



Executive Committee

Tue 12 Nov
2013
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



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Ivor Westmore
Democratic Services**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

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

Chair

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

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

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Executive

12th November 2013

7.00 pm

Committee

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: Bill Hartnett (Chair) John Fisher
Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) Phil Mould
Rebecca Blake Mark Shurmer
Juliet Brunner Debbie Taylor
Brandon Clayton

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 - 6) Chief Executive	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on (Minutes attached)
5. Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 7 - 22) Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	To consider the results of the public consultation on options for changes to the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme and proposals for a new scheme which are based on the outcome of the initial consultation. (Report attached) (All Wards)
6. Nomination of an Asset of Community Value (Pages 23 - 34) Head of Planning and Regeneration	To consider a nomination as an Asset of Community Value for 54 South Street (the former REDI Centre). (Report attached) (Central Ward)

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<p>7. Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise</p> <p>(Pages 35 - 50)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider and authorise the Council to become a member of Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) and to approve the nomination of a representative of Bromsgrove District / Redditch Borough Council to act as a Director of the company and/or Voting Delegate at the Annual General Meeting of the company.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>8. Redditch Borough Council Response to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013)</p> <p>(Pages 51 - 54)</p> <p>Head of Planning and Regeneration</p>	<p>To consider the Council response to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013).</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>9. Making Experiences Count - Customer Services 2nd Quarter Monitoring Report</p> <p>(Pages 55 - 68)</p> <p>Head of Customer Access and Financial Support</p>	<p>To consider the 2nd Quarter Monitoring Report for Customer Services for 2013/14.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p>
<p>10. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(Pages 69 - 78)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th October 2013.</p> <p>There are no recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>11. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>

<p>12. Advisory Panels - update report (Pages 79 - 82) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p>13. Action Monitoring (Pages 83 - 84) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p>14. Exclusion of the Public</p>	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to any items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (<i>to be specified</i>) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</p> <p>These paragraphs are as follows:</p> <p>Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Para 1 – <u>any individual</u>;• Para 2 – the <u>identity of any individual</u>;• Para 3 – <u>financial or business affairs</u>;• Para 4 – <u>labour relations matters</u>;• Para 5 – <u>legal professional privilege</u>;• Para 6 – <u>a notice, order or direction</u>;• Para 7 – the <u>prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</u>; <p>may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.</p>

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**15. 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

15th October 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Braley

Officers:

D Allen, M Bough, M Cox, C Flanagan, D Hancox, S Hanley and S Morgan

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

59. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Rebecca Blake and Greg Chance.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

61. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that Item 6 on the agenda, 'Delivering New Affordable Housing', was being considered without the required notice being given on the Executive Work Programme due to the urgency of the decision around potential syndication onto a Mortgage Rescue Scheme and that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been advised thus.

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Chair

62. MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 17th September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. COUNTY AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Committee received the County Air Quality Action Plan which was being submitted to all Worcestershire local authorities for approval. It was reported that, as there were no Air Quality Management Areas in Redditch, there was not a requirement that the Council sign up to the Plan but Officers advised that adoption by Redditch would ensure consistency across the County and would allow the Council to benefit from involvement in discussions over air quality going forward.

RESOLVED that

the Countywide Air Quality Action Plan be adopted and agreement be given to supporting and assisting progress of the measures identified in the Plan that will provide effective resolution to areas of poor air quality and assist in preventing the requirement to declare any Air Quality Management Areas in Redditch.

64. DELIVERING NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A report was received which outlined proposals for the Council to develop homes and other options to increase the amount of affordable housing in the Borough to meet affordable housing demand. Officers had investigated the possibility of building Council homes on land owned by the authority but had also considered a number of other options to increase the stock of affordable housing.

The background to the proposals put forward was a cap on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of £122M which was the present level of the total HRA debt and an existing HRA Capital reserve of £9.4M which could be used to support capital or revenue expenditure.

Officers presented Members with a predicted average cost for building properties which was considerably greater than the current average cost of buy-back on Right to Buy properties and for this and similar reasons it was not considered viable or efficient to push ahead with house-building by the authority at the present time.

It was reported that there was an opportunity for the Council to become a syndicated partner in a Mortgage Rescue Scheme with the possibility in the 2013/14 financial year of achieving significant grant funding from Central Government in the process. Given that this would lead to the Council's housing stock being enhanced at an average cost of approximately £63K per property and would remove the risk of eviction for a number of households this was proposed as an option to pursue. The grant funding was only available until 31st March 2014 and it was therefore suggested that urgency procedures might be required following the meeting to expedite this course of action.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The suggestion that the Council did not build its own houses was discussed in depth. Some Members felt that it was appropriate in the present circumstances for the Council to take a calculated risk and use the HRA Capital Reserve to build new properties with anticipated rent helping to bridge the shortfall in currently available capital. It was pointed out that the New Homes Bonus, as well as forming a part of the General Fund, could not be relied upon as a source of funding as there was consultation around elements transferring to the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in 2015. Aside from questioning the prudence of diverting the HRA Capital Reserve to house-building, Officers also noted that there were other pressures such as the need to maintain the Decent Homes standards and the potential for the introduction of Universal Credit to impact upon rental income in the short term. A separate residential housing fund within the General Fund was also raised as a possibility but it was noted that this would not offer up affordable housing. The Leader undertook to seek to provide an example to Councillor Brandon Clayton of a Registered Social Landlord's (RSL) rents that were comparable to Council rents following the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Executive Committee notes the report and the current financial position of the HRA;**
- 2) due to the various risks and unknowns in the HRA business plan the Council does not build new homes in the short term;**
- 3) Members note the options within the report at 3.12 and task Officers to provide a further report on the options for further consideration of the Executive Committee;**
- 4) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Services and Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to enter into a Service Level Agreement with WM**

Housing to become a syndicated partner for the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme;

- 5) **authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Services to agree each individual case for purchase through the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme;**
- 6) **Officers undertake a review of the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme to determine if further funding needs to be invested and report back to the Executive Committee before 31 March 2014;**
- 7) **the Committee notes the intention to use urgency procedures to consider the recommendation to Council at 8), below, prior to the next available meeting of the Council in view of the timescales involved in establishing a Mortgage Rescue Scheme; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 8) **authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance & Resources and Head of Housing Services to use up to £400,000 from Housing Revenue Account reserves for the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme and support.**

65. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2014/15

A report had been submitted which set up proposed funding splits for the various parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme for 2014/15.

Officers confirmed that the overall budget for the Grants Programme was the same as in the preceding year and also a number of years prior to that, the amount available not having been altered for some considerable time. In response to the contention that this represented a real terms decrease in funding over time it was noted that the level of grant-funding to the authority from Central Government had been falling far more significantly over the same period.

RECOMMENDED that

the following themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2014/15 voluntary and community sector grants process: (see report for details on themes: these themes link into the Strategic Purposes for Redditch Borough Council – See chart - Appendix 1 to the report)

- Independent Communities = £130,000 – see 3.3.1
- Community Development = £ 55,000 – see 3.3.2
- Thriving Communities = £ 20,000 – see 3.3.3
- Community Welfare = £ 20,000 – see 3.3.4
- Stronger Communities Grant Programme = £ 15,000 – see 3.3.5
- £1,000 be allocated from the Grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to deliver:
 - a) networking and promotional events;
 - b) advertising and communication support;
 - c) newsletters.

66. MONITORING REPORT - WRITE OFF OF DEBTS - APRIL - AUGUST 2013

Members considered a report which detailed the action taken by Officers with respect to the write-off of debts during the first four months of 2013/14 and set out the profile and / or level of the outstanding debt.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the report be noted.

67. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th September 2013.

RECOMMENDED that

Scrutiny Task Group Recommendations Monitoring Process

- 1) the reference that “the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review implementation of recommendations made in any report not sooner than twelve months after consideration of its report by the Executive Committee” be removed from the Council’s Constitution; and

RESOLVED that

- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th September 2013 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

69. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The latest update on the activity of the Council's Advisory Panels and similar bodies was considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

70. ACTION MONITORING

The latest version of the Committee's Action Monitoring report was received by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the Action Monitoring report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.01 pm

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Chair

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LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda de Warr
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Not applicable
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Government changes to the benefits scheme in relation to Council Tax required the Council to introduce an annual Council Tax Support Scheme, from April 13. This scheme must be reviewed annually and any proposed changes consulted on. Where no changes are proposed the current (or default) scheme remains in place. This report summarises the results of the public consultation on options for changes to the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme ("the Scheme").
- 1.2 The report presents proposals for an amendment to the existing scheme. If endorsed these proposals will be subject to a further period of consultation after which a decision will be made on the implementation of changes to the current Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) the outcome of the initial statutory consultation on options for changes to the Local Council Tax Scheme, be noted;**
- 2) for the purposes of the further statutory consultation that is required, to amend the current Scheme, namely that entitlement to Council Tax support should be capped at 80% of Council Tax liability so that all working age claimants will pay a minimum of 20% towards their Council Tax Liability, and that the amended version shall become the proposed draft Scheme 2014/15;**
- 3) the Executive Director of Finance and Resources be authorised to consult on this draft Scheme;**
- 4) a report on the outcome of the further consultation be brought back to the Committee in due course for a decision on its recommendation to Council on the Scheme to be adopted from April 2014; and**
- 5) Officers be instructed to explore and report back options for a hardship fund, as well as further technical changes to Council Tax Exemptions.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 As members are aware, from April 2013 the Government replaced the national scheme of Council Tax Benefit with a scheme of Council Tax Support to be agreed locally.
- 3.2 This scheme, although agreed locally has certain requirements namely:
- Pensionable age claimants must be protected;
 - Local billing authorities are tasked with determining the extent of support for working age claimants;
 - The scheme is a discount rather than a benefit; and
 - All schemes must ensure that work incentives are enhanced.
- 3.3 The impact of the change to Council Tax Support was to reduce the tax base for the Council by the amount of any support given. This affected all organisations that raise a precept, including the Borough Council, major preceptors and the parish council. Compensation for the loss of council tax is paid for by the Government as Council Tax Support Grant to billing authorities and major preceptors but, the Grant is equivalent to around 90% of previous council tax benefit costs.
- 3.4 Prior to the Government introducing these changes the cost of council tax benefits in Redditch was around £6.5m per year. The 10% shortfall as a result of the reduction in grant towards the support scheme is around £650k and this is split between the Borough Council (including the parish council) and our major preceptors, broadly in line with the proportion of council tax levied. As a result the County Council will take the largest share of the shortfall. The cost to the Borough is in the region of £91k (14%).
- 3.5 Any reduction in council tax support will result in more council tax to collect, thus potentially increasing the administrative costs associated with recovery.
- 3.6 Also from April 2013, more discretion was given to billing authorities regarding discounts and exemptions for second and empty homes. In April 2013 the Borough Council reduced discounts on second homes from 10% to nil and reduced short term empty property exemptions from 100% to 50%. These changes are estimated to claw back in the region of £257k (£26k for RBC) of the £650k overall funding gap.
- 3.7 The adoption of the proposal to cap entitlement at 80% of the Council Tax liability would meet the remainder of the funding gap. This option was broadly supported in the consultation exercise with 67% of those who responded agreeing with a cap on entitlement.

