current shortfall in housing need. In answer to specific questions, Officers clarified that there were currently around 3,000 people on the Council's Housing Waiting List and, of those, around 900 were in housing need.

Members of the Committee noted that there were a lot of outstanding questions about the sites being proposed for future growth and it was hoped that the forthcoming consultation period would begin to provide answers to some of those questions and gather the views of local residents on the proposals. It was made clear that the initial selection of possible areas for development had been undertaken by Officers and that Members' role in the process was now starting with the agreement of documentation to be put out for public consultation. Officers added that the proposed housing growth was in line with the annual pattern of housing growth within the Borough since the mid-1980s.

RECOMMENDED that

the consultation document, Redditch Growth Consultation (Appendix 1) and the supporting background evidence report (Appendix 2) and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 3) be approved for public consultation jointly between 25th February and 8th April 2013.

145. DRAFT BOROUGH OF REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN NO.4

The Committee considered a report which was proposing the approval of a draft Local Plan No.4 for the purpose of public consultation. The Local Plan was required to establish the proposed levels of growth for the Borough, most particularly in relation to numbers of new dwellings and the amount of new land for employment purposes up until 2030. Members commented that the constituent parts of the Local Plan had received previous consideration at meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel and it was noted that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan had been received by the Panel earlier that same evening.

There were concerns expressed at the impact of further development at Webheath, particularly in relation to traffic congestion in Headless Cross centre. It was reported that traffic problems were currently a feature of that junction and that the problems would be compounded by further development in that vicinity. Officers explained that highways modelling had not been undertaken by the County Council at that location as the pinch-point

on that route had been identified some way from the junction. It was stated that, should Members want modelling carried out on that junction, the Council could ask the County Council to do that, but the Council would have to meet the cost. Officers added that detailed modelling had been carried out in connection with an ongoing planning application and Officers offered to check which junctions were concerned and report back to all Members.

It was suggested that the creation of a further 3,000 homes under this Local Plan would leave no further housing land in Redditch and Officers were asked what the options were at that point. It was noted that, as ever, the Council would be required to comply with nationally imposed requirements but, should a no further growth option be available, the Council could consider that at the time.

Officers accepted that the two most contentious issues in the Local Plan No. 4 were the Webheath ADR land and the Brockhill area and explained that they had given those most closely involved with campaigns to limit development in these areas prior notice that these matters would be coming before the Council as a consequence.

RECOMMENDED that

the Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (Appendix 1) and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2) are approved for public consultation between 25th February 2013 and 8th April 2013.

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

The Committee received an update on the budget position in advance of the Council Tax Setting meeting the following week. It was reported that Heads of Service and Finance Officers had been working hard to achieve savings over recent months but could now come forward with a balanced budget, although, as ever, there were some risks involved. The Leader thanked the Finance Team for their efforts in achieving this outcome in difficult circumstances.

Officers highlighted a typographical error in paragraph 3.6 wherein it had incorrectly been stated that the cumulative grant reduction for 2014/15 was £2,289,000 (41%) rather than the £2,389,000 (43%) intended.

The proposed savings through transformation of £150,000 were based upon previous savings through this means but were difficult to allocate any more precisely. The expected VAT refunds were also not able to be finally quantified as yet. At the end of the year it was anticipated that the Council would hold just over £900,000 in

balances. What was clear was that the following two years would present further challenges to the authority.

It was accepted by Members that it was a further difficult year for the Council, not helped by the late announcement of the Grant Settlement, and the meeting was informed that the outcome of a letter of appeal to the Government over the Settlement had been a further small reduction in the Council's grant.

There was some discussion over the financial implications of the Local Plan No. 4 and the Cross Boundary Growth Consultation and whether money had previously been re-allocated for other purposes. Officers confirmed that the necessary funding was in place and undertook to provide further clarification on this matter prior to the forthcoming meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED that

the current position for 2013/14 – 2015/16 be noted and Officers be requested that Officers review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget.

147. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - 2013-14 - RENT SETTING

Officers explained that 2013 was the first year out of the Housing Subsidy system. Because of the proportion of the national housing debt inherited by the Council, the Council was no longer in a position to borrow to fund the future capital programme.

A further major change was the requirement to calculate depreciation on the Council's housing stock, although there was a five-year transitional period before a final depreciation figure was required.

A Member noted that the total figure for Landlords, Costs, Insurance etc. seemed to be extremely modest and Officers were asked how much insurance was being paid per property as a proportion of this figure. Officers undertook to provide this information to Members of the Committee.

Members were keen that the Council continued to maintain a good quality housing stock.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the draft 2013/14 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A, be approved;**

- 2) **the actual average rent increase for 2013/14 be 3.8% (2.6% RPI plus 1.2% due to rent restructuring); and**
- 3) **£3.5m be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme and repay borrowing.**

148. FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14

The Committee received the proposed Fees and Charges for the Council's chargeable services for the coming year. It was explained that Heads of Service had aimed to achieve a three percent increase in income over their range of services.

A Member questioned the cost of the hire of the Abbey Stadium Swimming Pool for local first schools, noting that they were aware of at least one school which used a pool further afield. This was set against the backdrop of the provision of free swimming for under 16s and over 60s. Officers undertook to investigate this matter, adding that there could be a range of factors other than costs which had led the school to this course of action. It was added that the free swimming had seen a very considerable uptake in the year to date with around 6,000 individuals taking advantage thus far.

A further question was asked about hire products on page 53 and the apparently high cost of having an alarm. Again, Officers undertook to establish the reasons for the present charging level and report this back to Members.

The Committee noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the Fees and Charges the previous week and were content to endorse the comments made by that body.

RECOMMENDED that

the fees and charges for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A - H to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-

- a) **fees or charges are statutory,**
- b) **fees and charges are set externally, or**
- c) **other Council- approved circumstances apply; and**

RESOLVED that

the comments of the Overview of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

149. DISPOSAL OF HEWELL ROAD SWIMMING BATHS AND ADJACENT PLAY AREA FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Members considered a report which proposed the disposal of the Hewell Road Pool site to a Registered Provider for the development of affordable housing.

There was some discussion around the criteria used for the assessing of the Registered Providers' bids and whether any one Group might be advantaged or disadvantaged by the proposed scoring system. Officers were of the opinion that all the potential providers would be in a position to apply on equal terms for the right to develop.

The value of the site was also a matter raised by a Member. The suggestion that the site be handed to a Registered Provider for as little as £1 was queried in light of the Council's obligation to dispose of land for the best consideration. Officers confirmed that disposals at less than best consideration were permissible under certain circumstances and explained that the disposal in this case would also involve the clearance of the site by the developer and insurance against restrictive covenants and similar risks.

There was widespread agreement that the proposed affordable housing on the site was to be welcomed

RESOLVED that

- 1) the option to dispose of the Hewell Road swimming baths site and the adjacent play area (plan at appendix 1) by sale or transfer for the development of affordable housing to a Registered Provider from the Council's Preferred Partner list be pursued;**
- 2) the selection criteria (appendix 2) be agreed;**
- 3) Officers invite development submissions for the site from the Council's Preferred Partner Registered Providers;**
- 4) a selection panel be formed of Members, and supported by Officers to assess and evaluate the submissions and nominate the proposed partner; and**
- 5) the selection panel brings a further report to the Executive Committee for the formal selection of the successful submission.**

(During consideration of this item, Councillor Bill Hartnett declared an other disclosable interest as a Member of the Board of Redditch Co-operative Homes, appointed by the Council, and vacated the Chair and the Chamber for the duration of this item. The Vice-Chair, Councillor Chance, assumed the Chair in Councillor Hartnett's absence.)

150. NOMINATION OF AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Officers introduced a report detailing a request that the Redditch Youth House be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

The Youth House was currently vacant and a local group had put together a bid to bring the building back into use. The approval of the request would provide a 6 month period to generate sufficient funds to purchase the building to provide community facilities.

Members welcomed this proposal and wished the group well in their venture.

RESOLVED that

the listing of the Redditch Youth House as an Asset of Community Value be approved.

151. QUARTERLY MONITORING - WRITE OFF OF DEBTS - QUARTER 3 - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2012

Members considered the latest quarterly report of the action taken by Officers with respect to the write-off of debts during the previous quarter.

RESOLVED that

the content of the report be noted.

152. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2013-14

Members considered the annual report from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils (IRP) setting out that body's recommendations for the level of allowances to be paid to members of the Council for the coming Municipal Year. The IRP had met with all Leaders of the Worcestershire Districts in preparation for this report.

Members reiterated the view expressed in previous years that this decision be taken out of their hands and levels of allowances be set nationally.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the Council has regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel;**
- 2) **the Council does not accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, set out in detail in Appendix 1 to its report, for the following allowances:**

**Basic
Leader
Deputy Leader
Portfolio Holders
Executive Members without Portfolio
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee
Chair of Planning Committee
Chair of Licensing Committee
Chair of Standards Committee
Political Group Leaders;**

- 3) **the Council accepts the Panel's recommendations for travel, subsistence and dependent carers allowances;**
- 4) **for 2013-14, the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances continue at the level set for 2012-13, as set out in detail in the final column in appendix 1 to the Panel's report;**
- 5) **the Panel's recommendation relating to the Parish Council be noted.**

153. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th January 2013 be received and noted.

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

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

155. 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.

156. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee received the latest Action Monitoring report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.27 pm

.....
Chair



Executive Committee

18th February 2013

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Carole Gandy, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer, Luke Stephens and Debbie Taylor

Officers:

E Baker, R Bamford, A Darroch, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, S Morgan and J Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

157. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

158. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

159. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

160. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 12th February 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

161. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2013/14 - 2015/16 AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2013/14

Officers introduced a report which proposed a budget to be considered by the Council and a proposed level at which the coming year's Council Tax was to be set. The Council was once again reminded that the information in respect of formula funding from central Government had been received very late this year and adjustments had had to be made up until a short time before this meeting to take account of various factors of which the Council had been notified in recent days.

The overall level of funding from central Government was considerably lower than several years previously and the cumulative decrease in funding was expected to total 43% by 2015/16. Savings continued to be achieved through shared services and transformation and bids for revenue had been kept to a bare minimum this year; these were to be paid for from balances. In order to address the shortfall arising from the ending of Council Tax Benefit the Council had reviewed the levels of discount applied to certain prescribed levels of Council Tax Discounts and these were set out in full within amended recommendations tabled before the Committee.

The Leader thanked Finance Officers and Officers of the Council more generally for their response to the difficult circumstances in which they were working. The Committee was informed that the response to a letter of appeal to the Government over the level of formula funding had been a further small reduction in funding.

Members discussed the various means through which the Council had sought to save money in recent years, including the creation of a single management team, the closure of the REDI Centre and the passing of the Countryside Centre to outside management. It was noted that these changes had enabled the Council to retain a reasonable financial position. However, further incremental cuts were seen as inevitably leading to future threats to frontline services and staffing. The items over which there was most discussion were the provision of free swimming for under 16s and over 60s and pre-9.30am concessionary bus travel. It was suggested that it was imprudent to be pursuing such policies in times of financial hardship, however it was pointed out that these had been funded from savings to the budget agreed for the 2012/13 financial year and had placed no additional stress on the Council's finances.

RECOMMENDED that

to enable Members to approve the budget for 2013/14, 2014/15 & 2015/16:

- 1) the Council determines the level of Council Tax discount to be applied to the prescribed classes of dwellings as defined by the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) for
 - a) Class A [“second homes with planning restriction”] be set at 0% - no discount
 - b) Class B [“second homes without planning restriction”] be set at 0% - no discount
 - c) Class C [vacant dwellings] be set at:
 - a. Where the dwelling appears in the Valuation List for the first time and it has been continuously unoccupied and substantially unfurnished since the effective date of entry into the list:
 - i. for the first 3 months from the date of entry into the list 100%
 - ii. for periods of more than 3 months and for less than 6 months 50%
 - iii. for periods of 6 months or more 0% - no discount
 - b. Where the dwelling has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of less than 6 months 50%
 - c. where the dwelling has been continuously unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 6 months or more 0% - no discount
 - d) Class D [uninhabitable dwellings] be set at 100%

For the purposes of Class C when considering whether a dwelling falls within the class any period of occupation, not exceeding 6 weeks, during which it was not unoccupied and substantially unfurnished shall be disregarded.

- 2) the powers to reduce the Council Tax payable on a case by case basis , as provided by Section 13A 1(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance and Resources and the Revenue Services Manager;
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to implement 2) above;
- 4) the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 ‘Part C’ of the report be approved;

**Executive
Committee**

18th February 2013

- 5) a bid for Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment of £14K be approved and funded from general fund balances detailed in paragraph 3.30;
- 6) a bid for Green Deal up to £10K be approved and funded from general fund balances detailed in paragraph 3.32;
- 7) the use of balances totalling £24,000 be approved; and
- 8) the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix B to the report be approved.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.40 pm

.....
Chair



Overview
& Scrutiny

Redditch Market Task Group

February 2013

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

making
a
difference

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

CONTENTS

	Page Number
Foreword by the Chair	3
Summary of Recommendations	4
Introduction	7
Background Information	7
Chapter 1	9
Chapter 2	14
Chapter 3	16
Chapter 4	19
Chapter 5	22
Conclusion	25
Acknowledgments	26
Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference	27
Appendix 2 - Key Background Papers	30
Appendix 3 – Market Review Survey	31
Appendix 4 – Summary of responses to the Market Review Survey	33

Membership of the Task Group

Councillor Andrew Brazier (Chair)
Councillor Joe Baker
Councillor Alan Mason
Councillor Brenda Quinney
Councillor Derek Taylor

Support Officer

Michael Craggs,
Democratic Services Officer, michael.craggs@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk,
(01527) 64252 ext. 3267

Contact

Further copies of this report, including copies in an alternative format, are available on request from:

Address: Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Email: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

I was genuinely excited at being given the opportunity to chair this review, given the complexity of the task that lay ahead. As a lifetime resident of Redditch, the town centre market and carnival fairs have both been important parts of my life.

The composition of the review group and supporting officers brought together considerable relevant experience. Our starting point involved examining contents and conclusions of numerous reports into local markets from around the Midlands and elsewhere. However, a copy and paste review was never an option! Members felt that only the 2011 report on the Redditch Market produced by retail and tourism expert Ros Sidaway could be considered relevant in highlighting strengths, weaknesses and challenges facing market traders in today's tough retail climate, therefore this became the group's baseline report.

We knew the only way to progress this review was to get out and about amongst both the local market traders and customers, and to visit other markets to see how they were adapting to the rapid pace of change in shopping habits.

With the help of the Council's Communications Team and the Redditch Standard, we investigated local people's views about the market. This involved asking them why they visited the market, or why they did not. We went further by asking local businesses for their views.

This report highlights our findings and impresses on the urgency to actually act upon them before we risk losing our market altogether, an integral part of the identity of our town centre.

On behalf of the group, I would like to thank officers Lyndsey Berry and Ros Sidaway for their time and invaluable experience. Also, from North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration, our 'man on the ground' Roger Munn, Senior Market Operative, and Steve Singleton, Economic Development Manager.

Thanks to all our special guests who have provided evidence throughout the review, and to everyone who participated in the public consultation. Special thanks must go to Michael Craggs for his research and steer and equal endurance of some very cold market visits!

I would of course also like to thank my fellow group members, Councillors Alan Mason, Joe Baker, Brenda Quinney and Derek Taylor, who together brought such a wealth of experience, ideas, and input to the table.

All we need now is someone to press the "Go" button to help us realise the huge potential that the Redditch market has to offer which is our vision.

Councillor Andrew Brazier
Chair, Redditch Market Task Group

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 1 – Strategy and Vision

Recommendation 1

A new strategy for the market be developed which clearly sets out how the market can be revitalised over the next five year period

Recommendation 2

A small core working group consisting of local stakeholders should be created to help develop and implement the new strategy

Recommendation 3

The number of general retail market operating days should be reduced to no more than three days a week. The working group to consult with existing regular traders about which particular days should be retained

Recommendation 4

Consideration is given to holding more speciality markets to take place on non general retail market operating days on a regular basis to help create a niche for the Redditch market. The working group to consider how such markets would be managed within the available resources

Chapter 2 – Operational Issues

Recommendation 5

The market working group considers the feasibility of introducing an on-site Redditch Market information point

Recommendation 6

The market working group considers the feasibility of market customers being provided with an opportunity to pay the traders for goods through their mobile phone and debit and credit card payment facilities

Recommendation 7

Each trader is required to possess a returns policy which should be clearly advertised

Chapter 3 – Engaging with the Local Community

Recommendation 8

The working group facilitates further opportunities for local people, especially students and the unemployed, to obtain business experience through operating stalls in the market place at no charge on a short-term basis, to include the introduction of a new mentoring scheme to offer help and assistance to new traders

Recommendation 9

The working group facilitates further opportunities for local businesses to showcase their goods and services on market stalls

Recommendation 10

The working group facilitates the allocation of free stalls on a rotating basis to local people to promote forthcoming community events and the work of local charities, subject to stall availability

Chapter 4 – Areas for further investigation

Recommendation 11

The market working group explores the possibility of realigning and extending the layout of the market past its current location

Recommendation 12

The market working group explores the feasibility of introducing a covered food court area

Recommendation 13

The market working group explores the suitability of the design of the current market stalls and to consider whether the introduction of alternative stalls would improve the overall visual appearance of the stalls

Recommendation 14

The market working group ensures that any review of signage in the town centre includes adequate reference to the market

Recommendation 15

The market working group works with local bus operators to help further promote the market

Chapter 5 - Other

Recommendation 16

The Council should engage with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association with a view to reaching an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre

Recommendation 17

Redditch Borough Council should join the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and participate in the *Love Your Local Market 2013* event to publicise the changes and new opportunities that would have been introduced at the market

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Redditch Market Task Review which was commissioned in November 2011 by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The review was precipitated by concern that the market was not performing to its full potential. This in turn was having a negative impact to the town centre economy and its general image. Together with Redditch being renowned as a traditional market town, this led the Committee to sanction the review's undertaking. It was agreed that an in-depth investigation should be led by a group of Borough Councillors to help identify the main factors that had been undermining the market's performance and which needed to be rectified. The review group would have the opportunity to visit other markets to learn from best practice and to provide them with fresh ideas about what could be successfully introduced in Redditch.

Following a period of initial evidence gathering, the review was eventually launched in June 2012 under the chairmanship of Councillor Andrew Brazier. The wide remit of the review would allow a thorough assessment of the market to be undertaken to help establish what could be done to revitalise its performance. Some of the review's main objectives included:

- Reviewing ways to promote Redditch Market to potential market stall holders
- Assessing the operational arrangements in place at successful markets located throughout other towns and lessons that could be learnt in Redditch
- Investigating the appropriate geographical location for the market in Redditch

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 'open air' market currently operates as a general retail market on every day of the week apart from Wednesdays and Sundays. Trading hours are between 9.00am and 4.00pm. A 'peoples market', allowing local people to sell their own goods, operates on the last Wednesday of every month from April until September.

The 'open air' market moved to its current location on Market Place and Alcester Street in 2006 for a two year trial period following a Borough Council operational review in consultation with the existing market traders. This followed concern that the previous location behind the Debenhams store in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre was proving unpopular with the local public. The relocation was made permanent after a successful trial period.

Full responsibility for managing and operating the 'open air' market passed from Redditch Borough Council to North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) in April 2012.

Regulations for the market are refreshed on an annual basis. All traders, their employees, representatives or guests must comply with these regulations. Vehicles are only permitted to enter the market area via Peakman Street and Silver Street. Exit is via the Market Walk/Silver Street service road. Traffic order prohibits the movement vehicles in the market area.

Chapter 1 – Strategy and Vision

Recommendation 1	A new strategy for the market be developed which clearly sets out how the market can be revitalised over the next five year period
Financial Implications	Any implications are expected to be met within existing budgets
Resource Implications	Any implications are expected to be met by existing staff resource
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

Redditch Market does not currently possess a clear strategy or business case to explain how the market should function in the coming years. The Group firmly believes that the development of a strategy would help tremendously in determining how the market should operate during the next five years, what it should become, and how this can be achieved.

The Group propose that a recruitment and retention policy should be integral to any new strategy to help ensure that talented traders could be attracted to the town and, crucially, that they would want to stay. The Group feels it is imperative that barriers to entry for prospective traders setting up in Redditch should be removed wherever possible if the market is to thrive once again. Given the strong competition from local markets, traders must be given a real incentive to come to Redditch. Members of the review were made aware during their investigations that markets elsewhere have successfully increased their number of regular traders by offering free trial periods to new traders.

A new strategy should also possess a formal communications and marketing plan to publicise the market and any associated and relevant upcoming town centre events, including street entertainment events and competitions. As part of this, the Group feels that there is considerable potential for the Council to utilise free social media, including *Facebook* and *Twitter*, at little or not cost to promote the market. The Council already enjoys excellent working relations with the local media, as evidenced in a successful public consultation exercise which captured local people's views about the market. The Group therefore feels that there is a real opportunity for both to work together again to promote the market for the good of the town. Finally, the Council's own communications resources should be utilised effectively. As part of this, Members propose that the market should have its own designation section within each edition of the new online *Redditch Matters*.

As briefly mentioned, the Group strongly feels that more town centre entertainment events are needed to help increase footfall in the town centre. This sentiment was echoed by many who participated in the public consultation. Members saw for themselves through their site visits to other markets how street entertainment events can have a very positive effect in terms of adding vibrancy

to a town centre. This can provide a real incentive for people to visit the market and town centre and give a real boost to the local economy. For example, Nuneaton market successfully attracts many families to the town centre through facilitating family friendly entertainment. The Group believes that this can and should be replicated in Redditch. Any strategy should include a calendar of events for each coming year, which would enable sufficient resources to be allocated.

Music could also help to draw people into the market, as suggested by a participant in the public consultation:

“At Christmas having music on draws you in whereas at the moment people just walk past it.”

The Group suggests that the development of a formal communications and marketing plan could be crucial in attracting new customers to the market, especially those from areas outside Redditch. This may involve seeking specialist advice on how best to promote the market.

It is also thought that the development of a new strategy could help to improve quality standards for the market. Due to changes in consumerism and the rise of customer expectations, there is an ever increasing need for markets to look professional. In particular, the development of strategic plans has helped charities to become increasingly professional in recent years, setting out what quality standards should be maintained. The Group therefore feels that any new code of quality for traders would be given more credibility if this was part of an overarching new strategy.

Recommendation 2	A small core working group consisting of local stakeholders should be created to help develop and implement the new strategy
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.
Resource Implications	There are potential resource implications, subject to a renegotiation of the existing service level agreement between Redditch Borough Council and North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration to operate the market, to establish exactly where responsibility lies for taking this forward
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group also feels that for any strategy to be effective, input into its development is needed from the many local stakeholders that are affected by the market, and assert that real leadership is needed to drive the market forward. It is proposed that a core working group, to contain representatives from the Borough Council, Kingfisher Shopping Centre, the Borough’s Town Centre Partnership, market traders, and from North Worcestershire Economic Development and

Regeneration, should be established as the mechanism for ensuring that leadership for the market is provided. It is also proposed that the Chair of this review is involved, at least during the initial stage, to ensure that the recommendations of this report are sufficiently acted upon. This would facilitate regular dialogue between the key stakeholders of the market. Indeed, a leading trader that was consulted by the Group suggested that there needed to be far greater dialogue between key stakeholders than was currently the case.

In addition to developing a new strategy for the market, the Group feels it is essential that the proposed new working group continues to meet on an ongoing basis to ensure that the strategy is adequately implemented and that other important market matters are addressed. In particular, it is suggested that the working group could also monitor the enforcement of quality standards in the market as it was felt that this was another area that needed to be improved.

Furthermore, the Group proposes that a new permanent market working group would be best positioned to take forward the majority of the Group's recommendations that require further investigation.

Recommendation 3	The number of general retail market operating days should be reduced to no more than three days a week. The working group to consult with existing regular traders about which particular days should be retained
Financial Implications	The financial implications will not become clear until the specific days that would continue to hold a general retail market have been identified.
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group believes that it is no longer sustainable for the Redditch Market to continue operating five days a week as a general retail market. During their review, the Group was informed by a number of different sources that markets across the country have suffered in recent years as shopping habits have changed dramatically, as can be seen through the ever-increasing popularity of online shopping. Low price convenience stores have also provided strong competition for the market.

As part of their review, Members visited Nuneaton Market to see for themselves how a market that had been struggling less than a decade ago had had been successfully transformed. Winner of the National Association of British Market Authorities Best Street Market 2008, the market is only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Members heard that this helped to concentrate the quality of the market and ensure that business was not diluted over a longer period. Furthermore, by operating for only two days a week, this helped to introduce a

sense of vibrancy to the market as high footfall levels could be sustained. This encouraged customers to return in future. In particular, Members were made aware that Nuneaton Market has been very successful in attracting visitors from outside of the town.

A number of Redditch traders who were consulted did not feel that there was sufficient footfall to sustain the market in its current form for five days a week. The Group believes that concentrating market trade into a shorter week would help to increase the level of footfall around the market on its operating days, which turn could encourage stall holders at other markets to trial Redditch Market if they feel that there is enough potential trade.

Further work will be required to identify the specific days that could be removed from the weekly schedule. This should involve the market working group carrying out thorough consultation with regular traders to ensure that their views are heard and taken into account before a final decision is reached. Once specific days have been identified, traders should be provided with sufficient notice before these changes are implemented to help mitigate any inconvenience to their working patterns.

Recommendation 4	Consideration is given to holding more speciality markets to take place on non general retail market operating days on a regular basis to help create a niche for the Redditch market. The working group to consider how such markets would be managed within the available resources
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	There are potential resource implications, subject to a renegotiation of the existing service level agreement between Redditch Borough Council and North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration to operate the market, to establish who exactly would be responsible for coordinating the speciality markets
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

It is felt that there is considerable opportunity to use speciality markets to develop a niche for Redditch Market. This would help to distinguish it from other markets and attract more customers who do not live in the town. In particular, the Group suggests that allotment markets could become very popular in the town for both local producers and customers alike, given its close proximity to agricultural land. The Members are also aware that arts and craft markets held in Redditch have proved very popular.

The Group does not propose that Redditch attempts to compete with large and well established speciality markets, such as the German Market in Birmingham, such would be the practical difficulties of holding a similar event for a lengthy period in a confined space. However, the responses to the public consultation clearly indicated that the market needs to offer a wider variety of choice to encourage more customers back. In particular, it was suggested that the facilitation of farmers markets in the town centre would help to attract new customers to the market.

Having visited a farmers market in Kidderminster, the Group is aware that these operate at various locations across the county, typically twice a month at each location. However, concern was raised by a representative from the relevant farmers' market group that it would be difficult for them to work alongside a general retail market. The Group suggests that, should the number of general retail market days be reduced, this would make it easier for speciality markets to operate successfully in Redditch on a regular basis.

The Group is also aware successful speciality markets have helped to improve trade for nearby shops through increased footfall when these have been held elsewhere, offering a real boost to the relevant town centre and local economy. Members of the review believe that these markets would therefore prove very popular for shops in Redditch town centre.

It is proposed that the working group should be tasked with considering how such markets would be managed within the available resources. The resource implications will also be subject to renegotiation of existing Service Level Agreement between Redditch Borough Council and North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration.



Local produce on sale at Kidderminster Farmers Market, Friday 11th January 2013

Chapter 2 – Operational Issues

Recommendation 5	The market working group considers the feasibility of introducing an on-site Redditch Market information point
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group suggests that introducing an on-site information point at the market would help to improve the overall level of customer service. It is proposed that this should act as the main base of the Senior Market Operative, increasing their visibility and presence, thus enabling all customer enquiries to be immediately addressed and resolved efficiently. The Group does not feel that it is sufficiently clear to whom general customer enquiries on the market should be addressed at present. It is thought that this can be particularly problematic for new or occasional customers who are unfamiliar with market staff. The members of the review are aware that this facility previously existed.

Given the potential financial implications involved, it is suggested that the market working group is tasked with exploring the matter further to establish whether this can be realistically introduced in the market.

Recommendation 6	The market working group considers the feasibility of market customers being provided with an opportunity to pay the traders for goods through their mobile phone and debit and credit card payment facilities
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

As the review was being undertaken, a new scheme was unveiled that would enable shoppers in Redditch town centre to redeem coupons and vouchers through a free mobile phone application at the point of sale. The customer would simply be required to tap their phone on a contactless device with simply plug and play installation to redeem their coupon. There would be no need for expensive software upgrades or purchases.

Members believe that Redditch Market can take advantage of the increasing popularity of mobile payments for consumers by looking to utilise this facility. It is thought that this could be effective in attracting more young people to the market, especially when many students from nearby schools and colleges already pass through and around the market on a daily basis, as it is felt that they are arguably more likely to take advantage of this facility.

Members also propose that the market should possess a portable credit and debit card payment facility which would offer customers more options for purchasing their goods from the individual traders. This was picked up by the Group following conversations with market customers. Given the potential financial implications involved, it is recommended that the market working group look at this issue in greater depth.

Recommendation 7	Each trader is required to display a returns policy which should be clearly advertised
Financial Implications	Any implications are expected to be met within existing budgets
Resource Implications	Any implications are expected to be met by existing staff resource
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

During a visit to Redditch Market as part of their review, Members noticed that many if indeed any of the stalls did not appear to display notice of a returns policy for their goods. Concern was raised that this could be deterring customers from purchasing items on the market if they were not entirely confident that they would be able to return an item if it proved to be faulty or unsuitable.

The Group therefore proposes that each trader should be required to clearly display a returns policy on their stall to ensure that market customers have confidence that they have the same rights as in any high street shop and reassure them that they can shop with greater confidence at the market.

Chapter 3 – Engaging with the Local Community

Recommendation 8	The working group facilitates further opportunities for local people, especially students and the unemployed, to obtain business experience through operating stalls in the market place at no charge on a short-term basis, to include the introduction of a new mentoring scheme to offer help and assistance to new traders
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

Members feel that the market should be a place where community entrepreneurship is strongly encouraged. During the review, they were referred to examples in other towns in which the local market has made a considerable contribution to the wider regeneration of an area.

For example, the Acton Town Centre Market Regeneration Project in West London gave local people the unique opportunity to start up new businesses as market traders by providing fifty stalls in the town centre. The project also offered free market trading courses to help those new to market trading gain experience and confidence in successfully running a stall. The project has been very effective in providing self-employment opportunities for unemployed individuals and in attracting more visitors to a reinvigorated town centre.

The Group was also referred to similar examples that had been introduced locally, most notably at Nuneaton Market, whereby the local council worked with *Job Centre Plus* and *Princes Trust* to give young people the opportunity to gain experience in the market place and improve their business skills. This in turn helped to develop their self-confidence and employability. The Council did not charge any of the young people or relevant organisations for rent.

The Group recommends that introducing a similar initiative in Redditch would provide a real helping hand to local students and the unemployed who are in urgent need of credible work experience. In turn this could provide a boost the town centre through increased footfall due to the extra stalls. The short term cost to the Council through offering heavily discounted or zero rent on a short term basis would be significantly outweighed by the potential to skill up the local workforce and through increased footfall and custom to the market and town centre in general.

The Group asserts that this could be a very effective way in which to bring through the next generation of traders into Redditch Market. It is imperative that more young people are encouraged to become traders to help ensure that the market can remain viable for the future.

Recommendation 9	The working group facilitates further opportunities for local businesses to showcase their goods and services on market stalls
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

Related to the previous recommendation, Members were impressed that a number of stalls at other markets were being used effectively as shop windows for local businesses. For a low cost, the stalls were used by local companies to showcase their goods. The traders reported that renting a market stall, even for a short period, was a very effective technique in terms of promoting their business to local shoppers, and in turn generating extra business through increased awareness.

Although there were a few examples of this type of selling at the Redditch Market, the Group feels that there is considerable potential to roll this out at a much wider level through increased promotion and publicity, to the benefit of the town centre and local businesses.

Recommendation 10	The working group facilitates the allocation of free stalls on a rotating basis to local people to promote forthcoming community events and the work of local charities, subject to stall availability
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group also recommends that, as a fundamental part of the local community, the market should be used as a platform to promote community events and the work of local charitable organisations by helping to generate greater awareness about their particular cause.

For example, representatives from a local wildlife sanctuary are regularly invited to appear at Nuneaton Market. This has had a very positive impact in terms of

raising local awareness and support for the sanctuary and in reinforcing the sense that the market is very family friendly through the popular appearance of a few of the animals.

Members therefore propose that similar opportunities should also be provided on a regular basis in Redditch to help raise awareness and support for local charities. This can help to further develop a real sense of community spirit within the town, and reinforce the idea that Redditch is a generous town that supports those that help others. The operation of this at other markets across the country would enable Redditch to learn from best practice.



Animals from Nuneaton & Warwickshire Wildlife Sanctuary at Nuneaton Market, Wednesday 5th September 2012

Chapter 4 – Areas for further investigation

Recommendation 11	The market working group explores the possibility of realigning and extending the layout of the market past its current location
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

During the review, the Group received contrasting feedback from traders and members of the public in terms what constituted most appropriate layout for the market. This is reflected in the responses received to the market survey. Whilst some suggested that the layout of the market should remain compacted to help concentrate footfall in a smaller area, others felt that market should be extended as more stalls were needed. The Group did not therefore receive a clear steer on this issue. Given the time constraints involved with the review, the Group was unable to explore this matter sufficiently to reach a clear conclusion.

It is therefore felt that further work should be undertaken by the market working group into this important issue to establish the suitability of realigning and extended the layout of the market past its current location past Evesham Walk to Church Green West, or further down Alcester Street in a southern direction.

Recommendation 12	The market working group explores the feasibility of introducing a covered food court area
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

Members feel that the introduction of a covered food court area could be a very useful addition to the market both in terms of providing shelter for its customers and in becoming a community space in the centre of the market which would provide further encouragement for people to visit.

During their investigations, Members noted that covered food court areas had been used successfully at other markets as a public space whereby shoppers could relax. The Group feels that, should food markets become a regular feature of the market as proposed within this report, customers will expect sufficient provision of public seating where they can enjoy their food. It is therefore

recommended that the market working group further explores the possibility of introducing this amenity to Redditch and to consider the financial implications involved.

Recommendation 13	The market working group explores the suitability of the design of the current market stalls and to consider whether the introduction of alternative stalls would improve the overall visual appearance of the stalls
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

During their site visits to other markets, Members were impressed with the visual appearance of the stalls that were utilised. In particular, it was felt that colour schemes helped to make the markets more aesthetically appealing compared to the existing green and white colour scheme in Redditch. The market could therefore be made more colourful to help make it more attractive to potential customers.

Members were especially impressed with the pop-up stalls that were used in other markets. Indeed, many of the traders spoken to were very supportive of these stalls due to the ease in which they could be erected and dismantled. Importantly, the pop-up stalls can be removed when the market is not open which increases public space in the town centre. The pop-up stalls also appeared to provide greater cover for customers in inclement weather.

It is felt that the use of pop-up stalls could provide the Senior Market Operative with far greater flexibility in shaping the layout of the market for any given day, depending on the number of stall holders that would have registered.

In contrast, the Group feels that a significant disadvantage of Redditch Market's continued use of permanent stalls is the negative image it can create for the market during periods of poor weather and when trade is significantly down. It is felt that the appearance of empty permanent stalls in any market area is unsightly and provides a poor reflection of the town centre.

The Group therefore proposes that this is another area that can be looked at in greater detail by the market working group. Existing market traders should be consulted for their views before any changes are introduced. The working group could also have a close look at the cost implications of sourcing pop-up stands.

Recommendation 14	The market working group ensures that any review of signage in the town centre includes adequate reference to the market
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group is aware that work is already being undertaken to address signage in the town centre. Financed through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, the *Choose How You Move* initiative in Redditch has funded a project into way-finding in the town centre. The work will involve systematically surveying the Borough's town centre and photographically recording all that is currently available to help pedestrians form a way-finding point of view. As part of this, the project is expected to incorporate a recommendation on establishing a network of information points in the town centre.

The Group believes that signage for the market should be addressed as part of this project, and suggests that the market working group should take a lead in providing the market's perspective. Forty per cent of respondents to the public consultation did not consider that the market is currently well signposted.

Recommendation 15	The market working group works with local bus operators to help further promote the market
Financial Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Resource Implications	Subject further to the work and findings of the market working group
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

The Group believes that there is real potential to work with local bus operators to promote and publicise the market at minimal cost. Given the close proximity of certain bus stops in the town centre to the market, this helps to draw in potential customers into its near vicinity. With this in mind, the Group suggests that the market working group should liaise with local bus operators to explore the possibility of making clear references to the market, including rebranding some services as 'market buses'. It could also involve making marketing material available on these buses to inform passengers about events that were taking place and offers that were available. The Group feels that this represents another opportunity to increase footfall levels in and around the market.

Chapter 5 – Other

Recommendation 16	The Council should engage with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association with a view to reaching an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre
Financial Implications	Any implications are expected to be met within existing budgets
Resource Implications	Any implications are expected to be met by existing staff resource
Legal Implications	It is proposed that that an agreement is reached between Redditch Borough Council and the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association that would establish guidelines for the voluntary regulation of charitable street fundraisers.

One of the major concerns raised by market traders who had been consulted by the Group regarded the operation of charity street fundraisers, often termed 'chuggers', in the very near vicinity of the market. Members heard that the presence of the fundraisers in Alcester Street and Market Place was often having a detrimental impact on trade as this was clearly deterring potential shoppers from entering the market area in the knowledge that they would likely be approached by street fundraisers. Furthermore, the traders reported that, on a number of occasions, the fundraisers had encroached upon the market trading area that was supposedly off-limits. Altogether, this was having a damaging impact on trade, especially as the adjacent Kingfisher Shopping Centre has already imposed a ban on charity fundraisers, offering another incentive for would be shoppers to head elsewhere from the market.

More than fifty local authorities across the country have already developed agreements with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association which restricts the operation of street fundraisers to specific days and/or areas. Members acknowledge that street fundraising is a crucial method for many charities in raising money for very worthwhile causes. The Group does not therefore propose that a bylaw, which would require the approval of the Secretary of State, is developed that would ban street fundraisers from operating in the town centre altogether. However, they feel that a fairer balance can and should be reached that would preserve the various charities ability to raise donations in Redditch town centre yet not at the expense of market trade.

Given that one of the Group's main recommendations is to reduce the number of general retail market operating days to no more than three days a week, the Members feel that this provides sufficient scope for the street fundraisers to operate in the town centre yet outside of the market's trading days. Members therefore propose that the Council replicates the action of many local authorities

elsewhere in establishing an agreement with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association that would restrict street fundraisers from operating in the town centre during market days. This would reassure members of the public that they can freely enter the market area without fear that they might be stopped and asked for their bank details, likely increasing footfall and potential trade for the market as a consequence.

Recommendation 17	Redditch Borough Council should join the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and participate in the <i>Love Your Local Market 2013</i> event to publicise the changes and new opportunities that would have been introduced at the market
Financial Implications	Annual subscription for district councils to the National Association of British Market Authorities is £636+VAT.
Resource Implications	Any implications are expected to be met by existing staff resource
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications

During the course of their investigations, Members were referred to the potential benefits of Redditch Market joining the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA). During a site visit to another market, the Group was informed that the particular market had obtained excellent value for money for its membership. A few of the benefits involved: a free half day consultation and safety check with a leading market expert; excellent networking opportunities; and the opportunity to learn from best practice from other markets across the country.

The Group subsequently contacted a number of other district councils who were already NABMA members, who provided the following separate responses regarding the benefits of their membership:

- “Outstanding value for what opportunity/advice they are able to provide.”
- “Being a NABMA member enables you to explore new initiatives, seek advice, and even tap into Government thinking.”
- “NABMA membership has been an excellent source of advice and support....if I was not a member of NABMA I would have faced the problem of managing a market isolation from common industry practice.”
- “Yes we find NABMA membership important as the organization is very active in promoting market interests at all levels including Government which is vital to the future of market in the UK.”