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- 3.8 The 80% cap is the only proposal that would meet the funding gap in full. None of the other proposals would meet the funding gap either on their own or in combination with other proposals. The 80% cap should also ensure that for households with the same Council Tax liability there will be an equal cut to Council Tax Support in cash terms, which makes the cap the most progressive of the three proposals for change.
- 3.9 The impact of the changes, particularly on residents who are of low income and have not previously paid Council Tax will need to be assessed and those individuals offered support and advice on managing their finances. It is hoped that with the framework of personal support that is in place as part of the transformation of the service this will mitigate the impact on residents and reduce any potential shortfalls in income recovery.
- 3.10 If changes were made to our council tax support scheme requiring all claimants to pay something towards their council tax bill, then we would want to introduce a discretionary hardship fund. There is potential funding towards a small discretionary hardship fund for a two year period if we introduce a scheme which meets the full funding gap. It is proposed that this would be targeted to those most in need. An outline scheme will be presented in January, alongside the outcome of the consultation on the scheme.
- 3.11 Introducing a cap at 90% would meet just over half of the funding gap.
- 3.12 The most popular option from the consultation (73% of responders) was the introduction of a minimum level of Council Tax support. If entitlement was below this level no support would be paid. The minimum level could be set at either £5.00 or £10.00 per week. The introduction of a minimum level of support would have failed to meet the funding gap leaving a remaining gap of £278k (£39k impact on RBC).
- 3.13 This option would also have failed to meet the Government's principles for Local Council Tax Support Schemes which requires that all schemes ensure that work incentives are enhanced. A minimum level of support would lead to 'cliff edges' whereby small increase in income can lead to large reductions in Council Tax Support. These cliff edges lead to high marginal deduction rates as people's earnings increase which can act as a disincentive to work.
- 3.14 The second most popular option in the consultation – the capping of Council Tax support for larger homes would be largely ineffective on its own in bridging the funding gap. It would leave a remaining gap of £390k (£55k impact on RBC).
- 3.15 Changes to exemptions can be made without further consultation and officers will report options for further changes to exemption in December 2103.

Legal Implications

- 3.16 On 1 April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new scheme of Council Tax support called "Council Tax Support Schemes". Under s13A and Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (inserted by s10 Local Government Act 2012), each local authority was required to make a Council Tax Support Scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to the amounts of council tax payable.
- 3.17 Statutory Instrument 2012/2885, "The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements)(England) Regulations 2012" ensured that certain requirements prescribed by the Government were included in each Scheme (subsequently amended by S.I. 2012/3085)
- 3.18 The Authority must make any revisions to the Scheme no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding the one when it will take effect, so that it will be necessary for the Council's 2014/15 scheme to be in place by 31st January 2014.
- 3.19 Failure to agree a new scheme would result in the current scheme continuing to apply and a subsequent funding gap would emerge for both the Borough Council and other preceptors, which could result in challenge from those organisations.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.20 Income recovery and financial support officers will work to ensure that residents are supported through any changes to mitigate the impact on their own finances together with those of the Borough.
- 3.21 There may be a requirement to make changes to software however this will be dependent on the revisions to the scheme that are finally approved.
- 3.22 Consideration will need to be given as to how the discretionary assistance will be administered and at which level decisions will be made, and an outline scheme for discretionary assistance will be .

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.23 Any changes to council tax support will only affect working age claimants, however it is important that we provide support to those most vulnerable as a result of any changes to Council Tax Support. The Council will maintain a budget which would operate on a discretionary basis to provide support, in the event that these changes are made to our Council Tax Support Scheme, for those most in need.

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- 3.24 The changes will not disproportionately impact on those with special protected characteristics under the equality duty and the discretionary hardship fund will minimise any adverse impact caused.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Any changes to council tax support whilst increasing council tax income to the Council and our major preceptors will potentially have wide implications for our residents and therefore Officers will ensure that support on managing finances and advice on other potential benefits is made available. In addition the income recovery team will continue to measure the arrears position to ensure that members are aware of the impact on income collected.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation results

Appendix 2 – Council Tax Support – Consultation Options – Financial Data

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Held in Revenues Service

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: David Riley, Revenues Manager

email: d.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Tel.: 01527 64252 Ext 3382

2013 Council Tax Support Consultation Summary of Results

Purpose

This document presents a summary of the results from a six week consultation on the proposals to make changes to Redditch Borough Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

The consultation ran from 23rd August 2013 to 4th October 2013.

Background

Council Tax Support is the system under which councils give discounts on Council Tax bills to help people who meet certain criteria, mainly based on low income. This used to be called Council Tax Benefit.

The benefits system, along with government funding for it, has changed over the last few years. This means that we now have to take steps to change the way we provide services, including how much we pay in Council Tax Support, as we have less money available.

We have identified a range of changes we could make to our existing Council Tax Support scheme in order to meet our savings targets. Only working age people who claim Council Tax Support will be affected. None of the proposed changes will affect pensioners, who come under a separate arrangement.

If we decide to make any changes, we will carry out a further consultation on our revised Council Tax Support scheme. Any changes we do make will come into effect from 1 April 2014.

Methodology

We designed a survey containing questions about the potential changes we could make to Council Tax Support. We created an online version of the survey and made printed copies available on request.

We promoted the consultation through media releases, a prominent feature on the home page of our website and social media. We invited members of the Social Landlord's Group and The Private Landlords Steering Group to give their views.

Results

Completed consultation questionnaires were received from a number of individuals and organisations; the summary of the responses is detailed in this section.

Written responses not taking the form of the consultation questionnaire were received from Worcestershire County Council and Mary Latham, West

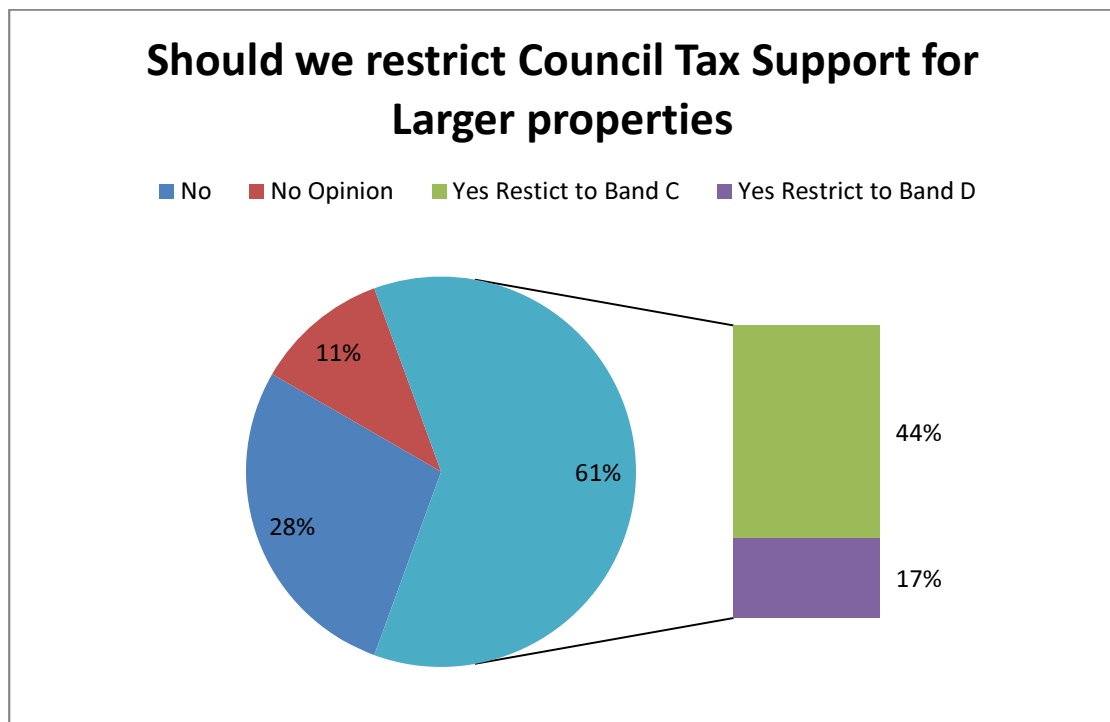
Midlands Representative of the National Landlord's Association. The written responses are appended to this report.

Reducing Support for higher banded properties

In the current scheme a person can get 100% Council Tax Benefit no matter how large their home.

We asked for a view on whether we should limit Council Tax Support for people occupying larger houses to the level that would be given to a smaller house.

61% of those who responded to the consultation agreed that we should limit support for larger homes to the level that would be provided to smaller properties – of the respondents in favour of limiting support for higher banded properties 72% (44% of all respondents) favoured a cap at Band C level.



The majority of respondents were in favour of reducing support for people living in larger homes with some providing their opinion as to how this would provide a fairer scheme.

"I am restricted to the property band that I can afford therefore I feel that anyone receiving benefits should also have restrictions imposed on them. Treat everyone fairly and don't favour some at the expense of tax payers"

"Yes because many people receive these benefits whilst living in large properties, which seems totally unfair. Equity release and downsizing are options to these people. Often also they are just playing the system."

Those people who advised us that they were against a cap drew attention to the need for a safety net for people who may have a sudden change in income and to the facts that factors other than size will affect a property's valuation band.