It is therefore felt that Redditch Market could also obtain sufficient value for money through an annual subscription of £636+VAT per annum given the many benefits it could obtain. Members were informed that North Worcestershire

Economic Development and Regeneration possesses sufficient finance within its budgets to fund this membership.

The Group also consulted other markets about the effectiveness of *Love Your Local Market 2012*, an event facilitated by the NABMA and other market associations to celebrate markets of all types across the country during the summer. The inaugural event was one of retail expert Mary Portas' many recommendations endorsed by Government to revitalise the high street. While the majority of the participating Councils contacted by the Group reported that the impact of the campaign was limited, almost all attributed this to a lack of resources to take full advantage of the event. However, the Group feels that the 2013 event will provide an ideal opportunity for the market to utilise the publicity around markets that is generated at the national level, and to launch many of their proposed new initiatives at the height of the market season during the summer. It would also represent an ideal opportunity to work with the local media to refer potential shoppers to the fresh changes, encouraging them to shop at the market once again and also to promote the opportunities involved with stall trading to local people.

CONCLUSION

Despite very challenging economic circumstances and changes in consumerism, examples across the country confirm that markets can still be very successful and can continue to play a vital contribution in creating lively and vibrant town centres and provide a real boost to local economies. Furthermore, markets can be a place to upskill the local workforce, improve employability, and provide much needed support to many worthwhile causes.

The Group firmly believes that Redditch Market can enjoy a prosperous future if the recommendations of this report are approved, and suggest that the implementation of these proposals will not only help the market to respond effectively to current challenges, but will also put the market on a sure footing in the long term to the benefit of the local community. In particular, the Group is confident that the creation of a new strategy for the market can provide a clear framework for its future success, and that, in establishing a core working group, this framework can be effectively implemented. The working group will also ensure that real leadership is provided by bringing key stakeholders together to address common concerns on a regular basis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

- Councillor John Haynes, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Allan Ottey, Town Centres Manager, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Anne Startin, Town Centres Support Officer, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Henry Wormington, Coordinator, Worcestershire Farmers Market Group
- Ken Williams, General Manager, Kingfisher Shopping Centre
- Martin Macwhinnie, Regional Operations Manager, Regional and General
- Rosemary Sidaway, Director, Redditch Town Centre Partnership
- Lyndsey Berry, Town Centre Coordinator, Redditch Town Centre Partnership
- Steve Singleton, Economic Development Manager, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration
- Roger Munn, Senior Market Operative, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration
- Anne Marie Darroch, Communications Manager, Redditch Borough Council

Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

Note: The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation	Councillor Brenda Quinney	Date of referral	18/10/11
Proposed topic title	Redditch Market Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	Redditch Borough Council objectives – Enterprising Communities and Well Managed Organisation.		
Background to the issue	<p>The market in Redditch is a subject of particular interest to many councillors. The market is a prominent feature in the town centre and has the potential to make an important contribution to the local economy. However, I am concerned that like other markets across the country footfall within the market has fallen in recent years. I feel that improvements could be made to the operation of the market in order to attract more custom and ensure that it is a market suitable for the twenty-first century.</p> <p>I understand that the Council and partner organisations have recognised that there is a need to address problems with the market. In particular, the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit is investigating this issue. Any review of the Redditch Market would need to take into account the Unit's proposals for the future of the market. However, I believe that a scrutiny exercise could help the Unit through a detailed review of Redditch Market.</p> <p>At the beginning of the year I was involved in the Promoting Redditch Task and Finish Review. As part of this review Members undertook a partial assessment</p>		

	<p>of Redditch Market. One of the group's final recommendations, which was approved by the Executive Committee, was that Redditch market should be developed and should provide opportunities for young entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has not yet monitored action taken in response to this recommendation. I would, therefore, suggest that a useful starting point for this review would be to assess what action, if any has been taken to date in response to the Task and Finish Group's proposals.</p>
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To assess the current operational and management arrangements for Redditch market: This should involve: interviewing relevant Council Officers involved in managing the market. 2) To investigate the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit's proposals for Redditch Market. This could involve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) interviewing a representative from the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit; and b) analysing relevant sections of the Redditch Town Centre Strategy. 3) To scrutinise the Council's strategy for Redditch Market. 4) To identify any existing problems with Redditch Market. 5) To investigate the appropriate geographical location for the market in Redditch. 6) To assess operational arrangements in place at successful markets located throughout other towns and lessons that could be learned in Redditch. This could involve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) reviewing the content of scrutiny reports produced by other local authorities about their markets; and

	<p>b) interviewing representatives from other local authorities.</p> <p>7) To review ways to promote Redditch Market to potential market stall holders.</p> <p>8) To identify the financial implications of any actions proposed by the Task Group.</p> <p>(Throughout the review the Task Group would be expected to consult with market traders).</p>
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)</p>	<p>I am aware that there is currently a Council consultation regarding a proposed new Street Trading Policy for Redditch. The terms and conditions of this policy may have implications for the future operation of Redditch Market. Therefore, I do not believe that this review should be launched until after the consultation has finished on 30th November.</p> <p>I believe that this review could be completed fairly quickly. However, I am aware that I am proposing a number of objectives. In addition, the timing of the review would coincide with busy periods during the year when access to Members and Officers could prove difficult, particularly during Christmas and the local Council elections. Therefore I am suggesting that the review should take eight months and aim to be completed by July 2012.</p>

Please return this form to: Jess Bayley, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Email: jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk

KEY BACKGROUND PAPERS

- City Living Commission Report: The Value of City Markets, Stoke City Council (2005)
- Full collated list of responses to the market survey
- Lockmeadow Market Review, Maidstone Borough Council (2008)
- London's Street Markets – Update Report, London Assembly (2009)
- Redditch 'Open Air' Market – Market Regulations (2012/13), Redditch Borough Council
- Review of Market Provision in Hackney, Hackney Council (2006)
- Scrutiny Review of the Future of the Markets, Pendle Borough Council (2010)
- The Traveller Stalls, Barry Evans (2010)
- Widnes Market – An example of a market that has turned its fortunes around, from www.localmarkets.org.uk
- Working Paper 1 – Redditch Open-Air Market Mapping and Gapping Study, Rockford Consulting (2011)

WEBSITES

www.nabma.com

www.loveyourlocalmarket.org.uk

**Redditch Market
Councillors Review**

A group of Councillors from Redditch Borough Council are undertaking an investigation of the Redditch Market and are asking for feedback from local residents about what can be done to improve it. The Councillors would therefore be very interested to receive your own views which to inform the review which is due to be completed in February 2013.

1) Do you currently visit the market? (If yes, why? If no, why not?)

2) What is your overall impression of the market?

3) What do you think of the selection of stalls at the market?

4) Do you consider the market to be well sign posted? (Please circle one answer only)

Yes No

5) Do you have any ideas for how the market could be improved?

6) What would encourage you to shop more at the market?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The Councillors involved in this review do not have any decision making powers. However, based on the evidence they gather during this review they can make recommendations to local decision makers.

Return Address: Please return completed copies of this questionnaire by Wednesday 9th January 2013 to:

Michael Craggs, Democratic Services Officer,
Redditch Borough Council, Redditch Town Hall,
Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH.
Email: michael.craggs@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Fax: (01527) 65216



Responses to the survey

1. Do you visit the market? (if yes/no then why/why not?)

'Yes' – 37 responses 'No' – 18 responses

Selected 'Yes' responses include:

- I use the fruit and veg stall and the meat man that's about it. I think with the phone, pound shops and Primark in town people shop there rather than going outside which is a shame I am not sure that the market traders and compete with these shops on cost and quality.
- So things are cheaper than the shops I can only get certain things on the market
- But not very often - easier to buy foodstuffs in supermarket than on market. Would probably visit more often if there were more 'niche' type goods for sale such as specialist delicatessen / fishmongers etc

Selected 'No' responses include:

- There is nothing in the market that ever appeals to me. Everything on the market stalls can be purchased in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.
- The items sold on the market are available in the shops within the town centre at the same prices, and there is nothing different on the market to the shops.

2. What is your overall impression of the market?

Selected responses include:

- The stalls I bought from were fine. I wouldn't buy clothes or have a need for anything else. I buy from people and if the people aren't friendly I wouldn't return. Also I am so use to paying by debit card, it can be difficult sometimes to make sure I keep within the small amount of money I carry with me.
- Empty, unloved, with generally no useful, niche or quirky stalls. Fridays are a little better with the fish stall, generally quite poor.
- I don't buy much from the market, and I don't visit weekly/often. I feel that there isn't the kind of selection of stalls to suit me. Generally I'm disappointed with the Redditch market, and possibly the town centre more generally. I find it easy to not have a reason to visit Redditch market / Redditch town centre, unless it's to go to the Library. The Kingfisher Centre isn't very inspiring. I don't believe in over-consumption. I find the Market easy to find because I have grown up in Redditch. It has a fairly central location and needs to use that to its advantage. Generally people are friendly.

3. What do you think of the selection of stalls at the market?

Selected responses include:

- Could do with more variety.
- Fridays has a better selection of stalls but some days very poor.

- Ok, but as above (too many stalls selling the same kind of goods needs more interest and variety of goods for sale) / different kind of stalls
- I do not think there is much of a selection.
- Varies from day to day but could generally be better

4. Do you consider the market to be well signposted?

Yes - 32 No – 22

5. Do you have any ideas for how the market could be improved?

Selected responses include:

- Better variety of stalls, there is often a special market selling some different merchandise but I'm sure there must be people willing to do a regular visit to the normal market selling something different. Some entertainment or some music
- Stalls that sold farmers' market style produce would be more appealing than the current offer at the market.
- Better directions and wider variety of stalls
- Need more specialist days such as Farmer's Markets; themed days etc.
- Increase stalls. Monitor quality of stalls. Local produce
- I think the market should be more compact, undercover and have more variety.
- Loyalty schemes. Local currency. Monthly Farmers' Markets. More fresh food vendors.
- Pop-up stalls to help young entrepreneurs have some space. Encourage a food co-operative to set-up with a stall. Allow community groups & charities to have reduced stall rents. Generally make some noise about it, create more of a culture and buzz for Redditch market. Give people a reason to go there. Democratise some of the public consultations onto a stall - Comment on the Local plan at the Market! Engage people. Make it fun. I used to remember the market being excellent - out the back of Woolies! See what other market towns centres do.

6. What would encourage you to shop at the market more often?

Selected responses include:

- Sorry to say very little. I can get all I need in one shop and pay more conveniently with a card at a supermarket. Times have moved on and goods aren't any cheaper on a market and certainly not enough to make a special trip for a couple of items. Maybe if I knew I was supporting someone that lived locally to make a living from a sustainability point of view, but this would only be relevant if I continued to work in the Town Centre. But for me with a young family it has to be convenience.
- Stalls that sold farmers' market style produce would be more appealing than the current offer at the market. I do question, however, whether a market is really needed, at least in the town centre, any longer. The Kingfisher Shopping Centre provides everything that shoppers need in town apart from restaurants. A market might attract more customers in one of the district centres, where the competition is more limited. However, as the footfall in the district centres is also falling that seems unlikely.
- Fix all the finger posts in and around the Town Centre - many have arms pointing in wrong directions.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

REDDITCH GROWTH AND LOCAL PLAN NO.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Greg Chance, Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development & Transport
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning & Regeneration
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Yes
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Both the Housing Growth consultation and the Local Plan No.4 came to Full Council on 18th February, with only Local Plan No.4 being voted in favour of consultation. A letter has been sent from Bromsgrove District Council to Redditch Borough Council dated 21st February (Appendix 4) urging Redditch Borough Council to reconsider the Housing Growth consultation, therefore this report seeks public consultation on both the Housing Growth consultation and Local Plan No.4 concurrently.
- 1.2 Bromsgrove District Council has already approved the Housing Growth consultation at their Council meeting of 20th February. To fulfil the Council's obligations under the duty to cooperate, this report now seeks a reconsideration of the approval for public consultation to be carried out between 1st April 2013 the 13th May 2013 on proposed Housing Growth alongside a deferred consultation for Local Plan No.4. The consultation on Housing Growth would be held jointly by Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council. Local Plan No.4 consultation would be held by Redditch Borough Council.
- 1.3 The Housing Growth consultation leaflet (Appendix 1) presents the two preferred sites adjacent to Redditch Borough but within Bromsgrove District, to meet the objectively assessed development needs of Redditch until 2030. It is recommended that the focus of the consultation should not change from the approach of highlighting the preferred option. The Councils must demonstrate at the examinations that a preferred option has been selected, the reasons why it's selected and that the preferred option has been consulted upon.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) **the consultation document, Housing Growth Consultation (Appendix 1) and the supporting background evidence report (Appendix 2) and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 3) are approved for public consultation by Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council between 1st April 2013 and 13th May 2013; and**
- 2) **the Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal are approved for public consultation at a deferred date to align with the Housing Growth consultation which is between 1st April 2013 and 13th May 2013.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The final stage costs of preparing and taking through examination the Redditch Local Plan No.4, which will include cross boundary housing policies, will be partly met through reserve budgets and salary savings for 2013/14 and will be partly subject to separate budget bids for 2014/2015; however costs associated with consultation processes can be covered by existing Development Plans budgets.

Legal Implications

Recommendation 1 only:

- 3.2 A recommendation from the Executive Committee on 12 February 2013 relating to the Redditch Growth Consultation was not carried by Full Council on 18 February 2013. As referred to elsewhere in the Report, Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 introduces the "Duty to Co-operate". This is a legal duty which requires local authorities to co-operate with each other in relation to planning for sustainable development, in particular the preparation of development plan documents relating to a strategic matter.
- 3.3 Members are advised that on the 20th February 2013 at the meeting of its Full Council Bromsgrove District Council, in accordance with its Duty to Co-operate under the Localism Act 2011, approved the Housing Growth Consultation document and agreed to public consultation on cross border growth on this basis.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

- 3.4 Members are therefore being asked to consider the contents of the letter from Bromsgrove District Council in the context of the Redditch Growth Consultation document the supporting background evidence report and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and decide what action if any needs to be taken.
- 3.5 For the purposes of this report all of the documentation is substantially the same as recommended to Council on 18 February 2013 save for the letter from Bromsgrove District Council and the proposed consultation dates. As this matter has already been considered by the Council within the last 6 months, were members minded to make a recommendation to Full Council the effect of which would be to rescind the previous decision, then the Constitution requires (Part 4 Paragraph 15) that a Motion, to that effect, be signed by at least 7 members of the Council.

For Recommendation 2 only:

- 3.6 A recommendation from the Executive Committee on 12 February 2013 relating to consultation on the Redditch Local Plan No4 was carried by Full Council on 18 February 2013. This recommendation is for the consultation on the Local Plan No4 and on the Redditch Growth Consultation document to be concurrent because it would not be meaningful for the Local Plan consultation to take place without the additional consultation on the Redditch Growth document, which is an integral part of the Local Plan No4 ,as to how the remainder of Redditch's growth needs are to be met.

For recommendations 1 and 2:

- 3.7 The Local Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town & Country Planning Act 2004 (as amended 2008). The preparation work has also included a combined Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) to consider the environmental, social and economic impact of the Plans Vision, Objectives and Policies or the growth options. These assessments consider whether the chosen sites are sustainable and where any potential impacts are identified, how or if they can be mitigated against. A separate SA for the housing growth consultation is attached at Appendix 3.
- 3.8 The housing growth consultation is essential for the two Councils to be able to progress their Local and District Plans. The 'Duty to Co-operate' is a legal obligation, introduced by the Localism Act (2011) which requires Local Authorities to co-operate with each other in relation to planning for sustainable development, in particular the

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

preparation of development plan documents relating to a strategic matter.

- 3.9 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 first introduced the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to produce Local Development Framework. Additional guidance was issued in PPS12 Local Development Frameworks. This was then superseded in 2008 by PPS12: Local Spatial Planning. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now supersedes all of the previous guidance. The NPPF requires that proposed development should be assessed against its degree of conflict with the Local Plan. With numerous planning applications coming forward, it is therefore highly desirable that Local Planning Authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place as soon as possible.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 In response to concerns raised at Redditch Borough's Full Council meeting (18 February 2013) about not consulting on alternative options, it should be noted that the background report (Appendix 2) analyses all options. This document will be available during the consultation period and respondents are able to comment on any of the analysis associated with any site. The consultation undertaken in 2010 between the two Councils presented broad areas for development. It would not be appropriate to repeat this kind of consultation again if the Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council are to progress their Local Plans in a timely way.
- 3.11 Further consultation is required for Redditch Local Plan No.4 and this needs to be undertaken alongside Redditch Cross Boundary growth because the Local Plan does not make sense without the additional consultation to suggest how the remainder of Redditch's growth needs are to be met.
- 3.12 The NPPF requires that Councils use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing. That need for Redditch's housing has been established through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Main Report and Strategic Housing Market Assessment Redditch Overview (2012).
- 3.13 The SHMA was prepared to assess Worcestershire housing need for the six separate authorities. This SHMA suggested that Redditch should provide between 5,120 and 8,620 dwellings. It also suggested that further work be undertaken to provide specific requirements. This work was completed and it concludes that the housing requirement for Redditch from 2011 to 2030 is 6,380 dwellings.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

- 3.14 Each Local Authority is required to produce a document which sets out land that is available for housing called the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Within Redditch the SHLAA demonstrates that there is capacity to accommodate around 3,000 dwellings within its own boundaries. This leaves 3,400 dwellings to be found cross-boundary. The SHLAA also sets out when it is likely that these sites will come forward for development. Based on information received from developers and landowners it is likely that some of these sites are not capable of being developed immediately and therefore cannot contribute to the five year supply of housing land.
- 3.15 A five year housing land supply is required by each local authority to demonstrate they can deliver housing within their area. Based on the housing requirement being 6,380 dwellings (as proposed by the SHMA) Redditch cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply using land within its own boundaries only. Therefore land is needed within Bromsgrove to ensure Redditch can deliver housing immediately. In order to ensure that developments do not occur in unsustainable and inappropriate locations both authorities need to identify sites in Bromsgrove to accommodate the cross-boundary housing requirements in the most appropriate and sustainable locations.
- 3.16 Officers are seeking to implement housing delivery within Redditch Borough on sites which don't currently contribute towards the five year housing land supply. The focus on maximising delivery of housing within Redditch boundaries is a consistent approach and will continue to be recommended.
- 3.17 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Panel Report was released in 2009 and set out clearly that Redditch Borough does not have sufficient development land within its boundary to meet locally generated needs. The report proposed a housing requirement of 7,000 dwellings to meet Redditch need and concluded that provision should be made in Redditch to accommodate 4,000 dwellings. Thus, 3,000 dwellings should be accommodated in Bromsgrove District. The Report supported the notion to retain flexibility as to where the provision should be made on the edge of Redditch, to be locally determined through the authorities working together. There has been an indication that the RSS will be revoked (as detailed in the Localism Act) however at present the RSS is still a material planning consideration when preparing Local Plans. In anticipation of the RSS being revoked, Redditch and Bromsgrove (along with other Worcestershire Districts) commissioned the SHMA as the local evidence to determine the appropriate level of housing for the authorities.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

- 3.18 Appendix 2 (supporting background evidence report) was completed in house by officers of both Bromsgrove and Redditch. This report follows consultation in 2010 on housing growth held jointly by the two Councils, where broad location options for potential growth were identified. Since then no preferred area for growth has been selected, until now. The background evidence document is required to identify the most sustainable growth location(s) with more detailed evidence than the Councils have previously had.
- 3.19 Early in the production of the document, the Councils reviewed any relevant policy documentation, then agreed on some common strategic objectives which are consistent with the two Council's emerging Plan's objectives. Then a set of site assessment principles were developed to drive the assessment process as a means of evaluating all the options for growth. A number of site visits were undertaken throughout the assessment process.
- 3.20 The broad site appraisal stage assesses twenty of the potential sites around Redditch against the site assessment principles. Sites were either discounted or taken forward (to focussed site appraisal) for further assessment and this process is clearly documented in Chapter 6.
- 3.21 Five areas were taken forward for focussed site appraisal. The outcome was that area 4 at Foxlydiate and area 6 at Brockhill East were determined at this stage to be the preferred option.
- 3.22 The background report explains in detail the process employed to assess each area's performance against site assessment criteria. In order to reach the recommendation on the preferred sites all the planning issues must be considered in order to reach a conclusion. All of the areas are in the Green Belt and all of the areas have constraints and strengths. The preferred option is based upon the areas which could most sustainably deliver the required amount of development and associated infrastructure with the least negative impacts. It must be stressed that the proposal has been selected on the basis of information that is currently available and this may alter as a result of the consultation process or as new evidence emerges alongside consideration of the alternative sites.
- 3.23 As can be seen from the conclusions for each focussed site appraisal area in the focussed site appraisal stage it is apparent that some areas perform better than others when tested against the varied assessment criteria. Clearly there are competing issues which are more difficult to resolve for some sites than for others. Some selected examples of issues are discussed below although it must be stressed that these

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

alone do not demonstrate why a site has or hasn't been considered to be the preferred option.