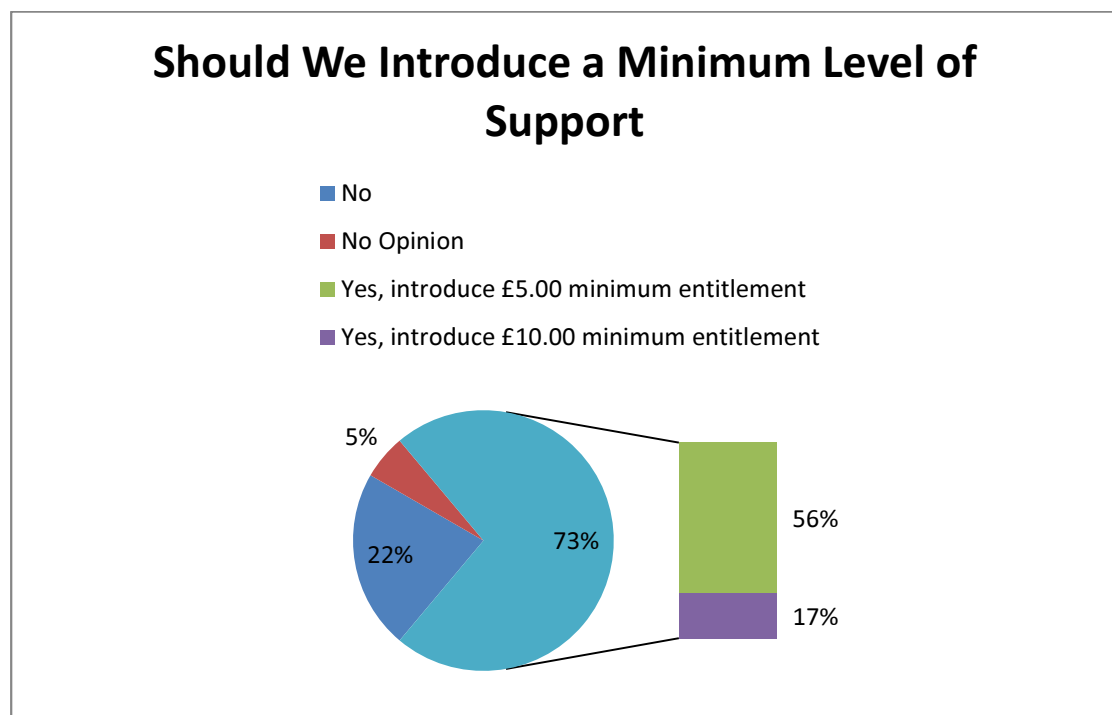
“The restriction would take no account of the fact that an individual who has been living in a large property for a number of years may have had a change in circumstances which has meant that they are now required to claim benefits. When the individual was not in receipt of benefits they would have been contributing at a higher rate – based on their larger home – and it would be unfair to penalise them when they have need to call on the welfare system. Especially when, as evidenced during the recent recession, the prevailing housing market may be preventing them from selling their home and downsizing.”

“Rating of properties is not necessarily just to do with size of the property but also the location. The same sized property can be a band B in one district but a band D in another”

Minimum Level of Support

Under the current scheme there is no minimum level of Council Tax support. Some people who are eligible for Council Tax Support get less than £5 a week. We asked for views on whether to introduce a minimum level of Council Tax Support of either £5 or £10 a week.

The majority of respondents, 73%, were in favour of a minimum level of support and of those in favour most felt that relief should be removed for anyone receiving £5.00 or less per week.



Those who were against the introduction of a minimum level of support commented on how the change would impact on people with the smallest incomes.

“£5 a week is a lot for a less well off person or family to lose. This benefit is after all given to those who are on low incomes and are assessed to need this.”

“There should be NO change to the minimum level of council tax because this will penalise the least well off once again.”

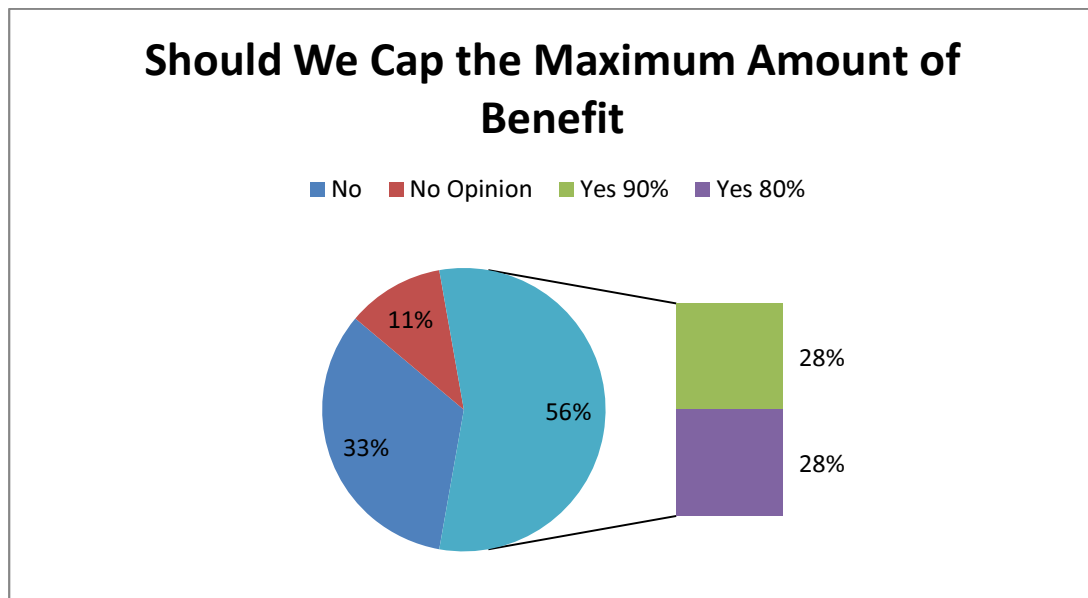
“When put in monthly rather than weekly terms £16 a month for someone currently getting £4 a week is a lot to lose.”

Everyone pays something

Under the current scheme people of working age can qualify for Council Tax support of up to 100% of their Council Tax bill. We asked whether we should change our scheme so that everyone of working age pays something towards their Council Tax bill.

This would mean no one eligible for Council Tax Support would receive a 100% discount on their Council Tax bill and we would assess their entitlement to Council Tax support based on a maximum percentage of between 80% and 90% of their Council Tax Liability, with the difference due to be paid.

33% of respondents were against the introduction of a maximum level of entitlement. Those in favour (56%) were split equally between a cap at 80% and 90%.



Comments received focused on how the requirement to make some contribution to Council Tax may incentivise work and also drew attention to the difficulties long term recipients of Council Tax support may have in the transition from full entitlement to capped entitlement.

"It helps to make work more attractive if everyone has to pay something and shows that you can't expect the local authority to pay your CT bill as a right"

"Again it does depend on the circumstances, if people are working on a low wage I believe they should have all the help possible. My concern is these people who do not work and appear relatively well off. I work with staff who say they were better off not working! Which I feel is a disgrace."

"As a personal preference I would suggest 85%"

"There are many people of working age who having been unemployed for a long time will find it difficult to get work."

"People on benefits who have previously qualified for 100% assistance, will now need to find the extra monies to pay their contribution, when money is already short."

"There are people as well as the elderly population who need protecting such as people who are long term sick or disabled and unable to work and not through choice have to live on benefits. With the rising costs of inflation and benefits not reflecting this they are already struggling to make ends meet. There is a minimum the government determines we need to live on which is why council tax is provided. How will this work if council tax is being demanded! Why should the vulnerable yet again be targeted for the mistakes of the previous governments inability to run the country's finances. Having local councils decide who is to pay what will create a post code lottery as to what amount of council tax one has to pay in Britain depending on where they live just like with NHS services. The government seem to find enough money available to send aboard for foreign aid and fighting in wars perhaps they should start looking after the people in Britain first instead of cutting our benefits and closing down our hospitals."

"Not having council tax support for anyone not working would reduce the amount that person has for other essentials such as heating and food."

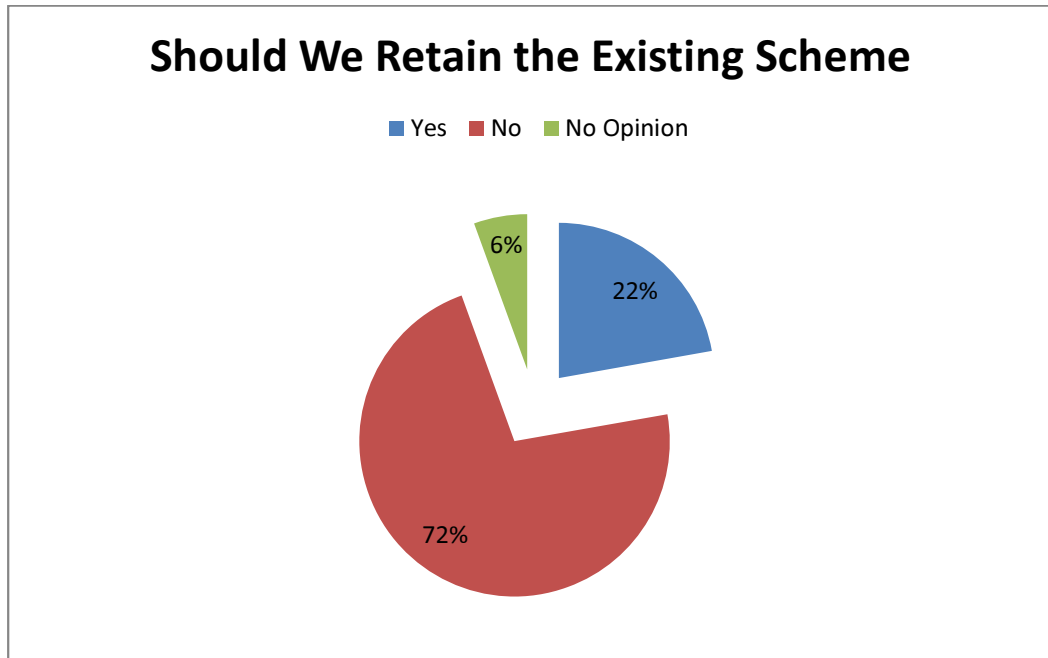
"If working age claimants are on a basic income of Income support then to make payments of 10% of the CT charge puts a huge strain on their finances and can put them into poverty."

No Change

If no changes are made to the scheme then the funding gap for Redditch Borough Council will be £46,000 – the total funding gap for all precepting authorities will be £390,000.

We asked people whether, after considering all of the options, they thought that we should retain the existing scheme and meet the shortfall by cuts elsewhere.

72% of respondents felt that changes should be made to the Council Tax Support scheme to meet the funding gap, with just 22% opting for no change.



Respondents comments acknowledged the need to make changes and provided opinions on how savings could be made to the way services are provided.

“Unfortunately monies have to be found from somewhere; even if it is a small amount overall.”

“I believe that you can save a sizeable sum within local authorities and schools by moving from proprietary computer software - such a Microsoft Windows to Free Open Source Software. See Munich City Council as an example.”

“Other cuts may be possible in other areas in addition to some changes to Council Tax Support i.e. length of time street lighting is on, lights left on in public buildings, increasing hire rates of public buildings - and anything else where economy savings can be made rather than cutting services.”

Some comments raised concerns that the impact of changes and cuts to services would fall on the most vulnerable claimants and asked for the burden of cuts to be spread evenly amongst all residents.

“I accept that to cover the loss of funding from Central Government changes must be made but to recoup these from the most vulnerable claimants in the area will put them into more financial hardship”

“The council should consider whether the method of meeting the shortfall can be shared equally across people claiming benefit and those who are not claiming. The

benefit changes could be made in conjunction with a general increase in the level of Council Tax."

"Make changes but make sure the better off in larger properties who are working and even have more than one property pay a higher share of the burden, or those privately owned who can down size and not expect the tax payer to pay for them to live in a large owned property that will be theirs in the end and therefore gain greater benefit..."

A number of respondents emphasised that all residents should make a contribution to the services provided by the Council and that a financial contribution can heighten a person's perception of the value of the service.

"I think everyone should pay at least something as we don't want to keep cutting important services that we need. We all have to pay for our utility services so think council tax should be treated the same in some ways."

"if people have to pay for something they usually value it more ironically. Also if you are utilising services then one should contribute"

Short Term Empty Properties

The consultation sought views on further technical changes to Council Tax by asking whether the 50% discount for properties that have been empty for less than 6 months should have the discount removed.

50% of the respondents were in favour of the removal of discounts for short term empty properties.

The response from Mary Latham, West Midlands Regional Representative of the National Landlord's Association is appended to this report and provides a detailed response relating to discounts for empty homes.

From: Mary Latham [mailto:Mary.Latham@landlords.org.uk]
Sent: 11 September 2013 12:24
To: Jennifer Delorenzo
Cc: Regions Reports
Subject: RE: Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation ORG-1222

Hi Jenny, I have posted the link on Social media and Tweeted it to my followers. It has already been re-tweeted and has reached over 17,000 people so far.

I have a concern about what happens when a local authority withdraws the short term empty property relief and I would be grateful if you would pass my concerns onto the relevant person.

NLA support good landlords and we encourage landlords to invest in their properties to keep them up to a good standard, that means that there are often short periods of time where our properties are empty - landlords do not want empty properties and we keep this time to a minimum.

NLA also support good landlords who thoroughly check their prospective tenants to protect neighbourhoods from anti social behaviour and to protect themselves from damage to their properties and rent arrears - this can mean that there are short periods of time where a property is empty while the landlord carries out the necessary due diligence.

You will also be aware that some tenants cause damages to properties and it takes time for those repairs/replacements to be carried out, again landlords keep these to a minimum but they often cannot be done while there is a tenant in place which can cause short periods where the property is empty

We are fully aware of the need for local authorities to balance their books but my concern is that if the council tax relief for short void periods is withdrawn from landlords it may have an impact on the standards of rented properties in Redditch and also the quality of tenants. None of us want this.

I would like to propose that your authority consider offering Council Tax relief to landlords for a maximum of 21 days if those landlords are accredited. Apart from the fact that this will reduced the potential issues I have already mentioned it will send a clear message to good landlords, who have taken the time and trouble to become accredited through an education based scheme, that your authority supports them and wants to encourage them to invest in good quality homes in Redditch.

If this is coupled with the use of the HMO licensing structure which is being used in Birmingham you will find that more landlords will become accredited and both property and management standards will improve in Redditch - which is what we all want.

I would be more that happy to meet the appropriate people to explore this further if necessary.

I will be very interested in the response to these proposals.

Mary

Mary Latham | West Midlands Regional Representative
National Landlords Association

M: 07812 125395 | W: landlords.org.uk
22-26 Albert Embankment London SE1 7TJ

Council Tax Support – Consultation Options

Option	Number of working age claimants affected (out of total of 4,600)	Total amount saved	Saving to Redditch (including parish)	Average annual increase	Average weekly increase	Administration benefit?
Introduce minimum council tax support of £5 per week. Currently no minimum support amount	2,000	£112,000	£16,000	£259	£5	Yes
Introduce minimum council tax support of £10 per week	2,150	£115,000	£22,000	£518	£10	Yes
Restrict all council tax support to Band D equivalent amounts		£8,000	£1,000			No
Introduce minimum payment of 20% council tax for all working age claimants. Only 80% of council tax liability assessed for council tax support	4,600	£449,000	£63,000	£100	£2	No
Introduce minimum payment of 10% council tax for all working age claimants. Only 90% of council tax liability assess for council tax support	4,600	£225,000	£31,000	£50	£1	No
Withdraw all Council Tax exemption for short term empty property (Class C) Currently 50% for 6 months (excluding new developments)		£134,000	£18,000			No

EXECUTIVE

12th November 2013

NOMINATION OF AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Greg Chance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford – Head of Planning & Regeneration
Wards Affected	Central
Key Decision – N/A	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To consider a request to list the REDI Centre as an Asset of Community Value

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and RESOLVE to EITHER

- 1) support the listing of the REDI Centre as an Asset of Community Value; OR**
- 2) not support the listing of the REDI Centre as an Asset of Community Value**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As Members are aware from previous reports the Localism Act included the 'Community Right to Bid' which gave communities a right to identify a building or other land that they believe to be of importance to their community's social well-being so that if it comes up for sale there is a six month period within which they can prepare their bid to buy the asset. The property in question can then be sold on the open market. Community groups have the same rights as any other bidders but there is no preference given to the local community bid.
- 3.2 Officers have received a nomination for the REDI Centre which is owned by the Council. The nomination has been made by Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise (RYCE). RYCE has requested that the asset be nominated to give the ability for it to remain as a community asset in the future. The nomination is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Local ward Councillors have been consulted as part of the process.
- 3.4 The nomination from RYCE supports the inclusion of the asset due to the fact that the REDI Centre has provided a valuable meeting space

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for the Community that could be utilised for a number of activities that would benefit the wider community. This includes provision of a youth club and classes to promote health and well being.

- 3.5 RYCE have provided officers with the constitution of the community enterprise.
- 3.6 Consideration of the nomination has been undertaken by Head of Planning and Regeneration and taking into account the relevant information, the Head of Planning and Regeneration is of the view that approval of the nomination would support the provision of community activities within the District should the property be for sale, other than as a going concern, and a community group were able to purchase the property. The recommendation from the Head of Planning and Regeneration to Executive is therefore to support the proposal for the REDI Centre to be listed. Members are reminded that under the new process for assets of community value introduced in November 2012 the final decision regarding whether to list an asset rests with the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 If the asset was privately owned, property owners who believe they have incurred costs as a result of complying with these procedures can apply for compensation from the Council. As previously reported to Council, Government recognises this as a potential risk to local authorities and will provide a safety net whereby any verified claims of over £20,000 will be met by Government. The owners also have a right to appeal the decision made by the Council in agreeing that the building be included on the Assets of Community Value.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There is a legal requirement within the Localism Act 2011 to implement the provisions as defined for Assets of Community Value regulations 2012.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.9 There are no specific operational implications for the District. The list of nominated assets will be maintained by Land Charges officers and will be available on the Councils Website.

EXECUTIVE12th November 2013**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.9 The approval of the nomination of REDI Centre will ensure that should the property be declared for sale any community group would be able to express an interest in purchasing the asset. This would result in up to 6 months of moratorium whereby any sale could only be to a community group. Following this the owner can sell to any purchaser.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The register will be maintained to ensure that all assets nominated are included to mitigate any risks associated with assets not being included on the register. Consideration by officers and members will be undertaken at each nomination to ensure a consistent approach is taken.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Nomination Form

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Ruth Bamford
E Mail: r.bamford@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881202

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE – THE COMMUNITY
RIGHT TO BID**

NOMINATION FORM

Section A: About your organisation

A1 Organisation's name and address

Name of organisation*

Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise (RYCE)

Address including postcode

19 Barlich Way Lodge Park Redditch B98 7JR

**full name as written in your constitution or rules (if appropriate)*

A2 Contact details

Name

Position in organisation

Address including postcode

Daytime telephone no.

Email address

How and when can we contact you?*

**by email or phone, and days of the week and/or times of day you would prefer*

A3 Type of organisation

Description	Put a cross against all those that apply	Registration number of charity and/or company (if applicable)
Neighbourhood forum		
Parish Council		
Charity	X	31965 R/EW00477
Community interest company		
Unincorporated body		
Company limited by guarantee		
Industrial and provident society		

A4 Number of members registered to vote locally (unincorporated bodies only)

In the case of an unincorporated body, at least 21 of its members must be registered to vote in the Redditch Borough. If relevant, please confirm the number of such members. If they are registered to vote in the area of a neighbouring local authority, rather than in Redditch, please confirm which area that is.

I can confirm that we have over 21 local members who are registered to vote in the Redditch area, these names and addresses are available to view if required.

A5 Local connection

Your organisation must have a local connection, which means that its activities are wholly or partly concerned with the administrative area of Redditch Borough Council or a neighbouring local authority. In some cases this will be obvious, eg. a parish council in Redditch, or an organisation whose activities are confined to the district. If your connection may not be obvious to us please explain what your organisation's local connection is.

Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise is made up of a committee from the local area and the majority of its members are from Redditch and its surrounding environs. Our aim is to purchase and run the property that is currently known as the REDI Centre .