- 3.24 The development of area 4 (site 1 on the consultation leaflet) has the advantage of improving facilities and services in the wider Webheath area. Whilst lying furthest from the Town Centre of all the areas it offers the opportunity to extend existing bus services and by the provision of facilities on site has the potential to reduce the need to travel. Whilst it does not have overall strong defensible Green Belt boundaries on all sides the effects of sprawl, coalescence and encroachment can be mitigated more successfully than some other site options.
- 3.25 It could be argued that areas 4 and 5 perform best in transport terms as their development is likely to have the added benefit of contributing towards the regeneration of both Town Centres. However this must be weighed against the potential negative impact on the setting of Hewell Grange grade II* listed registered historic park and garden (in relation to area 5 only) which is difficult to mitigate. Furthermore in terms of public transport it would be possible to improve/extend existing public transport services serving areas 4 and 5 whereas area 8 would need new bespoke public transport service which is likely to be very costly and undesirable for bus operators to run until development is completed many years in the future.
- 3.26 Area 6 (Site 2 in the consultation leaflet) has the potential to integrate well into the existing urban fabric of Redditch. It has the easiest access of all the areas to Redditch Town Centre and the facilities offered there including a range of retail services and the train/bus station providing access to the wider area. It is well served by existing bus routes and has employment close by. The impact on the highway network is more likely to lead to an even distribution throughout the strategic and local road networks. A strong defensible Green Belt boundary is attainable. There are no SSSI's or SWS's on this site and the impact on trees and woodland would be minimal. Whilst the site lies in an area of high landscape sensitivity it is considered that by avoidance of development on high slopes new housing can be contained within the topography.
- 3.27 All areas are of high landscape sensitivity apart from area 8 which has medium sensitivity. However as area 8 is an exposed site with no natural or physical boundaries which allow for containment, this exposed location further creates difficulties with integration into the existing built form of Redditch. It is considered development here could represent more of a visual intrusion, and the creation of an unsustainable isolated community on the periphery of the town. It is also considered development at area 8 would further exacerbate the unsustainable north /south commuting patterns between Redditch and Birmingham.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

- 3.28 There are some areas which have obviously less constraints than others, for instance area 6. However, the estimated capacity of area 6 alone (672 dwellings) is insufficient to meet the level of new development required. As a result it is considered that site 4 would also be required, this site has an estimated capacity of 2830 dwellings which in total would give an overall development capacity of around 3502 dwellings under this proposal.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.29 To engage with customers effectively a number of consultation events will need to be re-arranged including drop in sessions in locations such as a vacant Kingfisher Shopping Centre unit, Foxlydiat Arms public house, Bentley Village Hall and Alvechurch Village Hall.
- 3.30 A new Health Impact Assessment has been prepared in collaboration with Hillary Sharpe, a Consultant in Public Health from Worcestershire NHS. This demonstrates how the Local Plan's key themes and the policies within them help to promote health and well-being in Redditch Borough.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 In accordance with both authorities previously approved Local Development Schemes the next stage of the Local/District Plan, subject to amendments following consultation, is Pre-Submission Local/District Plan due August 2013. It could be that, given the deferral from February's Executive Committee and Full Council, this milestone of August may not be achieved. Officers will advise in a subsequent report if the Local Development Scheme needs to be amended but a short slippage may be justified.
- 4.2 The Local/District Plans are due to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in November/December 2013 but, again, this could be subject to change. A formal Examination in Public will be held, including possible joint hearing sessions for Redditch growth matters. If the Local/District Plans are found sound by the Planning Inspector, the Plans can be adopted by the two Councils.
- 4.3 There is a risk that the plans of the neighbouring authorities such as Birmingham or Stratford on Avon District are not found sound at examination for a variety of reasons. This could risk the soundness of the Redditch Local Plan or the Bromsgrove District Plan. Also neighbouring authorities could object to any of the proposals within the Redditch or Bromsgrove plans which could cause delay or issues of compliance with the duty to cooperate.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

- 4.4 Similarly, there is a risk that the Redditch or Bromsgrove Plans are found to be unsound at Examination in Public. This can be mitigated against to some extent by ensuring that Council's case is clearly articulated through the public consultation stages, and that evidence supports the proposals.
- 4.5 There is always a risk that residents, stakeholders and/or developers will not support the consultation or the findings of the housing growth consultation. This can be mitigated against to some extent by ensuring adequate explanation and justification for the proposals are provided at the public consultation stage and in the response report following consultation.
- 4.6 It should be noted that if members decide to not recommend the consultation on the Housing Growth or on the Local Plan, that the Borough Council is risking non-compliance with its Statutory duty under the Localism Act to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on this main strategic issue. The Council would also not be fulfilling its statutory duty to prepare a Plan for the area as prescribed by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. If the Borough Council allow Bromsgrove to go alone to consultation, this Council will have no right to be involved in the reviewing of representations received and this undermines future decision making on these issues.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Housing Growth consultation document (attached)
Appendix 2 - Housing Growth consultation background report (available via website and to Members in Group Rooms)
Appendix 3 - Housing Growth consultation draft Sustainability Appraisal (available via website and to Members in Group Rooms)
Appendix 4 - Letter from Bromsgrove District Council to Redditch Borough Council (attached)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Review of the A435 ADR and adjoining lands (2013)
Worcestershire County Council Redditch Development Sites - Highway Impact and Accessibility Modelling Report (May 2011)
Worcestershire County Council Redditch Local Plan – Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013)
Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 and Water Cycle Strategy update (2012)
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Main Report (Feb 2012)

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Appendix 4 – Redditch SHMA
Overview Report (Feb 2012)
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Annex – Redditch Updated
Household Projections (May 2012)
Employment Land Review – Partial Update (November 2012)
Redditch Town Centre Retail and Office Needs Assessments – Partial
Updates (October 2012)
Local Development Scheme (2012 – 2015)
Redditch Green Belt release to meet Growth Needs (2013)
Five Year Land Supply Refresh (February 2013)
Infrastructure Delivery Plan Summary Table and Report (2013)

All supporting technical evidence for the Housing Growth consultation
will be available on a specific website at
www.bromsgroveandredditchplanning.co.uk

AUTHOR OF REPORT

RBC

Name: Emma Baker

Email: emma.baker@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Tel.: Ext 3376



Our ref: RH/WR

21st February 2013

Councillor B. Hartnett
Leader Redditch Borough Council
Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
B98 8AH

From the Office of the Leader of the Council

The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove
Worcestershire B60 1AA

Telephone: (01527) 881400

Textphone: (01527) 881291

Fax: (01527) 881212

DX: 17279 Bromsgrove

Dear Councillor Hartnett

I write concerning the duty to cooperate agreement reached between the Councils last summer, and the subsequent events that took place at the respective Council meetings this week.

In response to the decision taken by Redditch Borough Council on the 18th February not to endorse the housing growth material for public consultation, Bromsgrove District Council considered a revised recommendation at its Council meeting on the 20th February.

Firstly, I can confirm that Council approved the Housing Growth Consultation document and decided to proceed with public consultation on Sites 1 and 2.

Secondly, Members considered the position of the two Councils under the duty to co-operate imposed by the Localism Act, and agreed that Redditch Borough Council should be asked to re-consider its position regarding the public consultation on cross border growth as a matter of urgency.

It is the view of Bromsgrove District Council that the evidence prepared by a joint team of planning officers, and which supports the development areas identified in the consultation material, is robust, and in accordance with the decisions taken by the Bromsgrove Cabinet and the Redditch Executive does not warrant any further amendments before consultation with the public.

To that effect, Bromsgrove District Council has resolved to delay the publication of the consultation in order to give sufficient time for Redditch Borough Council to respond to this request. It is still the wish of Bromsgrove District Council to carry out a joint consultation with Redditch as we firmly believe this is in the best interests of the residents in our respective authorities, and also in accordance with the duty to cooperate and the best principles of successful plan making.

Continued.....

2

We hope that a positive response to this request will be forthcoming. However, in the event that Redditch Borough Council does not endorse the information for public consultation it is the intention of Bromsgrove District Council to publish this material on 1st April for a 6 week consultation period.

We look forward to your response and continued commitment to work together to achieve sound sustainable development plans for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Roger Hollingworth
Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

**VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANT PROGRAMME 2013/14 -
FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Portfolio Holder Community Leadership & Partnership including Voluntary Sector
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes.
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Acting Head of Community Services.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Ward Councillor Consulted	(Grants Panel).
Key Decision Yes	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2013 - 2014. The total budget available for grants is £245,000 of which £15,000 has been allocated to the Stronger Communities Grants Programme. 42 applications totalling £313,864 have been received.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Section 3.6 of this report.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The total grant funding budget for 2013/14 is £245,000. In September 2012, Executive Committee and Council approved that £15,000 of this be allocated to the Stronger Communities grants pot.
- 3.2 The total funding being recommended in this document is £229,915.
- 3.3 The £85 remaining will be initially placed in the first round of the Stronger Communities grant programme with any surplus rolling over to subsequent rounds.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****12th March 2013**

- 3.4 The recommended funding detailed in this report will support a total of 22 projects by 20 Organisations. Two organisations received grant funding to deliver 2 separate projects each. Although being delivered by the same organisation, these applications were scored on their own merits and are being delivered as stand alone projects.
- 3.5 The Grants Panel has recommended a total of £229,915.
- 3.6 Following the scoring of the applications the Grants Panel recommend the grants to be awarded as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 In line with the policy the remaining un-allocated £85 has been transferred into the Stronger Communities giving element which encourages localised current project delivery by Local Community groups. This is in addition to the £15,000 allocated to this theme by Executive Committee on 18th September 2012. This has set the 3 rounds of Stronger Communities grant pots at £5,000 each.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 3.9 There is a further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 Applications for grant funding were required to address the themes recommended by the Executive Committee on 18th September 2012 and approved by the full Council on 15th October 2012. These are:-
- 1) Independent Communities
 - 2) Community Development
 - 3) Thriving Communities
 - 4) Community Welfare
 - 5) Stronger Communities.
- 3.11 Under the Stronger Communities theme, authority was delegated to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Grants Panel, to

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

agree the allocation of community grants under the 'Stronger Communities' theme.

- 3.12 The Grants Panel met on 11th and 13th February 2013 to consider and score the applications.
- 3.13 The Grants Panel agreed that in the event of two or more applications achieving the same score, Section 3 (Added value of the Project) of the scoring matrix would be the deciding factor in recommending grant funding.
- 3.14 The Council received 42 grant applications requesting a total of £313,864. (See Appendix 1 for a full list of all applicants).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.15 By supporting the VCS organisations to successfully identify alternative / match funding the Council can help mitigate total reliance on the grant programme for many VCS organisations allowing them to explore other funding streams. This will allow Redditch Borough Council's grants programme to move forward year on year.
- 3.16 The Grants process facilitates engagement with and support for more marginalised people and promotes equality and diversity issues within the local authority.
- 3.17 Value can be added to the local VCS by ensuring transparency of grant-giving practices thus promoting fairness and diversity.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk to the community has been minimised via grants being paid quarterly to organisations and through the submission of robust monitoring reports.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Application list for grants for 2013 – 14.

Appendix 2: List for grants for 2013 – 14 recommended for approval.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Redditch Borough Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

7. KEY

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Donna Hancox, Voluntary Sector Grants Co-ordinator
E Mail: donna.hancox@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext: 3015.

Redditch Borough Council - 2013/14 Grant Applicants

Independent Communities- 80k Grant

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Citizens Advice Bureau	£80,000.00	Redditch CAB Holistic Independent Debt Advice Service	55	1	£80,000.00
Total for theme	£80,000.00				£80,000.00

Independent Communities - 10k Grant - Pot = 30k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Community First	£10,000.00	Community Buildings Development & Support	31	3 (Added Value)	£10,000.00
Where Next	£10,000.00	Where Next	53	1	£10,000.00
NewStarts	£10,000.00	Skills for a New Start	31	4	N/R
Sandycroft	£10,000.00	Sandycroft Advice Services	53	1	£10,000.00
Total for theme	£40,000.00				£30,000.00

Independent Communities 25k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Two Pennies	£25,000.00	Two Pennies Serving Redditch	Two Pennies Serving Redditch	59	1
Total for theme	£25,000.00				£25,000.00

Community Development Grant 40k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Redditch Play Council	£40,000.00	Redditch Play Council	57	1	£40,000.00
Redditch YMCA	£11,725.00	Winyates Holiday Club	47	2	N/R
Total for theme	£51,725.00				£40,000.00

Community Development 3k - Pot = 15k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
YMCA	£2,790.00	Roman Way Breakfast Club	47	4	£2,790.00
JestaMinute	£2,904.00	Town Twinning - the Next Generation	24		N/R
Inspire Community Training	£3,000.00	Winyates Work Club	47	4	£3,000.00
NewStarts	£3,000.00	Skills for a New Start	0	Not Scored	N/R
British Asian womens Group	£3,000.00	The Cultural Learning Project	55	1	£3,000.00
Redditch History Society	£2,500.00	Remembering Lost Redditch	46	6	£2,500.00
Where Next	£3,000.00	Where Next Hub	55	1	£3,000.00
RSVP	£700.00	RSVP Redditch	51	3	£700.00
Total for theme	£20,894.00				£14,990.00

Welfare 4k - Pot = 20k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Sandycroft	£4,000.00	Pakistani Womens Mental Halth Project	39	9	N/R
Sandycroft	£4,000.00	Sandycroft Counselling Service	41	7	N/R
IDC	£4,000.00	Get A Head -	55	3	£4,000.00
Relate	£4,000.00	Counselling Service	0	Not Scored	N/R
IDC	£4,000.00	Friday Designers get Sewing	59	1	£4,000.00
Community First	£3,952.00	Mental Health First Aid	0	Not Scored	N/R
Onside	£1,431.00	Moodmaster	37	10	N/R
Touchstones Support CIC	£4,000.00	Supporting Bereaved Children	55	3	£4,000.00
The Ditch	£4,000.00	Ditch Sustain	0		N/R
Citizens Advice Bureau	£4,000.00	CAB Mental Health Advice Service	19	11	N/R
Inspire Community Training	£4,000.00	Visual Mapping for Health & Wellbeing	53	5	£4,000.00
JestaMinute	£4,000.00	Whats your prejudice	41	7	N/R
Worcesterhire Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre	£4,000.00	Independent Sexual Advice Advisor	49	6	N/R
Yum Tum Club	£4,000.00	Power Bar Challenge	59	1	£4,000.00
Total for theme	£53,383.00				£20,000.00

Thriving 4k - Pot = 20k					
Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Omega Therapy	£4,000.00	Social Approaches	14	10	N/R
216 (Redditch) Squadron	£3,975.00	Adventurous Activities	57	1	£3,975.00
RYCE	£3,950.00	RYCE Youth Support Programme	55	2	£3,950.00
NewStarts	£4,000.00	Skills for a New Start	57	1	£4,000.00
Community First	£3,952.00	Moodmaster	35	9	N/R
Oasis Christian Centre	£4,000.00	OCC Drop in & Storehouse	51	5	£4,000.00
The Ditch	£4,000.00	Ditch Sustain	55	2	£4,000.00
Indigo Arts	£3,985.00	Take 2	51	6	N/R
Redditch Arts Centre	£3,000.00	Arts Funding	5	11	N/R
Chinese Association	£4,000.00	Express yourself Youth Project	47	8	N/R
Old Needle works	£4,000.00	Reveal Needle Makers	49	7	N/R
Total for theme	£42,862.00				£19,925.00
Total grant funding requests	£313,864.00			Total recommended funding	£229,915.00

Redditch Borough Council - 2013/14 Recommended Grants

Independent Communities- 80k Grant

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Citizens Advice Bureau	£80,000.00	Redditch CAB Holistic Independent Debt Advice Service	55	1	£80,000.00
Total for theme	£80,000.00				£80,000.00

Independent Communities - 10k Grant - Pot = 30k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Community First	£10,000.00	Community Buildings Development & Support	31	3 (Added Value)	£10,000.00
Where Next	£10,000.00	Where Next	53	1	£10,000.00
Sandycroft	£10,000.00	Sandycroft Advice Services	53	1	£10,000.00
Total for theme	£40,000.00				£30,000.00

Independent Communities 25k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Two Pennies	£25,000.00	Two Pennies Serving Redditch	Two Pennies Serving Redditch	59	1
Total for theme	£25,000.00				£25,000.00

Community Development Grant 40k					
Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
Redditch Play Council	£40,000.00	Redditch Play Council	57	1	£40,000.00
Total for theme	£51,725.00				£40,000.00
Community Development 3k - Pot = 15k					
Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
YMCA	£2,790.00	Roman Way Breakfast Club	47	4	£2,790.00
Inspire Community Training	£3,000.00	Winyates Work Club	47	4	£3,000.00
British Asian womens Group	£3,000.00	The Cultural Learning Project	55	1	£3,000.00
Redditch History Society	£2,500.00	Remembering Lost Redditch	46	6	£2,500.00
Where Next	£3,000.00	Where Next Hub	55	1	£3,000.00
RSVP	£700.00	RSVP Redditch	51	3	£700.00
Total for theme	£20,894.00				£14,990.00

Welfare 4k - Pot = 20k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
IDC	£4,000.00	Get A Head -	55	3	£4,000.00
IDC	£4,000.00	Friday Designers get Sewing	59	1	£4,000.00
Touchstones Support CIC	£4,000.00	Supporting Bereaved Children	55	3	£4,000.00
Inspire Community Training	£4,000.00	Visual Mapping for Health & Wellbeing	53	5	£4,000.00
Yum Tum Club	£4,000.00	Power Bar Challenge	59	1	£4,000.00
Total for theme	£53,383.00				£20,000.00

Thriving 4k - Pot = 20k

Organisation	Funding Requested	Project	Score	Position	Recommended Grant
216 (Redditch) Squadron	£3,975.00	Adventurous Activities	57	1	£3,975.00
RYCE	£3,950.00	RYCE Youth Support Programme	55	2	£3,950.00
NewStarts	£4,000.00	Skills for a New Start	57	1	£4,000.00
Oasis Christian Centre	£4,000.00	OCC Drop in & Storehouse	51	5	£4,000.00
The Ditch	£4,000.00	Ditch Sustain	55	2	£4,000.00
Total for theme	£42,862.00				£19,925.00

Total grant funding requests	£313,864.00			Total recommended funding	£229,915.00

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Debbie Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Local Environment and Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Head of Environment
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	n/a
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council is formally required to present a 'further report' to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) under the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) by 31.3.13. This further report is included in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Council is fully engaged with tackling the key issues; and the report specifically commits the Authority to undertake its obligations in relation to domestic home energy efficiency to tackle fuel security, combat fuel poverty, and contribute to mitigation of carbon emissions locally.
The report details progress made so far against these obligations and concludes that we will participate in, and use the Green Deal and ECO (Energy Company Obligation – replacing all previous subsidies for energy efficiency) as our main delivery mechanism for HECA aims.
- 1.3. The Council has been asked within DECC guidance to set "ambitious" targets to improve home energy efficiency. Although the Council is committed to acting on issues relating to energy, and has agreed strategies in place to deliver on these issues, the report (Appendix 1) specifically does not set targets to be achieved in the short or long term, citing the unknown additional resource implications as the reason not to set specific targets. The Council would however, seek to establish targets in the future when there is a clearer idea of how the Green Deal will be delivered.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to RESOLVE that

- 1) the report (Appendix 1) be approved for submission to DECC and the consequent requirement to publish this report on the Council's website be noted; and**
- 2) the current position in relation to the Green Deal be noted.**

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 If the Council does not commit to specific targets, HECA in itself does not have any additional financial burdens.
- 3.2 However, delivering a comprehensive Green Deal in Redditch is likely to have financial/resource implications; the extent of which is dependent on which delivery mechanism is chosen (either a Worcestershire based Community Interest Company) or a Bromsgrove-Redditch only contract under the Birmingham Energy Savers procurement framework (run by Carillion).
- 3.3. Members have been made aware of this future decision as part of budget setting for 2013/14 and a full report will be required when more information is available (likely to be April/May 2013). At this later stage, a key decision will be required from Council.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 Compiling and submitting the report as set out by DECC makes the Council legally compliant with the statutory framework.
- 3.4 Although the Council is encouraged by Government to set ambitious targets and indicators, there is no legal framework that requires the Council to set them.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 HECA responsibility has moved from the private sector housing team and currently sits within Environment and Planning, although there is some crossover of responsibility.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 Although the Green Deal and ECO will include all of our domestic and commercial business premises, the Council is specifically committed to improving home comfort and working with those who are currently or likely to be suffering from fuel poverty.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - The draft HECA report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

DECC (July 2012) Guidance to English Energy Conservation Authorities issued pursuant to the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Ceridwen John, Climate Change Manager
email: c.john@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.: 01527 64252 x3046

HECA “Guidance 2012” Further Report: Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council

Following the 2012 guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 4 of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, a “further report” regarding energy conservation in our area is required by DECC by 31 March 2013. Although Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils are separate ECAs (Energy Conservation Authority), because this function is now delivered as a shared service between both Councils we request the right to issue the following as a joint report to DECC.