A6 Distribution of surplus funds (certain types of organisation only)

If your organisation is an unincorporated body, a company limited by guarantee, or an industrial and provident society, its rules must provide that surplus funds are not distributed to members, but are applied wholly or partly for the benefit of the local area (ie. within the administrative area of Redditch or a neighbouring local authority). If relevant, please confirm that this is the case, and specifically which area this applies to.

RYCE's current constitution clearly states:

To actively promote and encourage community involvement and champion the work of the community.

The rules of the "Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 clearly states that: '*The Society shall not trade for profit. Any profits generated by the Society shall be applied to the continuation and development of the Society*'.

A7 More about your organisation

What are the main aims and activities of your organisation?

RYCE intend to use the building that is currently known as the REDI Centre as a community hub. Maximising its facilities during the day as well the evening, giving an opportunity for all members of Redditch's diverse multicultural society to become fully engaged with its amenities. The following are examples of the kind of programmes that are envisaged: Youth club, mothers and toddler groups, music, activities for the elderly. We will also encourage classes that promote a healthy lifestyle. The building's individual rooms will also be available to hire.

A8 Your organisation's rules

Please send us a copy of the relevant type of document for your organisation, and put a cross in the next column to indicate which one this is	X
Memorandum and Articles of Association (for a company)	
Trust Deed (for a trust)	
Constitution and/or rules (for other organisations)	X

Part B: About the land or building(s) you are nominating

B1 Description and address

What it is (eg. pub, local shop)
Unused Adult and Community Learning Centre

Name of premises (eg. Post office , Community Centre)
REDI CENTRE

Address including postcode (if known)
54 South Street Redditch B98 7DQ

B2 Sketch plan

Please include (here or on a separate sheet) a sketch plan of the land. This should show:-

- The boundaries of the land that you are nominating
- The approximate size and position of any building(s) on the land.
- Any roads bordering the site.

The building known as the REDI Centre fronts onto South Street Redditch its post code is B98 7DQ It has a boundary to West Street on one side while its rear boundary is to a property known as The Youth House.

The building is approx 393.90 sqms

The property consists of a reception area, offices, meeting rooms, small hall kitchen and coffee bar and toilet facilities.

Unfortunately a sketch plan is unavailable.

B3 Owners and others with an interest in the building or land

You should supply the following information, if possible. If any information is not known to you, please say so.

	Name(s)	Address(es)
Names of all current occupants of the land	Redditch Borough Council	<i>Same as B1.</i>
Names and current or last known addresses of all those owning the freehold of the land (ie. owner, head landlord, head lessor)	Redditch Borough Council	Town Hall Walter Stranz Square Redditch B98 8AH
Names and current or last known addresses of all those having a leasehold interest in the land (ie. tenant, intermediate landlord, intermediate lessor)	N/A	N/A

B4 Why you think the building or land is of community value

Note that the following are not able to be assets of community value:-

- A building wholly used as a residence, together with land “connected with” that residence. This means adjoining land in the same ownership. Land is treated as adjoining if it is separated only by a road, railway, river or canal.
- A caravan site.
- Operational land. This is generally land belonging to the former utilities and other statutory operators.

Does it currently further the social wellbeing or social interests* of the local community, or has it done so in the recent past? If so, how?

The REDI Centre before its closure in 2010 provided an Adult and Community Learning Centre. The building is currently closed .

Could it in future further the social wellbeing or social interests* of the local community? If so, how? (This could be different from its current or past use.)

RYCE intend to use the building to its full potential offering its many varied facilities to encompass every sector of the local community. We will offer its varied spaces to any group. As stated earlier in A7:

‘RYCE intend to use the building that is currently known as the REDI Centre as a community hub. Maximising its facilities during the day as well the evening, giving an opportunity for all members of Redditch’s diverse multicultural society to become fully engaged with its amenities. The following are examples of the kind of programmes that are envisaged: Youth club, mothers and toddler groups, music, activities for the elderly. We will also encourage classes that promote a healthy lifestyle. The building’s individual rooms will also be available to hire’

*These could be cultural, recreational and/or sporting interests, so please say which one(s) apply.

Section C: Submitting this nomination

C1 What to include

- The rules of your organisation (question A8).
- Your sketch plan (question B2).

C2 Signature

By signing your name here (if submitting by post) or typing it (if submitting by email) you are confirming that the contents of this form are correct, to the best of your knowledge.

Signature Raymond Groves

C3 Where to send this form

You can submit this nomination:-

- **By post to:** Jayne Pickering , Executive Director Finance and Resources, Redditch Borough Council , Town Hall , Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
- **By email to:** j.pickering@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12 November 2013

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (IESE)

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks (Chief Executive)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	Not applicable

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To consider and authorise the Council to become a public body member of Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) and to approve the nomination of a representative of Redditch Borough Council to act as Voting Delegate at the Annual General Meeting of the company.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive Committee **RESOLVE** that

- 1) the principle of Redditch Borough Council becoming a member of iESE Limited be agreed;**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve and execute any documentation necessary to give effect to Recommendation 1) above; and**
- 3) the proposal in relation to the nomination of a Redditch Borough Councillor as Voting Delegate be endorsed.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Improvement and Efficiency South East originally operated as one of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs). These Partnerships were funded by central government with the objective of identifying, fostering and delivering improvements and efficiencies across the public sector. Indeed the Council has been and continue to be supported by Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands in a number of areas of work.
- 3.2 Improvement and Efficiency South East established a leading profile in this regard however with the funding for RIEPs being stopped as part of the austerity measures they decided to continue their work under the umbrella of an independent company with the same objectives and purposes. The new entity was incorporated as a non profit distributing company limited by guarantee and was retitled Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise. There is an opportunity to become a member of the company which it is felt will be of benefit to the Council.

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A copy of the IESE brochure is attached at Appendix 1 which details the “whole offer” that they provide – a number of areas may be of benefit to the Council including potential advice on different operating models.

- 3.3 In addition to the company, it is envisaged that additional subsidiary companies will be created over time. These subsidiary companies will deliver services to clients on a not for profit or profit making basis.
- 3.4 Being a member will involve each council/public sector body guaranteeing the company to a limit of £1. There are two classes of members; members who are public bodies and iESE members. As a local authority, Redditch Borough Council would become a “public body member”.
- 3.5 The company will be funded by a number of different means, including:
- The transfer of existing Improvement and Efficiency South East assets
 - Grant funding where available
 - Payments from clients receiving services from a group company.
- 3.6 The Council will be required to enter into a Members’ Agreement governing the relationship between itself and the company. This Members’ Agreement covers the following aspects of the relationship:
- Management of the company
 - Preparation, execution and monitoring of a Business Plan
 - Provision of Accounts
 - Admission of new members
 - Termination of the relationship
 - Disputes involving the relationship
- 3.7 The Members’ Agreement will also seek to ensure that the local authority/public bodies retain control over the ownership, strategic direction and key decisions of the company.
- 3.8 It is proposed that the Leader of the Council be nominated to act as the Council’s Voting Delegate . This appointment will be noted at Annual Council. Members are asked to note that the nominee will not be a director of the company. The Articles of iESE provide for there to be up to six public body directors each year; these are selected annually by a vote of the public body members.

Financial Implications

- 3.9 There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this proposal, other than entering into a guarantee for the sum of £1. This

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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guarantee will only be operational should the company be wound up.

- 3.9 As the company is non profit distributing, any trading surpluses generated within the company or its subsidiaries will be retained for the development of future service provision by the company.

Legal Implications

- 3.10 There are no legal implications arising from the report other than set out in the background.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.11 None

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 None

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no major risks associated with this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – IESE Brochure

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Articles of Association of iESE Transformation Limited

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Kevin Dicks

E Mail: k.dicks@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Tel: 01527 534000



Transforming Together

Delivering improved public services at lower cost

“ The Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise exists to help all UK public bodies improve and become even more efficient. We have a highly skilled team and a network of subject specialists. We can work with you to identify where you can make savings; ensure you are getting the best deals on the market; and your local taxpayers are getting the most for their money with continuously improved high quality services.”

Dr Andrew Larner, Chief Executive, iESE



IESE
Council Offices
Station Road East
Oxted, Surrey RH8 0BT

Telephone: 01883 732957
www.iese.gov.uk

Dear Colleague,

Introducing the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise

IESE exists to help you deliver improved local public services at a lower cost. We care because we are owned led, and governed by councils. We pride ourselves on delivering results not reports with over £250m in cashable savings already made.

Our experienced team and network of specialist associates have enabled us to transform all aspects of local public service. Our tools, services and partnerships give you a one-stop-shop for your transformation support.

As a Premier Practice of the Institute of Consulting, we are committed to the highest standards of quality and integrity. As a not for profit social enterprise you can be confident that any surplus is invested back into local public services.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about IESE. To find out how we can help you, please do not hesitate to contact us at enquiries@iese.gov.uk or call 01883 732 957.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Paul Bettison
Chairman

Dr Andrew Larner
Chief Executive



Nationwide



75% of UK councils are now using our services.

We support change in 8-10 councils at any one time

iESE Products

Our very experienced team and network of subject matter experts enable us to support all types of public body and transform all aspects of public service from leadership and corporate management to both back office and front line service.

Our tools reduce your workload and save you money, our services increase your capacity and transform your business, and our partnership expertise help you make radical transformations to your performance – either with other public bodies or with us as a social enterprise.

Our online services are used by over 75% of UK councils and we are on-site helping 8 to 10 public authorities at any one time.

iESE fully understood our pressures and constraints and helped us identify where real change could happen. Their successful reviews not only resulted in cashable savings, but enabled us to ensure that our much relied upon services continue and our residents are happy. Our staff appreciated their hands-on, practical and focused approach with their sustainable results speaking for themselves.

Geoff Bonner, Chief Executive,
Hart District Council

Corporate Challenge

Our tailored challenge to lead members and chief executives is a no-nonsense approach to working with your top team. We can ensure your efficiency, leadership and corporate governance programmes are on track to meet targets and help re-focus efforts where necessary.

Our review ensures you know exactly where you need to focus to achieve maximum efficiency and our development plan includes a number of in-house support days that can provide additional skills to service teams as required.

iESE helped us initiate a new corporate improvement programme that will introduce new ways of working and will help us to achieve efficiency savings of £1.4 million over the next three years.

David Neudegg, Chief Executive,
West Oxfordshire District Council

Shared Services

We have worked with councils to not only identify where shared services would benefit council taxpayers but have also overseen the development and roll out of new ways of working. Our practical hands on support to members and officers has led to more collaborative working that has enabled them to quantify and realise real savings year on year.

Our new Shared Procurement Service (SPS) is also helping leverage efficiency savings and manage markets, allowing for a more strategic, joined up approach to managing budgets. Already it's saved one council over £100k and a spend and opportunities review for another has saved £831k.

We asked iESE to review our procurement to ensure it was legally compliant. We soon realised that we could improve the service and by sharing it with others save on the cost of the service as well as procure higher quality products and services at a lower cost, for example, iESE recently helped us save £1 million from our M&E contract by reviewing our arrangement.

Andrew Grant, Chief Executive,
Aylesbury Vale District Council

Procurement Services

Our no nonsense approach has made immediate savings, even smaller public bodies have seen savings of £250K a year realised within days. We have completed and implemented reviews of all external spend delivering savings of millions of pounds for each customer.

We have also armed customers with the tools and skills to better manage their procurement and contract management in the future.

We asked iESE to help us improve our procurement capability which was identified as a means of delivering ambitious savings targets. The iESE team brought specialist expertise and knowledge to the party which resulted in real cashable savings and, longer term, laid the basis of a more informed approach to contract management by council staff.

Mary Orton, Chief Executive,
Waverley Borough Council

Waste Services

Recognised by government as a national lead in delivering waste knowledge transfer, direct support and market engagement to local authorities, iESE are a delivery partner to DEFRA. Our support programme, compiled with the help of government, the LGA, WRAP and Keep Britain Tidy, ensures we offer a bespoke service that cannot be found elsewhere. Our Waste Management Services Framework is a UK first and offers councils a compliant route to the waste market.

Live for four years, councils can potentially save up to £85m, procure in half the time and reduce red tape. It's a groundbreaking solution for councils looking to tender new contracts in recycling and waste collection, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and bulky waste collection.

In addition to the time and financial benefits the framework brings us, we are particularly impressed with the access to the knowledge and experience from iESE. Whereas authorities may have previously brought in external legal or procurement expertise for these type of contracts, by using the framework we are able to access that through iESE.

Clive Moore, Assistant Chief Executive
Tandridge District Council

Social Care Services

Caring for the most vulnerable in society means that it is crucial that councils have access to the most up-to-date information. Working in partnership with ADASS, our Care Funding Calculator (CFC) has now saved councils over £63m when looking to support both residential care and supported living for adults. It's enabled London councils to reduce the cost of a current placement by up to 60% and pilots for our new Children's CFC are currently running across the UK with a national roll out due from Spring 2013.

Our social care reviews have saved up to £2.1m for individual councils and delivered 40% improved productivity and we lead the way on the new approach to setting equitable care fees across residential care.

iESE have been extremely successful in helping Children's Services take forward plans and ideas to help to achieve greater efficiencies in the way we provide services. Their work has also helped to begin to significantly change the culture in the organisation toward much more of a business way of thinking and operating. Every member of staff involved in this process has been very positive about iESE's support.

Chris Williams, Chief Executive,
Buckinghamshire County Council

Transforming

iESE Limited marks a new era of support as local government's first improvement and efficiency social enterprise.

Equipped with a proven track record, councils the length and breadth of the country can now access its services.

Let our transformation be your transformation.

To find out how we can help, contact us at enquiries@iese.gov.uk



iESE Pricing and Membership

By using our services you also have the option of becoming an owner. Whether you want to own a part of the business or if you want to have a leadership role for the mutual as a whole you will always be welcome.

Our members have the benefit of accessing our services without the need for the usual procurement bureaucracy reducing the cost of transformation to us and to our owners.

You may also, in time, look to create a mutual for some of your own services. Having created local government's first transformation social enterprise, we are always willing to share with you our experiences of creating a mutual. Your mutual can also become part of the iESE network, and in such cases, we will be willing to co-invest in establishing it.

Pay as you go

- ✓ Any public body can access our services
- ✓ You can choose to pay on a day rate basis or as a share of the savings banked for our transformation support

iESE Club Class

- ✓ Membership of the iESE Innovation Forum
- ✓ 5 days free consultancy a year targeted at Leadership support
- ✓ Improvement and Efficiency support
- ✓ Market sector research and advice
- ✓ 5% discount on our normal rates when you call off our transformation support
- ✓ You still have the option to pay by day rate or gain share for transformation support

To find out more about how iESE can help you contact enquiries@iese.gov.uk or call us today 01883 732 957

6 ways to help you transform...

1

A Trusted Partner

iESE is a not-for-profit social enterprise, owned, led and governed by councils. We help public bodies across the UK deliver improved services at lower cost.

Whilst supporting local authorities, we also work with police, fire and health bodies together with their third sector partners.

2

Passionate

We thrive in transferring knowledge to others that leaves a legacy, up skills, builds confidence, saves council taxpayer's money and delivers improved services for resident bodies together with their third sector partners.

3

Quality

A Premier Practice of the Institute of Consulting, we provide a credible alternative to private sector consultancy and adhere to the standards of competence, honesty, integrity and other professional behaviours defined within its Code of Professional Conduct.



4

Accomplishments

Over the past six years, iESE has saved local tax payers over £250m.

Over 75% of UK councils are using our online services, and we pride ourselves in supporting change in 8 out of 10 councils at any given time.

5

Experience

We have supported improvements in corporate management and leadership and have delivered transformations in corporate services such as procurement, HR, social care and waste. We also specialise in corporate challenge programmes and critical friend support.

6

Legacy

We are the gateway to ensuring all public bodies can learn from each other to maximise budgets. Tried and trusted by the sector, we've already delivered vast improvements, ground breaking money saving solutions and are dedicated to continuously finding new innovative ways of working that benefit all.

Waste Management Services Framework aims to save councils

£85m

31%

of councils registered to

www.socialcareimprovementefficiency.org.uk

Construction framework has made

£92m

of savings



In Figures

£250m



iESE has generated over £250 million worth of efficiency savings over the last 5 years...

Care Funding Calculator has saved authorities

£63m

95%

of local authorities registered on www.win.org.uk



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www.iese.gov.uk



**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th November 2013

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM
AND SOLIHULL LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP SPATIAL PLAN FOR
RECOVERY AND GROWTH CONSULTATION DRAFT (SEPTEMBER 2013)**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Greg Chance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This Report seeks approval of the Redditch Borough Council response to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013) (App. 1).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

the Redditch Borough Council response to the GBSLEP Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013) (Appendix 1) be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.2 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

3.3 The Localism Act 2011 requires each Local Authority to discharge the Duty to Cooperate. The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement to ensure cooperation between Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and prescribed bodies. One way of discharging the duty is for collaborative working within the LEP. This report ensures continuous involvement in the activities of the LEP and therefore will assist in discharging the Duty to Cooperate.

Service / Operational Implications

3.4 The Draft Spatial Plan being consulted upon is the strategic spatial framework plan for the LEP area. It looks at the scale, broad distribution and directions of growth and the component elements which make up that growth. It is intended that once finalised it will provide a strategic steer and coherence to the individual development plans across the LEP area.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th November 2013

- 3.5 Redditch is part of the GBSLEP and are fully supportive of the principles contained within the Spatial Plan. This Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft seeks to provide a steer to the growth needed in the LEP area. The Borough Council is supportive of this but aware that further work is currently being completed regarding the scale of growth required for Birmingham and understands this work will need to inform the emerging plan. This work will also inform the options available for dealing with this growth. Therefore at this stage no response can be provided on the best approach for dealing with the growth until more information regarding the scale of growth is known.
- 3.6 A positive response to the GBSLEP Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (Appendix 1) has been prepared by Officers. This response is considered appropriate at this time as Redditch is a member of and supports the role of the GBLEP and is fully supportive of the principles contained within the Spatial Plan as they accurately reflect the Councils emerging Local Plan.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 It is important for the development of Local Plan No.4 for there to be continuous involvement in the work of the GBSLEP as this will ensure that the development of the Local Plan is appropriate for the community of Redditch.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

If the response is not submitted this could potentially appear unsupportive of GBSLEPs continuing work, this could jeopardise future working relationships.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Redditch Borough Council response to Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

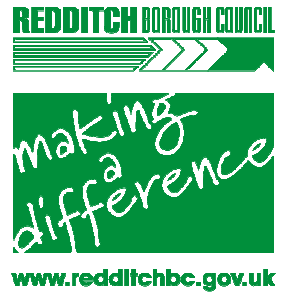
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013)

7. KEY

GBSLEP - Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Emma Baker
Email: emma.baker@redditchbc.gov.uk
Tel.: (01527) 64252 extn: 3376



Redditch Borough Council

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Walter Stranz Square, fax: (01527) 65216
Redditch, minicom: 595528
Worcestershire B98 8AH dx: 19016 Redditch

DRAFT

LEP Executive

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
Baskerville House,
Centenary Square,
Broad Street,
Birmingham,
B1 2ND

Councillor Bill Hartnett
Leader of the Council
Redditch Borough Council

Dear Sir/ Madam

Redditch Borough Council response to Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft (September 2013)

Redditch Borough Council would like to support the emerging Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth. The Borough Council notes that further work is currently being completed regarding the scale of growth required for Birmingham and understands this work will need to inform the emerging plan. This work will also inform the options available for dealing with this growth. Therefore at this stage no response can be provided on the best approach for dealing with the growth until more information regarding the scale of growth is known. Notwithstanding this at this point the Borough Council endorses the contents of the emerging plan and wishes to see it continue to formal approval.

Kind regards

Bill Hartnett
Leader of the Council
Redditch Borough Council

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th November 2013

**MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT – QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICE
REPORT – QUARTER 2, 2013/14**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	✓
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda de Warr – Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	Not applicable
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides Members with details of customer feedback data for the second quarter of 2013/14, along with transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the contents of the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

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

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

Financial Implications

3.3 There are no direct financial implications, although failure to deal appropriately with complaints can lead to financial recompense being necessary.