It includes data obtained from the DECC website, information collected locally and where appropriate, information and activities shared with neighbouring ECAs.

Summary

Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils understand the importance of home energy conservation and the influence the council has with its residents. We will make all reasonable efforts to support the installation of energy conservation measures in the areas, and where applicable in our own stock in Redditch; and continue to encourage householders to take advantage of appropriate Government and other national initiatives as well as local projects that support improved energy efficiency, namely the new delivery frameworks for the Green Deal (GD) and Energy Company Obligation (ECO).

We will support the principles of “Climate Local” by recognising that the council has a vitally important role to help residents and businesses capture the opportunities and benefits of action on climate change. These include saving money on energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in ‘green’ industries, supporting new sources of energy, managing local flood-risk and water scarcity and protecting our natural environment and its resources. We have developed a joint [Climate Change Strategy](#) across both Councils. However, we are not considering signing up formally, because tight internal resource demands mean that the increased reporting requirements involved are not justifiable, especially as we already have a recognised strategy in place.

The Councils recognised from the outset that considerable effort was needed to turn around our high energy consuming behaviour to become more sustainable, and we have made important progress towards our ultimate goal of achieving a significant reduction in energy use throughout residential accommodation across the district and borough. We have been working through a number of channels, including as partners in our local Affordable Warmth group and [Local Strategic Partnership \(Better Environment Theme Group\)](#) and collaborating more widely with countywide [Warmer Worcestershire](#) and Green Deal groups. In the latter, we are working together with other councils to ensure we can offer a package of energy efficiency measures that benefit both our residents, business and our local economy through the use of our local skill and supply base.

Adverse social impacts associated with energy costs also seem to be growing. The incidence of fuel poverty across the district is increasing with some rural areas experiencing fuel poverty levels as high as 27%; these are often in areas previously perceived as being affluent. Excess winter deaths are also higher in the Bromsgrove areas than in other parts of the county and this is now one of the districts key priorities recognised through the JNSA. Excess summer deaths are also likely if we experience the summer temperature rises predicted. We and our community will strive to limit these impacts by working with neighbours and partners across both the district and the County to put in place the measures needed to make a difference.

Reducing our need for energy has so many benefits that it is impossible for us not to take part in this agenda. We have a large stock of aging homes that leak heat and waste energy, and residents are finding it difficult to maintain a comfortable affordable home. Residents and businesses need help and guidance to improve their properties not just for the current occupants but for further generations to come. We also need to make sure that homes that may be affordable at the moment remain affordable when energy prices rise as they inevitable will. Most of the solutions are already available and our role will be to continue to make our householders aware of these through local advice, local support and local examples.

Our vision is that through leadership, our Councils engage fully with national and local initiatives, and ensure that our residents and local businesses prosper by taking advantage of all that is available to support them. This Council has an enviable record of achievement in delivering energy efficiency programmes, including large scale external wall insulation in some of our most deprived social housing communities, and a heat recovery system for our new Abbey Stadium, an award winning innovation project reusing waste heat from the adjacent Crematorium which reduces Redditch Councils heating energy demand at the new leisure centre by 42%. This project demonstrates our seriousness about addressing climate change issues, especially reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. We are also reducing both Councils' carbon footprint by sharing services and being more efficient, for example through route optimisation.

The details of some of our most notable achievements to date are included in the following pages of this report, but in short it is our intention to meet this "follow on" requirement under the Home Energy Conservation Act by continuing in the same vein.

2. Background and achievements to date

As required under the original HECA Guidance, both Councils identified the potential to improve home energy efficiency by 30% over a 15 year period from 1996-2011 and local monitoring showed that this had been achieved this by the **12th HECA** update report, figures from which are shown below. We have not been required to undertake any reporting since 2011

	% improvement	Energy saved (GJ)	Carbon saved (tCO₂)
Bromsgrove DC	29.58	1,376,770	84,243
Redditch BC	30.69	1,034,253	99,240

The measures originally assessed included wall and roof insulation, double glazing , draught proofing, replacement high efficiency boilers, improved heating controls, additional hot water cylinder insulation and temperature controls, low energy lighting, publicity materials and property specific advice.

Under HECA, the Councils reported that we would set up an Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to work with the Energy Saving Trust to provide free and impartial information and advice to householders in the area. The organisation was registered as an independent company in August 1998 and registered charity in May 1999 and is known as “Act on Energy”. Both Councils continue to have in place a service level agreement with Act on Energy to deliver on these commitments.

The improvement information reported under the original guidance was gathered independently by Act on Energy and included in the annual report together with an action plan for the following year, of which DECC have copies. A self completion householder questionnaire was sent annually to homes selected at random and the proportion of each improvement measure identified by householders as being carried out in the previous 12 months was applied to the baseline report figures as an estimate of the level of improvement during that period.

The council continues to work with Act on Energy to promote national initiatives, devise and manage local energy saving projects and provide a free local energy advice service to householders in the area; particularly important now that the Energy Saving Trust has ceased having a local presence.

The Councils promoted local initiatives for insulation contractors to access CERT energy supplier funding and refer appropriate people to the Warm Front Scheme up until 31st December 2012. We will continue to promote local and national schemes including Green Deal and ECO.

3. Time table for revised Energy, Carbon and Fuel Poverty strategies

The Councils, along with other partners in the Bromsgrove and Redditch Affordable Warmth Action Group work together to ensure residents are able access to warm and affordable homes through local delivery of Worcestershire County's Fuel Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. We are also partners in the countywide 'Warmer Worcestershire' group, which ensures that health needs linked to fuel poverty are addressed at both local and county levels, providing an effective vehicle for the delivery of the Cold Weather Plans using the Warm Homes and Healthy People Fund. We are also an active partner in the Worcestershire Climate Change Partnership and Worcestershire Partnership Environment Group, who are responsible for the delivery of Worcestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy.

These strategies will be renewed over the coming months to take account of the current situation, including more recent data and changes to the definition of fuel poverty and information available from DECC. We will align our targets where appropriate to match the Government's objectives in the Carbon Plan, subject to current funding constraints.

The extension of HECA resulting from the latest UK-wide guidance leads to renewed targets of a reduction in buildings CO2 emissions by 24-39% from 2009 levels by 2027. The Councils recognise however that they have little direct access to improve buildings other than their own, but accepts that they have a responsibility to advise households of their options for saving energy and promote up-take of all appropriate national and local schemes.

Therefore, the Councils are fully engaged with the Green Deal/ ECO processes and will be deciding in the coming months whether our best option is to deliver these alongside other Worcestershire Council's, or as Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils under the BES framework. In the interim, we have ensured that our residents continue to be able to access energy efficiency measures through impartial advice from our energy partners Act on Energy.

4. Data obtained from DECC website

CO₂ data

Using data published on the DECC website in September 2012, the Councils have reported to have reduced the emissions in the domestic housing sector for 2010 as follows (note this excludes industrial, commercial, transport and land use emissions):

	Total emissions (ktCO₂)	Emissions per capita (tonnes)	% reduction since 2005
Bromsgrove	232	2.48	6.05%
Redditch	173	2.20	7.06%

The Councils are pleased that there has been a reduction in CO₂ in the domestic sector although the emissions per capita are greater than the local and national average. This is not surprising considering the local demographic with large numbers of rural, older homes off the mains gas network in Bromsgrove. The Authority will continue to support schemes that promote and install energy saving measures in homes: in particular engaging with energy suppliers delivering ECO support under the Rural Obligation in Bromsgrove and Affordable Warmth and Community Carbon Saving branches of ECO across both areas.

Fuel Poverty Data

The 2010 sub-regional data indicates the following levels of fuel poverty, which are higher than the county average but lower than the regional average:

	% Fuel Poverty	Number of households	No. of LSOAs > 25%
Bromsgrove	17.7%	6,707	4
Redditch	16.5%	5,517	3

However, Bromsgrove does not have any areas which come under the lowest level of deprivation in the national top 15%, therefore will not be able to access the Affordable Warmth Obligation of ECO funding. In Redditch, there are nine such areas: Winyates, Woodrow (3), Church Hill, Batchley (2), Abbeydale, St Georges. This gives Redditch significant potential to leverage in external ECO funding to complete works in these areas.

The Councils are aware of the situation regarding fuel poverty in the district and have a local delivery partnership through its Affordable Warmth group as well as being

active in the Worcestershire Affordable Warmth group (Warmer Worcestershire). This group includes other agencies such as NHS, Age UK, Act on Energy and other interested parties particularly representing rural communities. There are a number of local initiatives planned including joint projects with NHS and the county mobile library service, the provision of information and advice at the autumn “Flu Clinics”, and providing support for the formation of rural oil buying clubs.

The Authority continues to be active in promoting energy efficiency and are continuing to resource a number of local schemes aimed directly at relieving fuel poverty and making energy more affordable to all households. Further to this, we have received some funding from DECC to undertake some piloting work, the first part of this scheme is to provide two show-homes locally.

5. Support for Green Deal and other government initiatives

The Authorities have looked in detail, and continues to do so, at the various options for engagement with Green Deal. We do not feel that within current resource constraints it is appropriate for us to become a Green Deal Provider.

The Authority does not consider that it has the necessary skills or resources to become a Green Deal Partner to deliver measures or make assessments and would rather utilise those existing local organisations preparing to provide the required services.

We do recognise that we have a role to play in supporting the Green Deal and it is our intention to promote Green Deal to our local communities by adding our branding and reputation to Green Deal activity in the area.

Having appointed consultants to look at the available options for us in detail, we are now in a position of considering two. The first is to engage in a County-wide promoter role; however, we also have expressed an interest in joining with the Birmingham Green Deal scheme and will be exploring this option over the current months. Both Councils are engaged with two separate LEP's, one in Worcestershire and the other in Birmingham, due to our close geographical proximity to both LEP's.

We are anxious that whichever Green Deal Providers are supported and promoted, they utilise local companies and build on the existing skills within the district rather than rely on delivery through external organisations. There are a number of local business and organisations already focused on becoming Green Deal Installers and Assessors and we will engage with Green Deal Providers who are able to use these local resources.

Alongside Green Deal, we will also promote the Energy Company Obligation by engaging with all energy suppliers who can provide financial assistance to householders in the district. Bromsgrove Council is predominantly rural with large areas off the mains gas grid and older solid wall properties. Redditch however is a new town with a much newer housing stock. We see considerable benefit in promoting the Carbon Saving Obligation to support improvements to many of the older properties in the district. Many of these are also suitable for renewable technologies, particularly where mains gas is not available, and we see the Feed in Tariff and Renewable Heat Incentive key to encouraging greater take up.

The areas have pockets of fuel poverty although it is not generally recognised as suffering from this problem. This is a particular issue for rural areas where fuel poverty is not widespread but concealed within otherwise affluent areas making it difficult to identify. For this reason the Authority works with other agencies, particularly Act on Energy and the health sector, to provide a referral service for those who suffer ill health as a result of cold homes.

6. Existing and proposed further initiatives and partnerships

The Authorities are a key member of the Act on Energy Local Authority Consortium Group which identifies and shares best practice in energy efficiency with the other authorities in Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Coventry and Solihull. This has been active since 1998 and now includes 11 ECAs and 2 first tier authorities and gives the member authorities the opportunity to replicate successful projects which have proven benefit in improving energy efficiency.

The Council supports the Warmer Worcestershire Network with neighbouring authorities, NHS and other partners which provides some additional funding for health and well being projects which support our fuel poverty agenda.

The Authority is also represented on the Carbon Action Network (previously the HECA Forum) by Act on Energy who also chairs the West Midlands CAN and reports to all regional members.

7. Communication strategy

A marketing and communications strategy has been developed which outlines the measures we will be taking to ensure we promote and provide guidance to all households within the district. This will ensure we achieve maximum take-up and engagement with the energy efficiency schemes available

Activity	Purpose	Timing
Council staff training	Ensure all staff are aware of the LAs desires and objectives to promote energy efficiency including in its own buildings	Annual
Senior Officer training	Ensure that all department heads within the council are aware of the duties we have to reduce CO ₂ and fuel poverty and cooperate with appropriate initiatives	Annual
Partner organisation meetings	Include energy efficiency as an agenda item for all meetings held with external partners	As appropriate
Develop a poster campaign	Create campaign branding, print and distribute posters to council and other buildings	Within 3 months
Media release	Send press release to local media, including council publications and website, outlining the council policy on energy efficiency	Immediate
Promotion	Work with partners to promote all energy related initiatives through normal partner activities such as presentations, exhibitions, events and home visits.	Within 3 months
Private sector householders	Encourage RSLs to consider private sector households when developing stock improvement schemes	Within 6 months
Social housing tenants	Provide advice to tenants on the efficient use of the equipment provided	Within 12 months
Private rented sector	Provide information on energy efficiency at Landlord Forum meetings	As appropriate
Signposting	Identify all energy efficiency activity available in the area and signpost householders to appropriate support organisations	Within 6 months

8. HECA Action Plan showing activities, outcomes, partners and timeframe

Object	Action	Outcome	Lead/Partners	Delivery date
HECA Further Report	Collate energy information	Submit and publish report	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy	31 March 2013
Partnerships	Identify and contact potential partners	Distribution lists for interested partners	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy NHS Worcestershire AgeUK	31 March 2013
Government initiatives	Support Green Deal through joint work with other LA's and partners	Identify GD Providers, agree level of support and promote GD services	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Worcestershire LA's? Act on Energy	On going
Energy Suppliers	Identify ECO opportunities	Installed measures Fuel poverty reduction	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy Energy Suppliers	On going
Promotion	Deliver communication plan	Council staff, other partners and householders aware of HECA plan and energy efficiency objectives	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy Local media	On going

Local initiatives	Identify other local energy efficiency projects	Support provider in delivering projects	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy Local contractors Energy Suppliers Local supply chain	On going
Council initiatives	Support/fund targeted projects Undertake communications as per section 7.	Increased project activity delivering measures and reducing fuel poverty	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Elected Members	On going
Monitor and review	Record and collate data from activity	Refine action plan	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy	On going
Follow on Report	Repeat action plan with variations as determined necessary	Submit report to DECC and publish locally	Ceridwen John (BDC & RBC) Act on Energy	31 March 2015

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE

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

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 On the 15th January 2013 members considered a report on the new arrangements for the administration of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. This report considers the operational arrangements for the delivery of this new service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is requested to RESOLVE that

subject to any comments, the proposal for operation of the Scheme set out at Appendix 1 be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolishes Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses from the 1st April 2013. A non-ring fenced grant is to be paid to Worcestershire County Council based on 2011 Community Care Grant expenditure and 2006 Crisis Loan expenditure. The funds have been transferred to local authorities as they are better able to take into account local knowledge and target the most vulnerable individuals. It has been agreed that the Council will receive delegated authority to administer these funds.
- 3.2. Community Care Grants are currently payable to anyone in receipt of certain income-related benefits in certain circumstances. They are non-repayable grants awarded for range of expenses including household equipment and are primarily intended to support vulnerable people to return to or remain in the community or to ease exceptional pressure on families. Average initial award £437.
- 3.3. Crisis Loans are interest-free loans available to anyone (whether on benefit or not) who cannot meet their immediate short-term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster, where there is an immediate risk to their health or safety. Repayments are deducted from benefit, and suitable recovery arrangements are made for those not on

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

benefit. The average award was £82. Applicants may be awarded a Crisis Loan for four separate reasons:

- items or services;
- rent in advance;
- general living expenses; or
- alignment payments to cover living expenses up to the first payment of benefit or wages

Financial Implications**Funding for the scheme**

- 3.4.1. The funding for the Scheme has been allocated across the County pro-rata to the data for the 2011/12 actual expenditure as follows:

Crisis Loans (Items & Living Expenses)	Number of applications	Successful applications	Expenditure 2011/12
Redditch	2,020	1,540	£100,800
Community Care Grants	Number of applications	Successful applications	Expenditure 2011/12
Redditch	570	270	£127,300
TOTAL	2,290	1,810	£228,100

- 3.4.2. The actual grant allocation is based on the 2006 expenditure levels which mean that Redditch will receive 10.64% of the total allocation for the County based on 2011/12 demand. The funding for administration has been allocated in the same way. Funding has only been agreed for two years.

2013/14 Funding Allocation	% based on expenditure 2011/12	Programme Funding Allocation
Redditch	21.42%	£202,906
2013/14 Funding Allocation	% based on number of applications	Administrative Funding Allocation
Redditch	22.23%	£43,390

3.4.3 Existing demand

- 3.4.4. It has been difficult to predict demand as DWP demand is only available at local level on number of awards. There is national data on the number and type of awards but there is no certainty that the payment was actually used for the purpose requested.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 20133.4.5. Data available on awards for Redditch:**Community Care Grants**

Awards to lone parents	32%
Awards where household included children under 5	29%
Awards where no children under 16	56%
Awards to people less than 54 years of age	87%
Awards to people less than 24 years of age	21%
Awards where household was a single female	44%
Awards where household was a single male	35%

Crisis Loans Items

Awards to lone parents	16%
Awards where household included children under 5	16%
Awards where no children under 16	79%
Awards to people less than 54 years of age	99%
Awards to people less than 24 years of age	48%
Awards where household was a single female	30%
Awards where household was a single male	62%

Crisis Loans Living Expenses

Awards to lone parents	18%
Awards where household included children under 5	20%
Awards where no children under 16	74%
Awards to people less than 54 years of age	96%
Awards to people less than 24 years of age	38%
Awards where household was a single female	35%
Awards where household was a single male	53%

Items most commonly requested under CCG**Item requested**

Beds and bedding	38%
Clothing	14%
Kitchen/dining utensils	13%
Carpets/Curtains	8%
Other	8%
Cookers	8%
Seating	5%
Washing Machines	3%
Fridges	2%
Removal Expenses	1%

Main uses of Crisis Loans Living Expenses

Care Leavers – 16-18 year olds
Disabled
Prisoners and young offenders

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

Rent in advance – moving home (families security relevant) and leaving care.