Legal Implications

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

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**12th November 2013**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.5 The Every Customer Every Time, Customer Service Strategy was launched in March 2011 and sets out our vision for excellent customer service provision and improving the customer experience when having contact with the council.
- 3.6 As an authority committed to improving customer care customer feedback and demand data is used to measure what is happening in our systems, and to inform improvements
- 3.7 Quarterly reporting is intended to ensure Members of the Council and customers are updated in respect of customer feedback, especially complaints made in respect of service provision.
- 3.8 Good customer service has improved 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

- 3.9 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 and act on the issues raised to reduce the possibility of them happening again.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

It is important to use the Council's complaints or compliments to measure how well the system is meeting its purpose and to act on those complaints to fix the system where it is failing

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Quarterly Customer Feedback Report Quarter 2
2013/2014

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Lynn Jones, Customer Services Manager
E Mail: lynn.jones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3851



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

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st July 2013 – September 2013



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

2. Customer Feedback Analysis

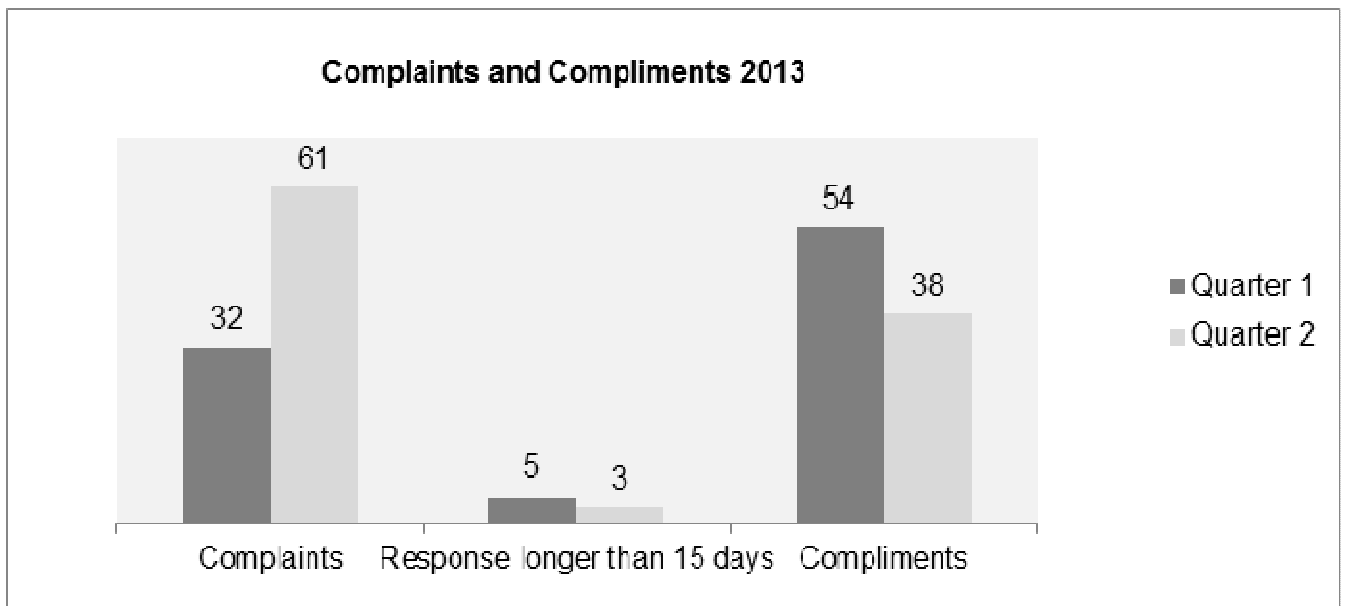
61 complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

55 complaints (90%) were answered in 15 working days or less – 3 complex Housing complaints are still open at this time

3 complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to and details of these complaints are listed below.

We also received **38 compliments**.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2; we will continue to chart this as a comparison through the year.



The number of complaints received is nearly double than that received last quarter.

The main reason for the rise in numbers is that teams in transformation are much more aware of the need to capture demand data and therefore more contact from customers is being recorded.

We have also had more Refuse and Landscaping complaints this quarter. We can see that this is due to the recent changes with the Route Optimisation project which has seen a change of collection days, along with new routes, new team members and new patterns of duty for refuse and recycling teams. Landscaping complaints usually increase slightly in the summer months due to seasonal growth.

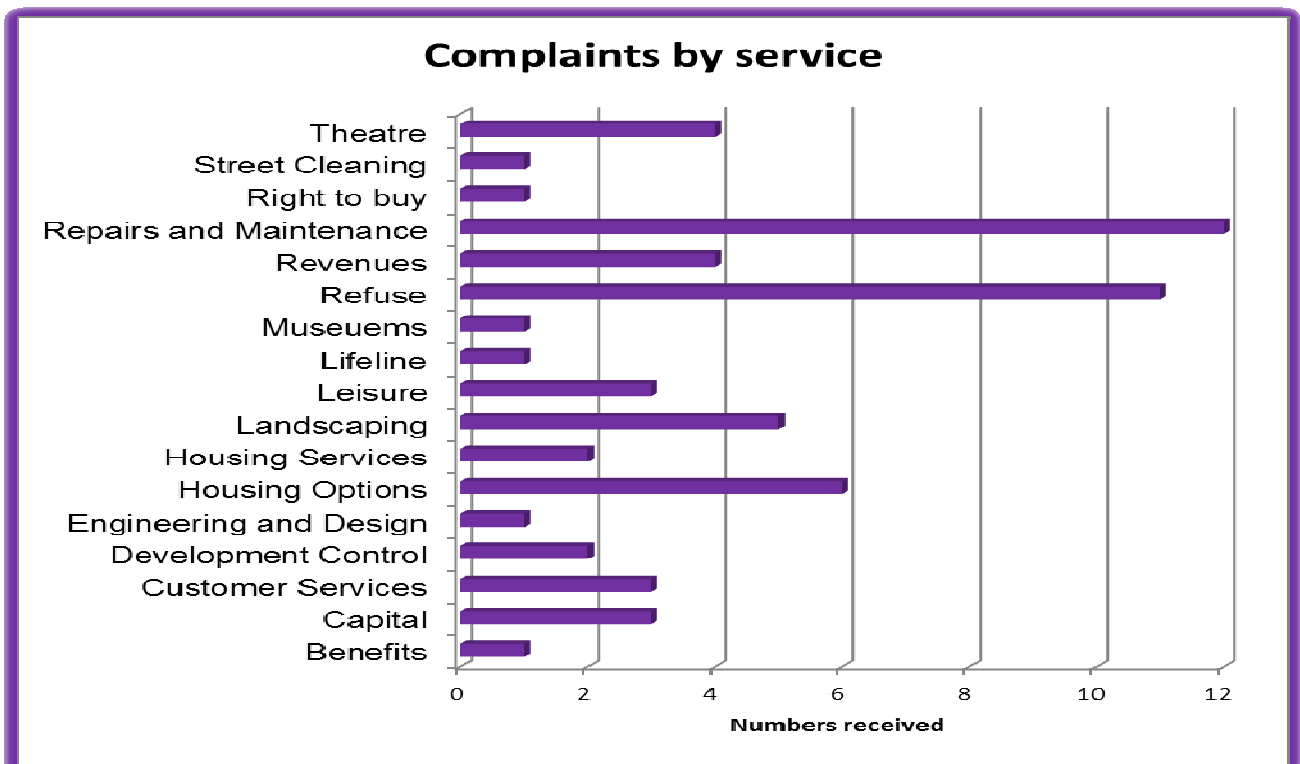
Over the past six months a trial of a new complaints process within the Housing Department has been underway. Through this trial we are seeing significant positive evidence that we can resolve complaints more quickly and effectively by taking a personal approach to each customer. This approach gives us a greater understanding of what the real problems are. This trial will be rolled out to other departments across both Councils by the end of the year.

The common themes in the complaints received this quarter were:

- Confusing information or no information received about changes to refuse service.
- Missed bins.
- Staff being unfriendly.
- Not doing what we promised to do.
- Not responding to customer's calls and queries.
- Unacceptable delays in taking action.
- Not keeping customers informed of changes/cancellations of service.

Number of complaints by service (detailed)

The following chart provides a breakdown of complaints by service.



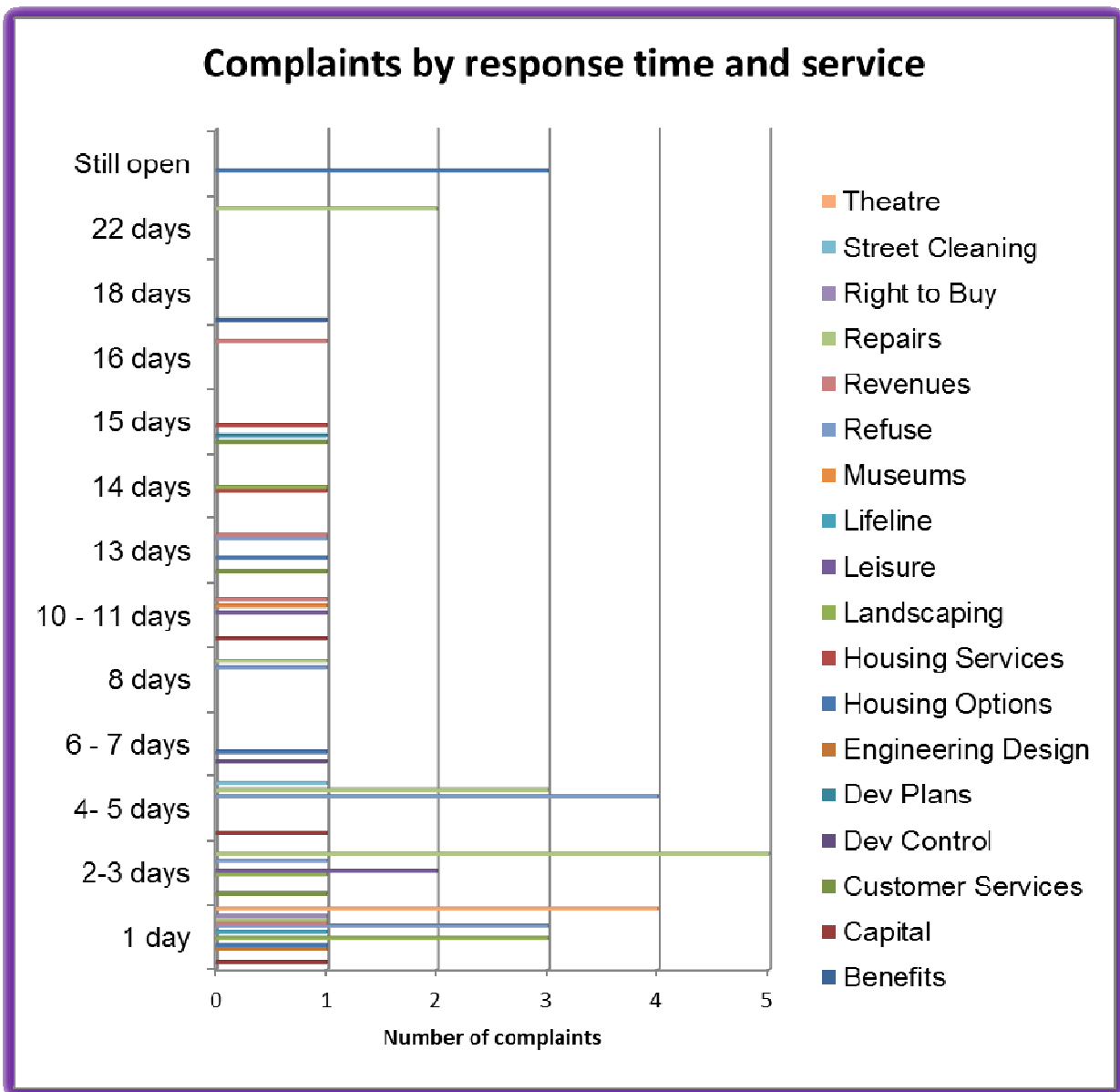
Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and **90%** of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, (3 cases) customers were informed that there would be a delay.