Lost or stolen giro

Capital not realisable

Reconnection of fuel supply

Benefit spent

Benefits disallowed or sanctioned (to remain with DWP as hardship awards)

Disaster

3.4.6. Budgetary control

There are two main reasons that close budgetary control will be required. The grant is a fixed amount and there is no provision for extra spend (there may be some flexibility by using Discretionary Housing Payments and Homeless funds). The grant given is less than current demand.

Legal Implications

3.5. There are no legal implications.

Service / Operational Implications

3.6 This is a new service to be provided by the Council for which there is limited guidance available on customer demand.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.7. The proposed scheme provides flexibility for officers to respond to individual demands being placed on the service because the details in terms of customer likely demands are largely unknown.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is a risk that the budget will prove to be inadequate because it is based on historic levels of demand.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposed local scheme

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers with this report.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

AUTHORS OF REPORT

Name: Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Resources
E Mail: t.kristunas@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3295

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013**Appendix 1****Proposed local scheme****Essential Living Fund****1. Introduction**

- 1.1. A local scheme, working title Essential Living Fund, is being designed to help local people in financial crisis out of immediate hardship and offer them advice and support to maintain their financial independence.
- 1.2. The scheme will link to the following strategic purposes;
 - Help me live my life independently.
 - Help me back to financial independence.
 - Help me find somewhere to live in my locality.
- 1.3. Delivery will be mainly face to face to understand the customer's needs and provide the appropriate support. The scheme will be delivered by the Housing Options and Benefits Service. It has been agreed to use the administration funding to recruit additional officers to support delivery of the scheme. Other partner organisations will be engaged to access the scheme, such as registered housing providers and organisations supporting resettlement. The scheme will mostly be grant based but will allow, where appropriate for repayable interest free loans. To avoid potential abuse of the system the provision of goods and appliances will be preferable but where the need arises for cash payments this will be provided.

2. Purpose of the scheme

- 2.1. The purpose of the Essential Living Fund is to:
 - Provide support to individuals to establish themselves in the community following a transition from care or prison.
 - Prevent serious risk to the health, well-being or safety of financially excluded residents.
 - Help individuals back into financial independence following a crisis.
 - Maximise the use of local discretionary funds, Discretionary Housing Payments, Homelessness Funds.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1. Only individuals who are local residents of Redditch will be eligible for the scheme. Additionally the individual must not have moved to the above areas specifically for the purpose of obtaining an award unless the move

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

is related to re-settlement or fleeing domestic violence. Priority will be given to individuals who have recourse to public funds.

3.4. One of the main principles of the scheme will be that an award will only be made where other funding streams are not available. This may include:

- Section 17 payments from County Council under the Children's Act to provide welfare for children in need.
- Care leavers grants
- Social service payments
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) payments:
- Budgeting loans
- Benefit alignment payments
- Where a state benefit has been sanctioned or disallowed.
- Statutory social fund payments, winter fuel allowance, Sure Start maternity Grants, Funeral payments.
- Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)-statutory duty to provide medical or disability equipment.
- Where the applicant could receive assistance, either through their own resources or where other people could support them.
- Rent in advance, rent deposits or rent top-ups where a Discretionary Housing Payment can be made.
- Where private insurance could cover costs of damage or replacement.
- Where another individual or organisation is obligated to provide recompense i.e. landlord.

Requests for assistance where budgeting issue will not lead to an emergency or crisis.

4. Potential Suppliers

The scheme will utilise the local voluntary sector to help provide the goods and provisions needed. This will support local providers and employment opportunities.

5. Appeals Process

Individuals wishing to challenge a decision can request an internal review of the decision where an officer not involved with the original decision will decide if the original decision fits the scheme purpose.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

**APRIL – DECEMBER (QUARTER 3) - FINANCE MONITORING REPORT
2012/13**

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	N/A
Non Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report details the Council's financial position for the period April to December 2012 (Quarter 3 – 2012/13).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the current financial position on Revenue and Capital be noted, as detailed in the report.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial information across the Council. The aim is to ensure Officers and Members can make informed and considered judgement of the overall position of the Council.

Financial Implications

- 3.2 The Council set a balanced budget in February 2012 for the financial year 2012/13. Within the budget were included savings of £654K which were not fully identified. These included savings relating to Shared Services, Transformation, and general vacancies within the Council. At the end of the 3rd quarter £579K of the savings has now been identified, failure to make all the savings will mean that an increased use of balances will be required.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

**Revenue Budget summary Quarter 3 (April – December) 2012/13 –
Overall Council**

- 3.3 The current financial position for services delivered within the Borough is detailed in the table below.
- 3.4 Internal recharges have not been included in these figures to allow comparison for each service area.

Service Head	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Budget April - December £'000	Actual spend April – December £'000	Variance to date April - December £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance Full Year £'000
Environmental Services	3,661	3,030	2,962	-68	3,614	-47
Community Services	2,172	1,638	1,493	-145	2,006	-166
Regulatory Services	573	422	411	-11	560	-13
Leisure & Cultural Services	3,388	2,549	2,575	26	3,389	1
Planning & Regeneration	1,694	1,212	1,266	54	1,782	88
Customer Services	812	599	542	-57	708	-104
Finance & Resources	5,425	1,238	1,198	-40	5,363	-62
Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	1,104	793	782	-11	1,094	-10
Business Transformation	1,077	816	799	-17	1,077	0
Head of Housing Services	924	693	672	-21	884	-40
Corporate Services	1,427	1,067	841	-226	1,201	-226
SERVICE TOTAL	22,257	14,057	13,541	-516	21,678	-579
Unidentified Savings						-654
Savings to Find						75

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Financial Commentary**3.5 Environmental Services**

- There is a £35k projected shortfall in On Street Parking Enforcement. This has been partly offset by salary savings within the service.
- A receipt of £54k from the Worcestershire County Council for the 2012/13 Waste Funding agreement accounts for the surplus on the Service.
- The S106 income has been received for maintenance of adopted land, and cleansing. As reported in Qtr 2, there was a possibility that, had this money not been received, there would have been an unavoidable pressure up to the value of 112k.

3.6 Leisure & Cultural Services

- The Learn Direct service is projecting a shortfall of income due to changes in the funding stream process and a lower than expected uptake of places. This has been built into the 2013/14 budget process as a pressure.
- Salary costs are higher than expected due to additional staffing costs relating to the shared service.
- There is a projected shortfall in income at Arrow Vale Sports Centre due to the following reasons: The new fitness facility opened part way through the year due to schools preference for the works to take place during the summer period. However, membership numbers are showing growth so officers are hopeful that the shortfall will be addressed in 2013/14. There has also been a reduction in demand for the astro-turf pitch due to the investment required in the facility and an increase in competition.
- There is a projected shortfall of sponsorship income due to the following reasons: previously we used to receive a contribution towards the Christmas lights but this is no longer available, and the budget assumed that roundabouts sponsorship would be operational for a full year but due to operational implications the policy was not approved until October 2012.
- Additional income is forecast elsewhere within the Service which is projected to partially off-set the over spend identified above. This includes an improved profit figure for the Palace Theatre.
- An earmarked reserve that is no longer required is being used to offset part of the overspend.

3.7 Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services

The budget variance in Democratic Services is a result of overall savings in the Members allowances budget and monies allocated to Members expenses for the period 2012/13.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

3.8 Planning & Regeneration

- Redundancy costs, associated with setting up Building Control shared service, have created an over spend in year.
- The Business Centres are showing an over spend due to the cost of the caretakers, and a reduction in income due to vacant units.

3.9 Customer Services

- The under spend within the customer services department, is due to a number of vacancies that exist, and spending has been reduced to a minimum.

3.10 Finance and Resources

- Benefit Services have made savings of 30k due to the Management being shared with Bromsgrove District Council, however the variance to date and outturn will show an overspend due to increased payments in benefits due to the economic downturn.
- There is however a £50K saving expected on rent allowances.
- Revenue Services has gone through transformation and following changes to systems are no longer taking as many council tax payers to court; this has resulted in a reduction in income.
- Investment Properties forecast an over spend due to increased NNDR on some of the properties and also underachieved rent.
- Human Resources will be showing a projected underspend due to a saving on the Corporate Training budget.

3.11 Community

- There is an under spend due to efficiency savings achieved by the shared provision of the CCTV and lifeline service.
- There is also a further underspend on Community Safety and Anti Social Behaviour as more of these services is to be funded from the HRA.

3.12 Business Transformation

- Work continues with the Locality and Joined up working transformation.

3.13 Housing Services

- The under spend is attributable to a vacant post within Housing Project Management

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

- The dispersed units are on target to breakeven, there was a budgeted deficit of £15K.

3.14 Corporate Services

- Savings have been identified within the financing charges and also a budget for corporate redundancies that was funded from 2011/12.

3.15 Capital Budget summary Quarter 3 (April – December) 2012/13 – Overall Council

Department	Budget 2012/13 £'000	Actual spend April – December £'000	Remaining Balance 2012/13 £'000
Business Transformation	116	41	75
Environmental Services	3,737	1,463	2,274
Regulatory Services	100	4	96
Community Services	991	313	678
Leisure & Cultural Services	162	125	37
Finance & Resources	945	335	610
Housing Services (inc HRA)	8,597	3,580	5,017
Total	14,648	5,861	8,787

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Financial Commentary:

- A review of the system for distributing Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Repairs Assistance is current under review, to simplify the process and encourage higher take up.
- Work on the Crematorium has progressed well, and will be complete by the end of the year.
- Environmental services Town Centre landscape scheme has been presented to members, and is currently seeking feedback from public consultation.
- There has been an under spend on replacement fleet; officers are reviewing the requirements inline with transformation, to ensure the correct vehicles are purchased for the transformed method of service delivery.

Treasury Management

- 3.16 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been developed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance prudential indicators and is used to manage risks arising from financial instruments. Additionally treasury management practices are followed on a day to day basis.

Credit Risk

- 3.17 Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Credit risk is minimised by use of a specified list of investment counterparty criteria and by limiting the amount invested with each institution.
- 3.18 At 31st December 2012, short-term investments comprise:

	31st December 2012 £000
Deposits with Banks/Building Societies	3,500

Income from investments

- 3.19 An investment income target of £79k has been set for 2012/13 using a projected rate of return of 0.75% - 1.50%. During the past financial year, bank base rates have remained at 0.50% and current indications are projecting minimal upward movement for the short-term.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th March 2013

- 3.20 In the 9 months to 31 December, the Council earned income from investments of £30k. Although this is not on target it is offset by reduced borrowing costs.
- 3.21 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been developed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance prudential indicators and is used to manage risks arising from financial instruments. Additionally treasury management practices are followed on a day to day basis.

General Fund Balances

- 3.22 The General Fund Balance as at the 31st March 2012 is £1,289K; the budget set in February 2012, amended on 23rd July 2012 included an estimated use of balance of £192K.
- 3.23 Any overspend on Revenue Budgets would have to be funded from Balances, thus affecting future year budgeted use of balances.

Legal Implications

- 3.24 No Legal implications have been identified.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.25 Sound performance management and data quality are keys to achieving improved scores in the Use of Resources judgement. This performance report supports that aim.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.26 Performance Improvement is a Council Objective.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk considerations are covered within the report.

5. APPENDICES

None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

**MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICE
REPORT - QUARTER 1, 2012/13**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil 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 details of customer feedback data for the third quarter of 2012/13, along with some transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update for the period 1st October 2012 - 31st December 2012 is noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 The report, attached at Appendix 1, sets out details of customer feedback, including complaints, compliments, Local Government Ombudsman complaints and other customer satisfaction feedback. It gives information on how well we have handled complaints against our agreed timescales.

3.2 It also provides some transactional information for the Customer Service Centre and One Stop Shops.

Financial Implications

3.3 There are no direct financial implications.

Legal Implications

3.4 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**

12th March 2013

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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

- 3.8 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 form vital information for all transformation reviews.
- 3.9 Measures provide us with useful information about what is happening in our organisation and help us to understand where changes may impact.
- 3.10 Although led by the Head of Customer Services, the Customer Experience Strategy applies to all services and all customers and progress against the action plan involves Officers 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**

12th March 2013

5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Making Experiences Count, Quarterly Customer Service Report Quarter 3 2012/13.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Amanda de Warr
E Mail: a.dewarr@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881241



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

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st October 2012 - 31st December 2012

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

1. 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.
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics for information; and
- Customer satisfaction information.











2. Customer Feedback Analysis

46 complaints were received during this quarter because we either did not meet the customer expectations; or failed to meet our own standards; or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

30 complaints (65%) were answered in 15 working days or less. **16** complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to and details of these complaints are provided below.

We also received **74 compliments**.

These figures compare with previous quarters and last year's totals as follows:-

Quarter 3 11/12		Total 11/12		Quarter 1 12/13		Quarter 2 12/13		Quarter 3 12/13	
									
47	35	204	177	56	81	73	91	46	74

There has been an overall reduction in complaints this quarter. Housing has seen a significant drop in complaints, due mainly to the improved service delivery in repairs and maintenance.

There has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints dealt with within 15 working days from 82% but this appears to be due to the reduced number of complaints in Housing which were generally quickly and easily dealt with and therefore brought the average down. The number of complaint taking longer remains reasonably consistent and appears to be due to the complexity of the matter.

We are reviewing our process in relation to dealing with complaints using systems thinking principles. A trial has started which sees far greater verbal contact with the customer at the earliest opportunity to improve understanding of the issues and reduce the need for responses by letter which may not address the real problem. We are also looking to remove the target time for handling complaints as this appears to be driving behavior which see some complaints taking longer to respond to than might be necessary. Instead we are aiming to work on the basis that the complaints should always be dealt with as quickly as possible and that communication with the customer should provide meaningful updates as to progress. We will continue to monitor response times and address concerns if they arise. The outcome of the trial will inform the process in future.

The complaints received this quarter had several factors in common which were:

- not doing what we have said we will do;
- not listening to the customer;
- giving customers incorrect or confusing information;
- staff being rude to customers;
- not responding to customers calls and queries; and
- delays in taking action.

These are issues that we are addressing by:

- Redesigning services through systems thinking transformation;
- Delivering a series of courses for managers designed to develop their coaching and communications skills in customer care;
- Arranging small workshops with teams to discuss customer service issues and then delivering training tailored to their needs;
- Further customer care awareness for all staff.

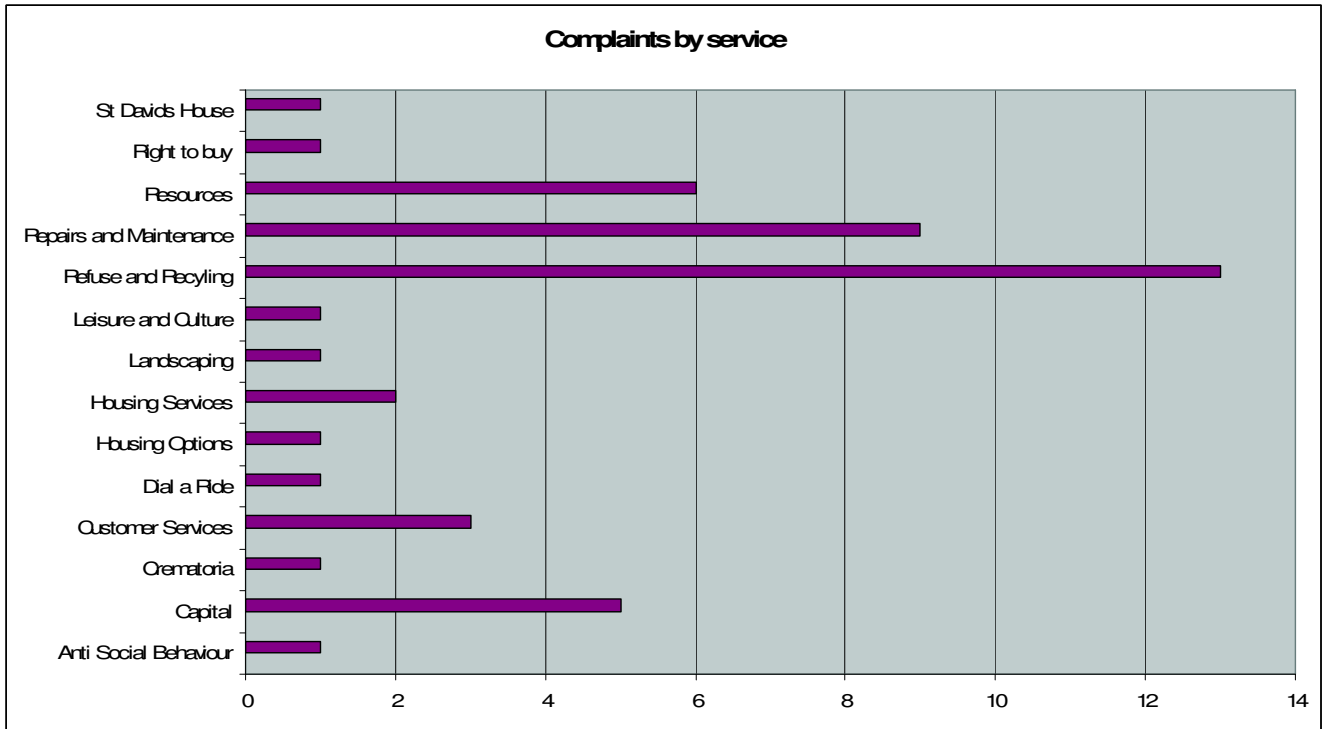
The following table shows the total of the complaints and compliments received by department. Those departments with the highest demand inevitably have higher number of complaints but compared with the total demand the numbers are low.

Complaints and compliments by department

Dept	Compliments	Complaints	Responded to within 15 working days	Still open
Community Services	17	2	2	0
Customer Services	8	3	3	0
Environmental Services	10	15	9	0
Housing	13	19	13	1
Leisure and Culture	23	1	1	0
Planning and Regeneration	1	0	0	0
Resources	2	6	2	1
Total	74	46	30	2

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown of complaints by service.

Number of complaints by service (detailed)



Time taken to respond to complaints

We currently aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and **65%** of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected (15 cases) customers were informed that there would be a delay, except where the delay was only 1 day (1 case), or where the customer could not be contacted (1 case).

The reasons for delay are detailed below, along with details of the complaint and the outcome.

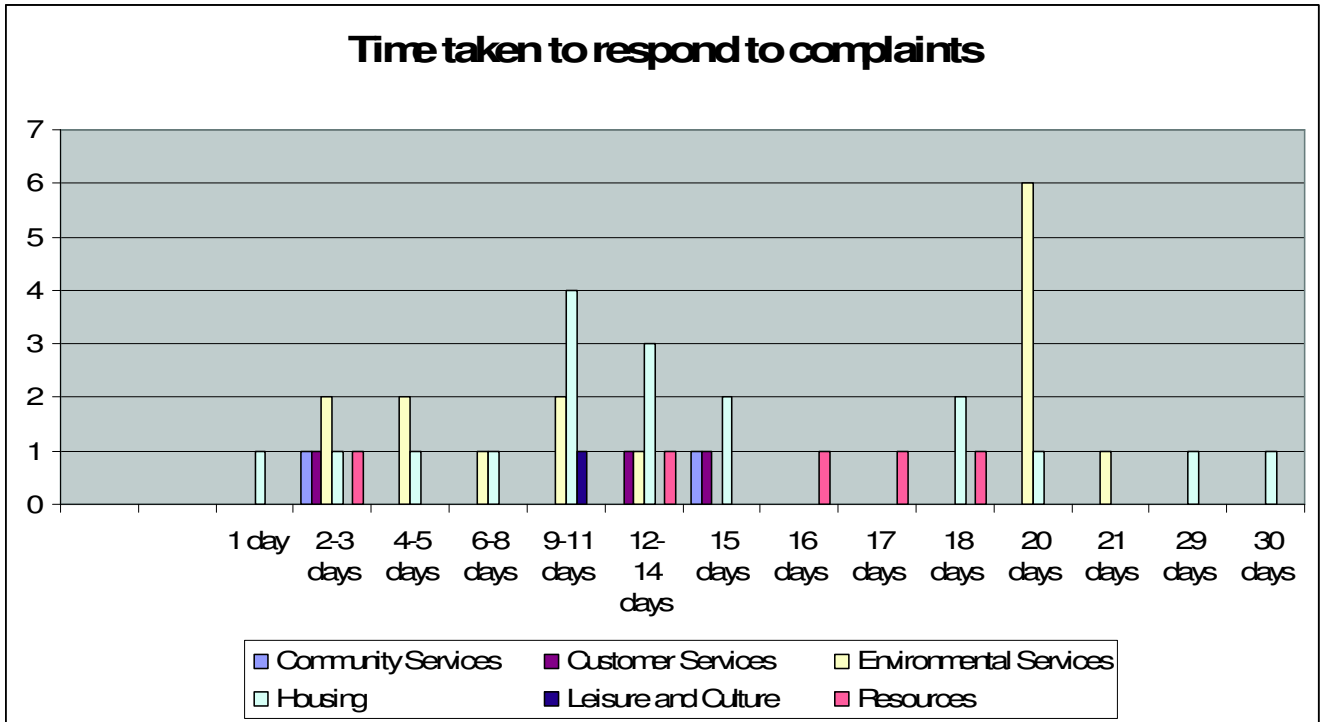
Complaint details	Outcome of investigation	Action taken	Days taken to respond and reason for delay
Environmental Services			
Customer unhappy that staff are not resolving her problems in relation to a gravestone which had been going on for 12 months.	Owners of an adjoining grave had erected a headstone which was larger than the regulation size and encroached on the space of the plots next to it.	Apology given to customer and other customers reminded of rules and regulations. Arrangements made for the headstone in question to be replaced.	21 Delay caused by not being able to contact family with the problem headstone.

<p>Six separate complaints received from residents of the same close regarding re-positioning of waste collection bins over the road.</p> <p>They feel that issue of moving the new collection point to over the road is avoiding the ongoing issue which is a car constantly parking on the road and path where the bins have always been collected since 2006. They feel that the car is parking illegally and ask why is the owner not noticed to move on rather than be accommodated?</p>	<p>Collection point changed at request of ASB Team due to ongoing Anti Social Behaviour issues.</p>	<p>Customers informed of reason for change.</p>	<p>20 (for six complaints) Investigation involving third parties.</p>
<p>Housing</p>			
<p>Customer unhappy that he has bid unsuccessfully a number of times. He believed it was based on family size and that there would be extra points when the new child arrived.</p>	<p>Customer did not qualify for the (larger) properties he was bidding on.</p>	<p>The criteria for qualification was explained to him.</p>	<p>18 Complex investigation.</p>
<p>Customer unhappy about delays to repair boiler and that Contractor was rude and would not undertake repair.</p>	<p>Poor communication between Repairs Team and Contractor identified.</p>	<p>Instructions reinforced with workforce and private contractors to carry out all repairs required on first visit, or if not possible report back immediately so the repair can be completed to cut down on waiting time. Apology given to customer and action taken to remedy.</p>	<p>18 Complex investigation.</p>

Customer lodged a formal complaint into the heating problems. He has been refusing to pay the heating element of his rent charge.	Residents having problems understanding the new thermostat.	Heating engineer will call in weekly for a short period to make sure there are no further problems.	29 Investigation took longer than expected as a lot of residents were also involved.
Customer unhappy about conflicting information about her tenancy received from Housing Officers.	Customer was confused about the tenancy agreement and provided conflicting information.	Council to support move provided customer informs us in writing of her wish to end the tenancy.	30 Investigation was complex as it involved various members of staff and members of customers family.
Customer is unhappy that she has had to chase repairs to dangerous crumbling slabs in her garden four times. She says she has never had a problem with repairs before they have always been excellent.	Delays due to errors in booking process.	Changes made to the process and work has now been carried out to customer's satisfaction.	20 Delay as Officers on leave.
Resources			
Customer unhappy about his Housing Benefit affecting his housing application.	Customer's personal circumstances are affecting entitlement.	Situation explained and the circumstances are being taken into account whilst a search for suitable property is being carried out.	17 Investigation involved several teams.
Customer unhappy with the attitude of benefits officer when he came in to get his student application signed.	Officer was not rude as suggested but was trying to get information to verify customers address and was not clear enough in their intentions.	A clearer explanation of the changes to benefits has been given to the customer.	18 Complex investigation.
Customer unhappy with the attitude of the bailiffs.	Bailiff acted correctly however customer has informed us of ill health of her husband.	Recovery actions put on hold and a payment has been negotiated.	16

Time taken to respond to complaints by service.

The following chart shows the break down of all complaints by response time. This suggests that the end to end time for responding to complaints is generally based on the nature of the service and/or complaint rather than any one service dealing with complaints in an unsatisfactory way.



The nature of Leisure and Culture complaints is such that they can usually be dealt with either on the spot or within a few days. Complaints for Housing, Council Tax and Benefits Services are more variable because investigations can be quite complex and time consuming.

You said - we listened - what did we change as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:

- Dial a Ride Staff will now contact the office if there could be a change to the running schedule so team can change routes accordingly;
- All customers will receive a copy of the rules and regulations for headstones and memorials;
- A robust list of assisted collections and where the bins are located has been established so crews know exactly where they need to be returned to;
- Process has been adapted so that contractors record the correct times for engineers to visit and carry out repairs.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There were no complaints escalated to the Head of Customer Services for further investigation or action during this period.

Happy Customers!

From the 74 compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides, especially when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner. Here are some of the compliments we have received for information.

Team	Compliment Detail
Lifeline.	Customer was very happy with the help and reassurance received from Lifeline when he rang with a problem.
Children's Centres.	Customer emailed to thank Diane Buggins for all her support over the last 12 months. She says "I can only hope the children's centres in Crawley are half as good as the ones here. Thanks again for the friendly ear."
Community Safety.	Compliment received regarding James Cooper, Senior Community Safety Project Officer. We have had positive feedback about James, including excellent communication a quick turn around from assessment to actions; James is very professional with families but also supportive and sensitive to their needs. Families have clearly been supported and empowered to remain in their homes due to the service that your team provides.
Customer Service.	Customer phoned to thank Neil Chapman, Reception, Town Hall, RBC, for all his help with the car parking, signposting, and the warm welcome both to the organisers and the attendees of an event.
Customer Service.	Customer phoned to thank Jo Frost in Customer Services for the efficient way she dealt with her enquiry and arranging for her guttering to be repaired.
Landscaping.	Customer phoned to say what a fantastic job the team did around his property. They phoned to organise the work, arrived on time, showed their ID, worked with minimal fuss in a courteous and professional manner.
Landscaping.	Customer rang to say "Thanks for cutting the hedges and brambles back - fab job, well done team!"
Housing Services.	Thank you letter from customer - "for the fence you arranged to have erected for our garden. We are very grateful for the quick service."
Housing Services.	Customer phoned to say a very big thank you to Laura for taking the request and then to Mick for attending on site to assess the situation, arranging for the work to be carried out so efficiently.
Repairs and Maintenance.	Customer phoned to say thanks to the tradesperson that attended to fit a new extractor fan in her downstairs toilet - he was the best repairs person she has ever had visit her property and would recommend him to anyone. She feels his hard work should be recognised as he was excellent!
Repairs and Maintenance.	Customer phoned to say she is very happy with the tradesperson who carried out the plastering repair to her bedroom wall. He was a very nice gentleman who did a lovely job and she wanted this to be noted.

Arts Development.	Letter received from Transport Coordination Centre and Department of Transport thanking the Council and its staff on behalf of the Olympic Delivery Authority and DoT for the support and assistance provided to the Transport Liaison Officers in making the Olympic Torch Relay 2012 a successful event.
Leisure.	Customer wrote to say she joined Abbey Stadium as a member a couple of months ago and all of the staff have always been very helpful and informative, they take the time to advise and support every member. She feels that they all go the extra mile in providing a customer service.
Caretakers.	Customer phoned to thank Bob for all his help with arranging the Civic Suite for the Carers' Rights Day. Bob made sure everything they needed was available and the day went very well.
Museum.	Customer emailed to thank Jo-Ann for meeting them and giving them a special tour of the Forge Mill Needle Museum. "Your knowledge of this history is truly exceptional and visiting the city where William Avery lived and worked, learning about the history of the area and especially visiting the museum gave even more meaning to our trip."
Sports Development.	Customer emailed to thank Hayley Gwilliam. She says" Hayley, I am very impressed by your initiative and by all your hard work that you are putting into the various health and fitness schemes. You are an inspiration".
Theatre.	Excellent performance and venue for Sleeping Beauty pantomime.
Development Control.	Customer very happy with help received from Iain Mckay.

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

During this quarter there was one complaint referred from the Local Government Ombudsman which related to trees on Council land at the back of the customers property. The customer felt that the Council had failed to properly maintain the trees causing an adverse impact on his property and amenity.

The LGO has since decided not to investigate as they could not find any evidence of maladministration by the Council.

4. Customer Service Centre Information

This section provides some statistical 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.**

Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer transactions recorded by the Customer Service Team:

	Totals for 2011/12	3rd quarter 2011/12	1st quarter 2012/13	2nd quarter 2012/13	3rd quarter 2012/13
Face to face (enquiries)	72,785	15,840	14,130	15,080	16,285
Telephone (enquiries)	76,813	16,946	12,579	13,007	15,439
Switchboard calls (handled by operator)	77,017	23,845	26,299	27,817	30,416
Switchboard calls (handled by automated system)*	118,586 (figures only available from 17/07/11)	38,478	39,125	41,170	39,283
Email (enquiries handled by CS team)	3,270	882	825	770	1,159
Payments (through cash offices)	118,576	30,383	28,031	28,867	28,094
Payments (online)	16,786	4,614	5,202	4,173	5,534
Payments (automated telephone service)	9,921	2,900	2,447	1,828	2,134
Payments (assisted telephone service)	4,676 **	1,675	3,693	2,619	3,321
Total customer contacts	498,310	135,563	132,331	135,331	141,665

* It is not known how many of these calls were unsuccessful and resulted in a repeat call which the operator then had to handle but the proportion is expected to be quite high.

** Service not available until Q2 2011

We have recorded a steady increase in contact and it is difficult to pinpoint the reason for this.

The increase in face to face contact could be partly attributable to the fact that we are encouraging greater face to face contact through the changes we have made to service delivery but I would expect telephone contact to decrease.

Some of the increase in recorded telephone calls will be due to the business continuity arrangements put in place in October to support Bromsgrove District Council. However, this is only a small part of the picture and we are seeing an increase of around 1,000 calls per month coming through.

Ongoing flooding and weather related calls have also had an impact on call numbers.

Despite this increase in business performance in relation to call handling remains very good.

We consistently answer around 90% of calls to the switchboard within 30 seconds, with approximately 80% answered in less than 8 seconds. This is discounting the automated calls, where the caller self selects the extension they want.

Due to the nature of the service, calls to the Contact Centre take longer to deal with and therefore wait times are always longer. Whilst the vast majority of calls (over 70%) are answered within 30 seconds, some callers do experience longer wait times depending on the time of day, the resources available and types of calls coming through at any one time. It is rare for calls to be on hold for longer than 3 minutes and less than 1% of calls waited longer than 5 minutes to be answered during this quarter.

During the 4th quarter of 2012/13 we will be implementing a new call handling system. This will be directly linked to the telephony systems already installed throughout the Borough Council's offices and will provide us with greater flexibility. It will result in more calls being handled directly by service specific teams and the Customer Services team will provide a greater role in handling the incoming call and transferring it to the correct team, but actually deal with less of the enquiries. This will bring about a shift in both role and resources, and savings (through vacancy management) have been identified as a result.

We are seeing a slow but steady rise in payments being made via electronic methods. This has been hampered by the various problems we have encountered with the provision of this service (technology and phone line issues) but once we have a totally stable platform we will carry out a campaign to raise awareness of this facility as it reduces the need for customers to wait in queues to pay and reduces our cost of collection.

5. Customer Satisfaction

The majority of problems or requests received by Customer Service Staff are handed over to someone else within the organisation to resolve.

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 the Customer Services team call back a sample of customers. During this quarter we made contact with 31 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	0	4	13	14

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the Council?

Yes	No
27	4

Those customers who did not feel their issue had been resolved had commented as follows:-

1. I was happy with the service regarding this issue but last week my green bin wasn't collected so I had to take it to the tip myself.
2. The flytipping I reported is still there in the same place and hasn't been removed.
3. The dog fouling I reported wasn't removed so I had to remove it myself.
4. My bin has been missed the last two weeks, this is an ongoing problem. I had to register a formal complaint.

The feedback from this exercise has been fed back to the relevant Officers to take into account when reviewing service delivery. One issue was referred back to Environmental Services for action and one new job was raised.

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services
January 2013

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

**SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE AND HEALTH FOR PERIOD
ENDING 31st December 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

To report to Executive Committee on Redditch Borough Council's performance for the third quarter (October - December 2012) in relation to sickness absence.

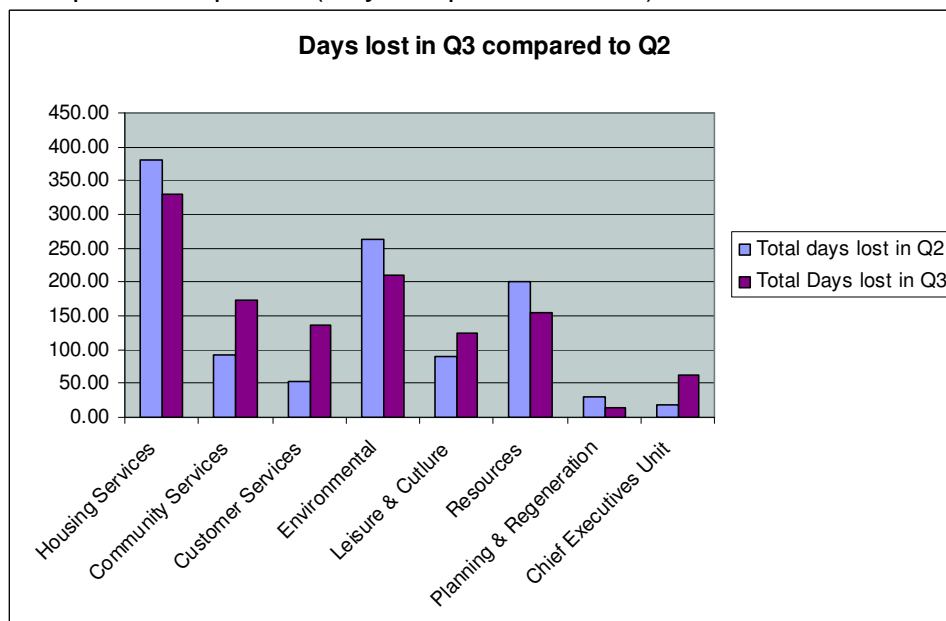
2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to **RESOLVE** that the data relating to the quarter be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES**Analysis of the monthly statistics for the quarter**

Statistics for the quarter October - December 2012 compared to the previous quarter

- 3.1 The graph below shows sickness absence for Redditch Borough Council employees in the quarter October - December 2012, compared to the previous quarter (July - September 2012).



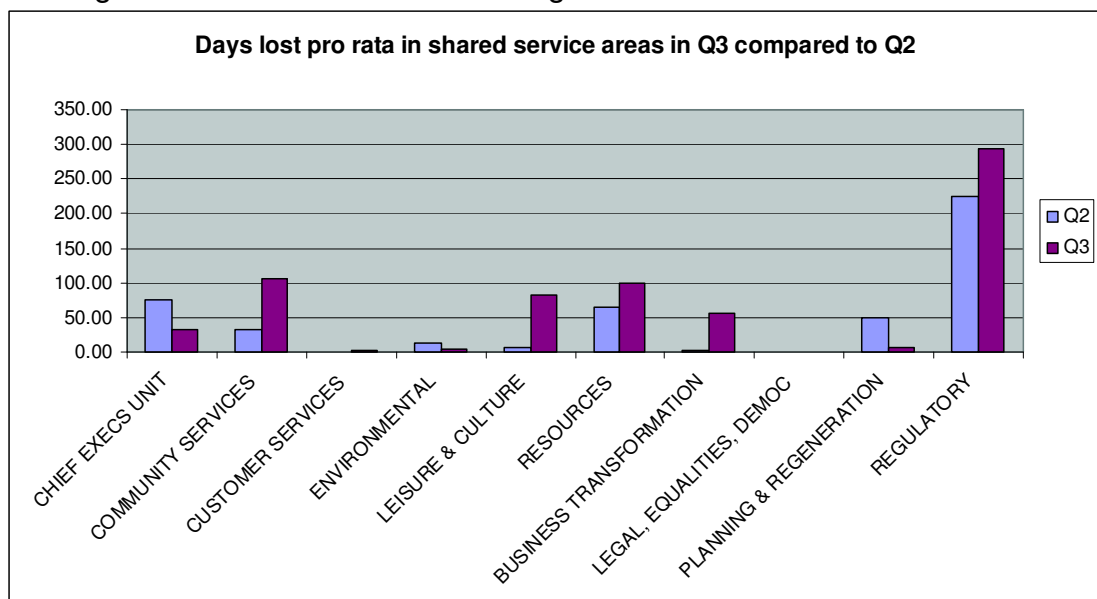
**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

- 3.2 The average days lost per person for this quarter is 2.13 days per person compared to 2.99 days in the previous quarter. This indicates a predicted outturn for the year of 8.33 days.
- 3.3 The main contributing factor for the overall increase in absence is due to an increase in short term absence particularly in relation to seasonal related illness, such as cold and flu.
- 3.4 Further information in relation to long-term and short-term absence levels are detailed later in the report.

Shared Service Information

- 3.5 The graph below provides an overview of sickness absence levels for all employees who specifically work within shared services for the quarter October – December 2012 compared to the previous quarter July – September 2012. Individuals may be employed by either Bromsgrove District or Redditch Borough Council.



- 3.6 The average days lost per person in shared services for this quarter is 2.15 days, compared to the previous quarter of 1.3 days.
- 3.7 It should be recognised that WRS proportionately has a higher number of employees compared to other shared services and therefore is likely to show more days lost compared to other services, as demonstrated in the chart above. Within WRS there is a notable shift from short term to long term absence. HR Advisers are working closely with Managers to review long term absence and identify appropriate support and action. As a result a large number of cases have since been resolved with

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

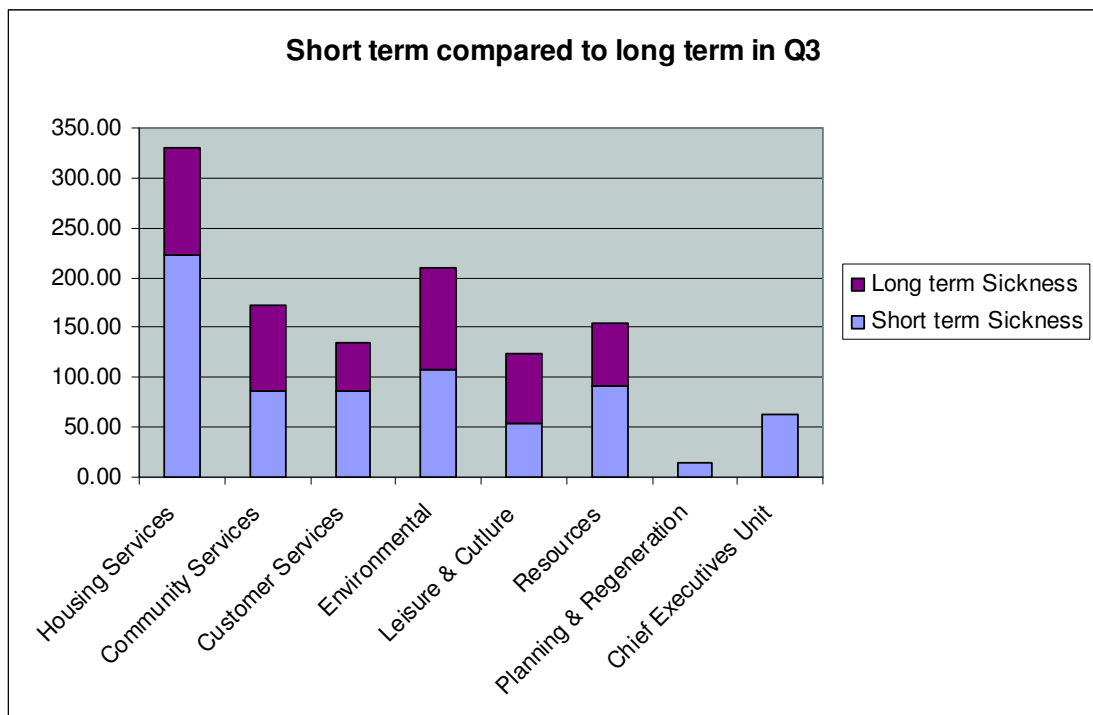
12th March 2013

either employees returning to work or dismissal through capability due to ill health. This should also be evident in future reports.

- 3.8 As well as the ongoing support provided by the Human Resources team, the recently reviewed Occupational Health provision and the appointment of a Wellbeing Officer will continue to assist the Council in the ongoing management of sickness absence and the promotion of Wellbeing amongst employees.

Long term and short term absence comparisons

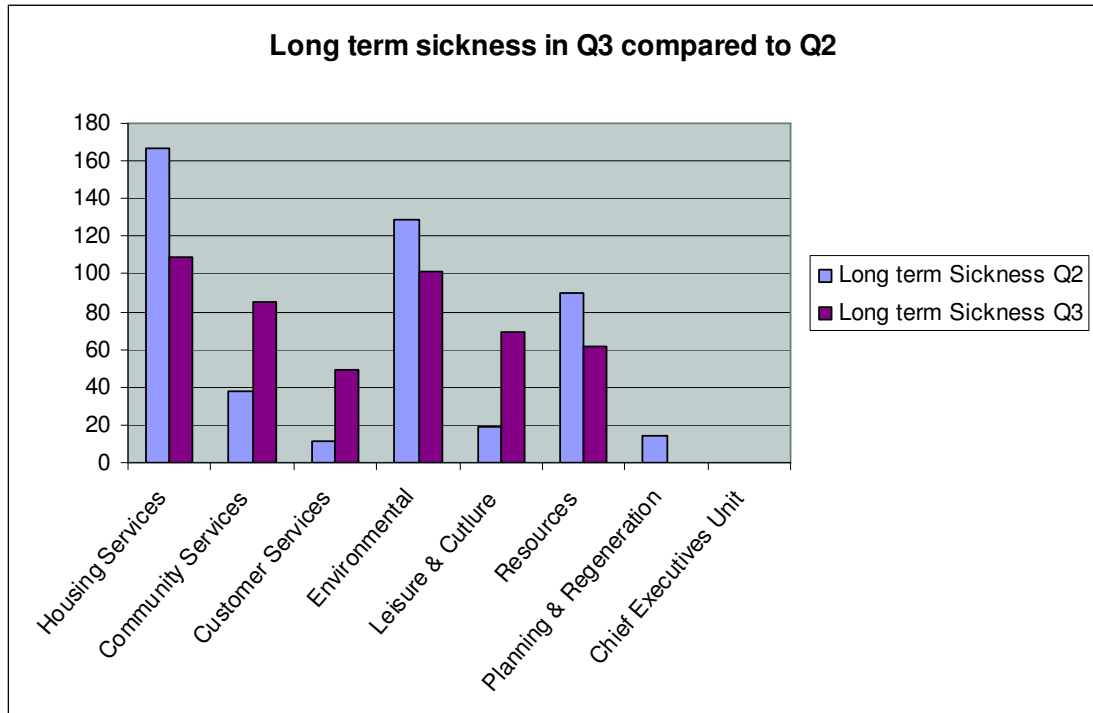
- 3.9 The following graph shows a comparison between long-term and short-term absence for the quarter. The graph shows that a higher proportion of absence is related to short term absence. This is likely a result of seasonal illness such as colds and infections which is to be expected during the winter months. This is in line with sickness absence levels for the previous year.



**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Long-term absence for the quarter October – December 2012,
compared to the previous quarter (July – September 2012)

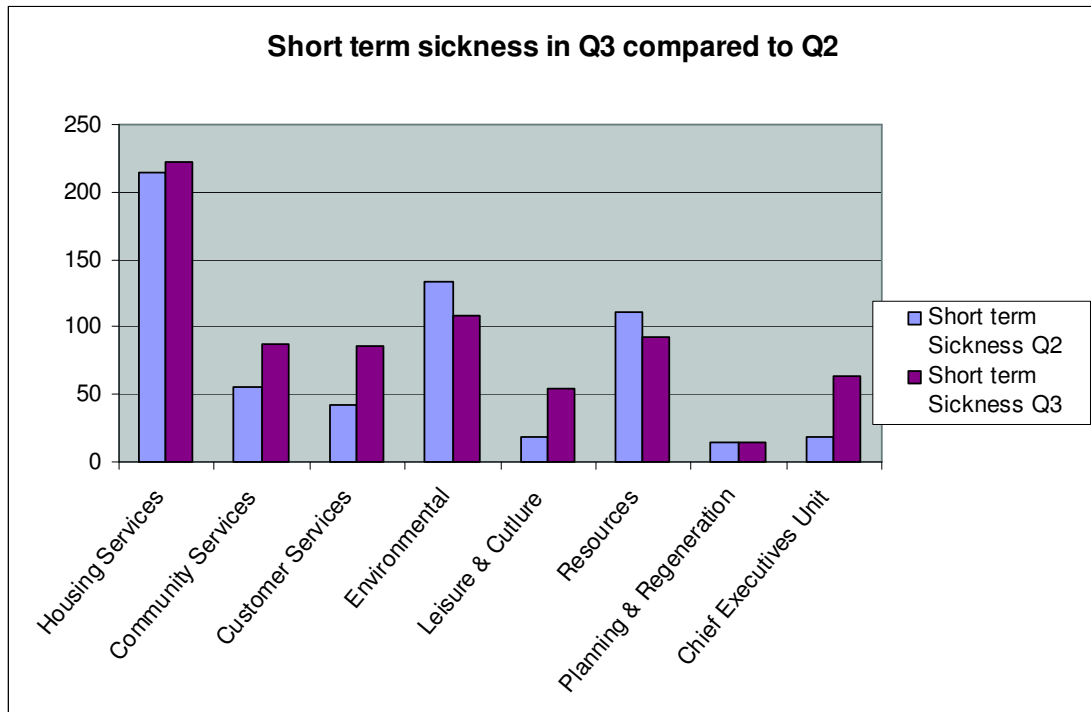


- 3.10 Overall there has been an increase in the number of days lost due to long term absences. This is primarily due to an increase of long term absence in Community Services, Customer Services and Leisure and Cultural Services. However, HR are continuing to work with Service Managers and as a result a number of employees have returned to work which will be reflected in the next quarter report. Ongoing cases continue to be actively managed with the support of Human Resources
- 3.11 The reduction in long term absence in Housing Services and Resources is as a result of long term cases being resolved either through the employees returning to work or the dismissal of employees through capability due to ill health.
- 3.12 Environmental services continues to show a reduction in absence as a result of effective absence management with HR, Service Managers and Trade Unions working together.
- 3.13 Changes which are soon to be implemented to the Councils Sickness Policy, particularly the introduction of the staggered process for management of long term sickness absence should also assist in reducing long term absence in future months.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Short-term absence for the quarter October– December 2012, compared to the previous quarter (July – September 2012)



3.14 Short-term absences have increased compared to last quarter. This is a result of seasonal related illness such as colds and infections which is to be expected during the winter months. This is particularly evident in Leisure and Culture and Customer Services.

3.15 There have been a number of recent changes to the provision of services to proactively support the management of sickness absence including weekly onsite clinics for occupational health and the imminent appointment of the Wellbeing Officer. All of which along with the changes which are soon to be implemented to the Sickness Absence Policy and the support and guidance available from HR will continue to assist the Council in absence and the promotion of Wellbeing amongst employees.

Financial Implications

3.16 The effective management of sickness absence is key in controlling the costs associated with sickness pay and service cover. There are no other financial implications identified.

Legal Implications

3.17 There are no legal implications identified.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.18 The effective management of sickness absence is key to ensuring service delivery is maintained and associated operational issues are recognised and addressed. There are no other service/operational implications identified.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.19 The effective management of sickness absence is key to maintaining high levels of customer service and should always be carried out in a fair and consistent manner. There are no further customer, equalities and diversity implications identified.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are none identified.

5. APPENDICES

N/A

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Becky Talbot, Human Resources and Organisational Development
Manager

E Mail: becky.talbot@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3385.



Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

5th February 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), Councillor Simon Chalk (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill and Pat Witherspoon

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley

135. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors John Fisher and Gay Hopkins.

136. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

137. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 8th January be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

138. FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14

The Committee received a report which outlined the proposed fees and charges for 2013/14 for the Council's chargeable services.

Members returned a number of comments regarding the proposed charges within Leisure and Cultural Services. In particular, it was suggested that more could be done to encourage families to visit Council owned gymnasiums. To address this it was agreed that this suggestion should be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism.

Upon it being suggested that charges for swimming and badminton appeared excessive, Officers explained that the charges were

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

comparable with fees levied by other local authorities, and that income generation was essential to sustain existing services, including free swimming for over 60 and under 16 year olds.

Officers clarified that each promotion and performance split at the Palace Theatre was agreed on an individual basis. This was common industry practice and was proving to be far more beneficial to the Council than the earlier practice of guaranteeing artists a set fee.

Regarding charges under Regulatory Services, Officers agreed to provide clarification on why the fees listed for gambling act permits and gaming machine permits had not changed since the previous year.

Finally, it was suggested that there should be three price brackets for potential dwellings in relation to pre-application advice to help encourage small housing developments in the town. Officers agreed to take this suggestion into account as part of the Planning transformation process.

RECOMMENDED that

that the fees and charges for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A - H to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-

- a) fees or charges are statutory,**
- b) fees and charges are set externally, or**
- c) other Council- approved circumstances apply.**

139. INITIAL ESTIMATES 2013/14 - 2015/16

The Committee was informed that the Council's final settlement grant from Government had now been confirmed. Overall, this amounted to a 43% reduction in government grant from 2012/13 to 2015/16 inclusive. Approximately £1.5m worth of savings was still to be found during 2014 – 2016. However, no revenue budget bids had yet to be received, and the Council was not facing any unavoidable financial pressures. Local authorities across the country were under severe pressure not to raise Council Tax, therefore the onus was on Councils to re-structure existing services in response to financial pressures.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Officers for their hard work in mitigating the impact on front-line services.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted

140. REDDITCH MARKET TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

As Chair of the Review, Councillor Andrew Brazier presented the Committee with the findings and recommendations of the Redditch Market Task Group.

Members heard that the group and Chair in an individual capacity had visited a number of different markets in an attempt to learn what was working well elsewhere and what could feasibly be introduced in Redditch. The group had also consulted with traders and local residents. This prompted a number of very useful ideas, many of which it was recommended should be taken forward by a new permanent working group for the market that would comprise of key town centre stakeholders and the Chair of the Review Group, at least on an initial basis.

Central to their recommendations, the group proposed that a new strategy for the market should be developed to help plan how the market could be revitalised during the next few years. It was recommended that this should include a recruitment and retention plan for new traders, and incorporate a formal communications and marketing plan to help promote key events.

The group was also proposing that the number of general retail market days should be reduced to no more than three each week, and that more speciality markets should be facilitated on the non-retail market days. Members felt that the town centre could no longer sustain holding a retail market on five days a week. It was thought that these measures would help offer far more choice and selection to market customers, and attract those who did not currently visit the market.

The Chair of the group asserted that, despite difficult economic times, markets could continue to be successful if they adapted to changes in customer shopping habits and expectations, and commented that the recommended actions contained in the report could help restore Redditch Market as a central attraction for the local community.

Councillor Brazier thanked the Committee for the opportunity to lead on the review and urged Members to approve the recommendations.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated the group on its work. Members felt that more should be done to help the market become more competitive, especially with low price convenience stores. However, caution was urged regarding the potential costs involved with arranging speciality markets.

Finally, Members were made aware that relevant Officers would need to liaise with North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration to determine whether any of the recommended actions would require the existing Service Level Agreement to operate the market to be renegotiated.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **a new strategy for the market be developed which clearly sets out how the market can be revitalised over the next five year period;**
- 2) **a small core working group consisting of local stakeholders should be created to help develop and implement the new strategy;**
- 3) **the number of general retail market operating days should be reduced to no more than three days a week. The working group to consult with existing regular traders about which particular days should be retained;**
- 4) **consideration is given to holding more speciality markets to take place on non general retail market operating days on a regular basis to help create a niche for the Redditch market. The working group to consider how such markets would be managed within the available resources;**
- 5) **the market working group considers the feasibility of introducing an on-site Redditch Market information point;**
- 6) **the market working group considers the feasibility of market customers being provided with an opportunity to pay the traders for goods through their mobile phone and debit and credit card payment facilities;**
- 7) **each trader is required to possess a returns policy which should be clearly advertised;**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

- 8) the working group facilitates further opportunities for local people, especially students and the unemployed, to obtain business experience through operating stalls in the market place at no charge on a short-term basis, to include the introduction of a new mentoring scheme to offer help and assistance to new traders;
- 9) the working group facilitates further opportunities for local businesses to showcase their goods and services on market stalls;
- 10) the working group facilitates the allocation of free stalls on a rotating basis to local people to promote forthcoming community events and the work of local charities, subject to stall availability;
- 11) the market working group explores the possibility of realigning and extending the layout of the market past its current location;
- 12) the market working group explores the feasibility of introducing a covered food court area;
- 13) the market working group explores the suitability of the design of the current market stalls and to consider whether the introduction of alternative stalls would improve the overall visual appearance of the stalls;
- 14) the market working group ensures that any review of signage in the town centre includes adequate reference to the market;
- 15) the market working group works with local bus operators to help further promote the market;
- 16) the Council should engage with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association with a view to reaching an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre; and
- 17) Redditch Borough Council should join the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and participate in the *Love Your Local Market 2013*

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

event to publicise the changes and new opportunities that would have been introduced at the market.

141. LIVING WAGE - SUGGESTED SCRUTINY REVIEW

At the request of Council, the Committee considered whether to investigate proposals for all Council employees to receive the living wage of £7.45 per hour as a minimum. The matter had been raised as a Motion on Notice at the Council meeting on 15th January 2013.

Members were agreed that more information should be presented at a future meeting before a final decision was made on whether to undertake further investigation on the issue. In particular, it was thought that the findings of the equal pay review would provide much greater clarity on the number of staff that would be affected.

RESOLVED that

additional information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation is required.

142. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING - FEEDBACK

Officers referred to the main points that were taken from the scrutiny skills training session that was delivered on Thursday 17th January 2013. In particular, undertaking careful preparation ahead of meetings was essential to ensure that interviews with expert witnesses were carried out effectively. Members were also advised not to ask more questions of witnesses than was absolutely necessary.

The Chair felt that the session had been very useful and thanked all who had attended.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

143. ACTIONS LIST

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Actions List be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

144. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15th January 2013 and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.

145. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

Councillor David Bush presented a draft scoping document concerning housing density targets in Redditch. It was suggested to Members that now was an appropriate time to undertake a scrutiny review into this matter given that the Council's local planning framework document was out for public consultation and that this was an important issue that required greater scrutiny.

Officers expressed concern that much of the proposal appeared to duplicate the work of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. It was also explained that the Council's Planning Advisory Panel had already addressed the town's housing density issues while reviewing Council's local planning framework document. The Council possessed a number of policies that allowed for a wide range of housing density developments, therefore it was not understood how the existing flexibility for housing development would be affected. Furthermore, it was explained that the Council could not insist that certain land was specified for self-build purposes.

Members offered competing views into whether the proposed Task Group review was necessary. It was argued that the Committee could look at this issue in greater detail than the Planning Advisory Panel, especially the impact of housing density targets on multigenerational and larger families. Conversely, however, it was suggested that the Council already possessed adequate monitoring procedures for its housing development policies.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Housing Density Targets Task Group be launched; and**
- 2) Councillor Bush be appointed as Chair of the review group.**

146. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

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

Members were informed that a number of meetings had taken place since the previous meeting of the Committee. The Group had considered 359 responses from residents and was scheduled to consider feedback received from local arts groups on the potential development of an arts and culture centre in the town.

The review was remained on course to be completed in time for the final report to be considered by the Committee on 2nd April 2013.

b) Redditch Market – Chair, Councillor Andrew Brazier

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

RESOLVED that**the update report be noted.****147. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Witherspoon provided the Committee with a brief verbal summary of most recent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) meeting on 24th January 2013.

Members were advised that members of the Joint Services Review (JSR) into the configuration of acute hospital services in the county had attended the meeting. The JSR team supported the centralisation of key services, including in-patient obstetrics and accident and emergency, at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

It was initially thought that public consultation on the proposed changes would take place before the Purdah pre-election period, however it was now understood that this might not take place until after the county council elections.

HOSC Members had also been informed that the closure of Berkeley Ward, which provided South Worcestershire's specialist dementia beds, was expected to produce financial savings with minimum disruption to patient care.

RESOLVED that**the report be noted.**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th February 2013

148. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair of the Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Andrew Brazier, delivered an overview of his report from the most recent Panel meeting on 31st January 2013.

Members were informed that, in taking an in-depth look at the 2012/13 quarter three performance tables for the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership for Redditch, the Panel had been pleased to learn that there had been a decrease in reported incidents for most areas of crime. In some instances, the decrease was in excess of ten per cent compared to the previous year.

Having welcomed Chris Wainwright from the Hereford and Worcester Rescue Service to the meeting, he had informed the Panel of an interesting scheme that the service ran in partnership with West Mercia Probation Trust to provide recent young offenders with support in gaining education, training, and employment opportunities.

The following Panel meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 28th March 2013, at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted

149. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

150. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.37 pm

.....
Chair

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

12th March 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 – 20 th March 2013
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr John Fisher John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Next meeting – 15 th April 2013.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

12th March 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 – 9 th April 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: Cllr John Fisher / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Phil Mould</u> Sheena Jones	Last meeting – 15 th February 2013.
7.	Grants Panel	Chair: Cllr David Bush / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Donna Hancox	Last meetings – 11 th and 13 th February 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

12th March 2013

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

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Ivor Westmore
E Mail: ivor.westmore@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Extn. 3269)

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

12th March 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 December 2012		
Cllr Shurmer/ D Allen / M 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.	Officers were awaiting information from a neighbouring authority who, in turn, are awaiting information from several London authorities.
12th February 2013		
Cllr Chance/ R Bamford	Redditch Growth Consultation Officers undertook to provide members of the Executive Committee with the numbers of houses built each year within the Borough since 2009.	This information was reported to Committee Members and the Council.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

12th March 2013

Cllr Chance/ R Bamford	Draft Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 Officers undertook to provide members of the Executive Committee with the approximate cost of carrying out the highways modelling of the junction at Headless Cross.	This information was reported to Committee Members.
Cllr Shurmer/ T Kristunas	Housing Revenue Account 2013/14 Officers undertook to provide members of the Executive Committee with further detail of the expenditure on insurance each year within the Housing Revenue Account.	This information was reported to Committee Members and the Council.
Cllr Mould / S Morgan	Fees and Charges 2013/14 Officers undertook to provide members of the Executive Committee with further detail on the cost of the Hire Products on page 53 of the report and what the weekly charge comprised.	
<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 18/02/13