The following table details the complaints which took longer than 15 working days to deal with and why.

Complaint details	Days taken to respond	Action taken	Outcome update from Head of Service
Benefits			
Customer feels that it is unfair that the Council are trying to recover overpayment when years ago they didn't tell her entitled to more.	18 days	Explained calculation and helped her understand her benefits and what was being decided better	
Repairs			
Customer unhappy that when work carried out by contractors on path when cement was mixed in road, left a terrible mess in road and surrounding area not cleaned up.	22 days Staff sickness	Apology given and area cleared	This has been discussed with the contractors to ensure it doesn't happen again
Customer has reported several repairs that he needs due to his disability.	22 days- Staff sickness	Repairs carried out and apology given	No further action

Time taken to respond to complaints by service.



This chart shows the breakdown of all complaints by response time. Data 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.

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

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

- Landscaping now record more precise information and spend longer talking to customers to gain right understanding.
- Landscaping now carry out site inspections with customers to make sure correct work is undertaken.
- New process has been introduced to improve communication between teams to ensure that when a repair to a property will result in essential facilities being unavailable for a night/several day's, the repairs team is aware that temporary accommodation can be offered to the tenant if reported promptly.

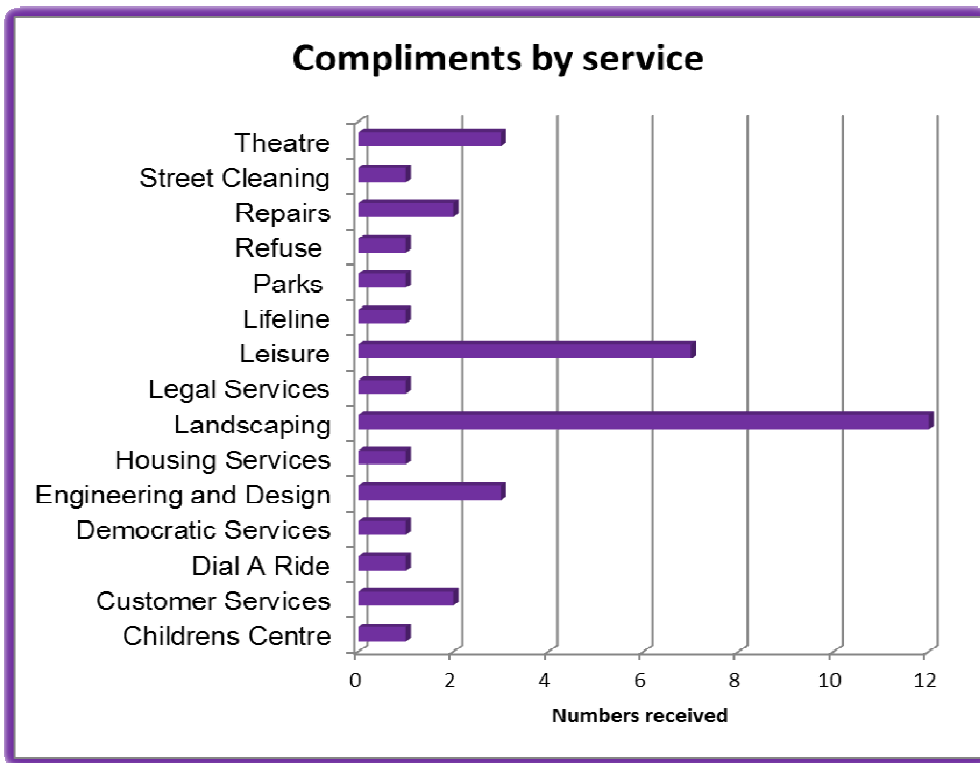
- Leisure working to improve disabled access for Kingsley Leisure.

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.

Happy Customers!

From the 38 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 details of some of the compliments we have received for information.

Team	Compliment Detail
Lifeline	Customer is very pleased with the service she received from Lifeline and called to thank us.
Children’s Centres	Thank you for helping students with their placement.
Dial a Ride	Customer telephoned the Dial-a-ride office to inform staff that she is very grateful for the service we offer towards her mom. Without Dial-a-ride her mom would be housebound, as the daughter works nights as a nurse and they have no other family members.
Customer Services	I will never forget Hilary as she was most kind and helpful to me when I was having difficulties on a previous occasion. I was in debt and you

	pointed me in the direction of a free debt counselling agency Christians Against Poverty and it has helped turn my life around, and I would like to thank her.
Landscaping	Work to trees requested by Diane Brown home support officer. Residents rang to say a big thank you to the Landscape Dept for the good work carried out.
Landscaping	Customer rang to say a big thank you for all involved in getting her tree work done. She said that the Tree Surgeons had all been great especially Elliott.
Refuse	Thank you to the refuse crew for their patience and understanding with her young autistic son who has developed an obsession with bin collections. Their friendliness has helped him develop his confidence.
Street Cleaning	Thanks to the team for responding so quickly and removing the horse manure from the roads.
Housing Services	Thanks to everyone involved in my move as I know I am not always the easiest person to deal with.
Repairs	Customer phoned to say thank you to repairs for the very good job they did on his front garden wall and in particular to supervisor Steve, who was very helpful.
Facilities Team	I just wanted to thank you and your team for making myself and the delegates so welcome on my training session. Nothing was too much trouble for anyone. The reception staff walked me to my room and made sure I had everything I needed. All of this helped to make the event a success. I train at a lot of venues and trust me there are many commercial venues that could learn a trick or two from you and the team there.
Legal	Customer said that Karen Gibbs, Legal Officer had been "absolutely brilliant" in helping complete a matter that had been delayed by other parties, causing cost and distress to her clients; that Karen had "helped tremendously" in finally getting it completed as quickly as it was possible to do.
Theatre	Just a big THANK YOU for all the help and support given to us to stage the Historic Film Festival. Pleased to say there were no major issues and we were very pleased with the turnout from the Redditch public. Many people came up and said how much they had enjoyed it which made it all worthwhile.

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were no complaints referred to the Ombudsman this quarter:

4. Customer Service Centre Information

This section provides some statistical information in respect of the amount of customer demand received via the telephones, face to face and through our payment channels.

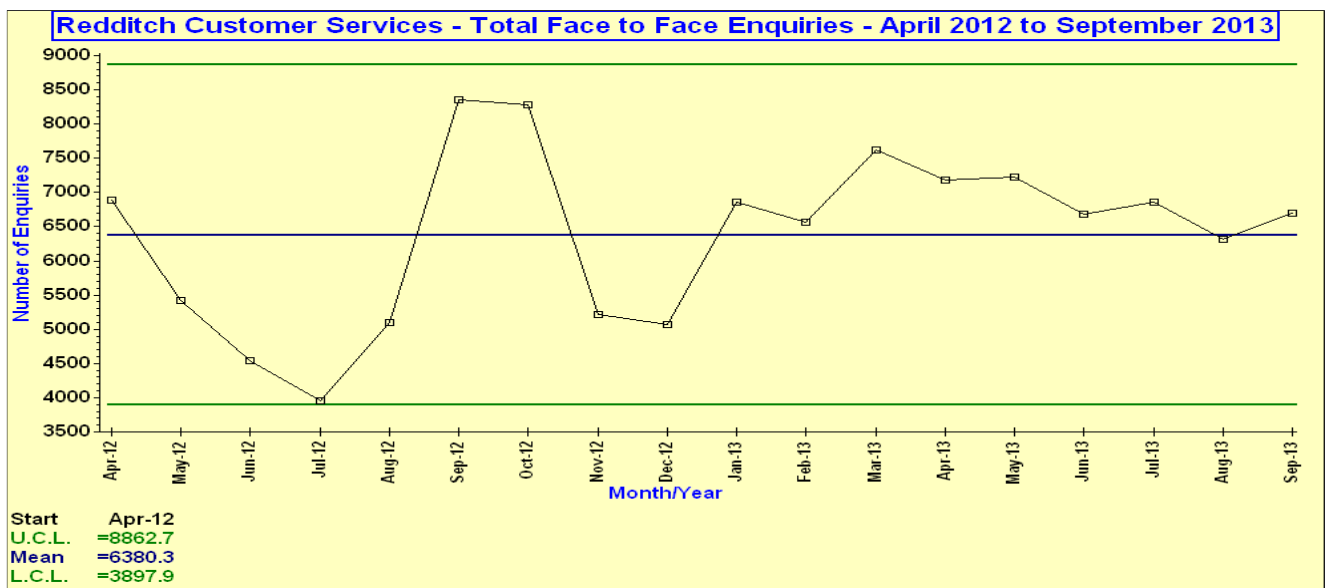
The operational purpose of the Customer Services Team is “Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem”. Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service staff act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert.

We use this information to help us understand the demand on all council services.

The following tables and charts show the number of customer transactions recorded and trends over time.

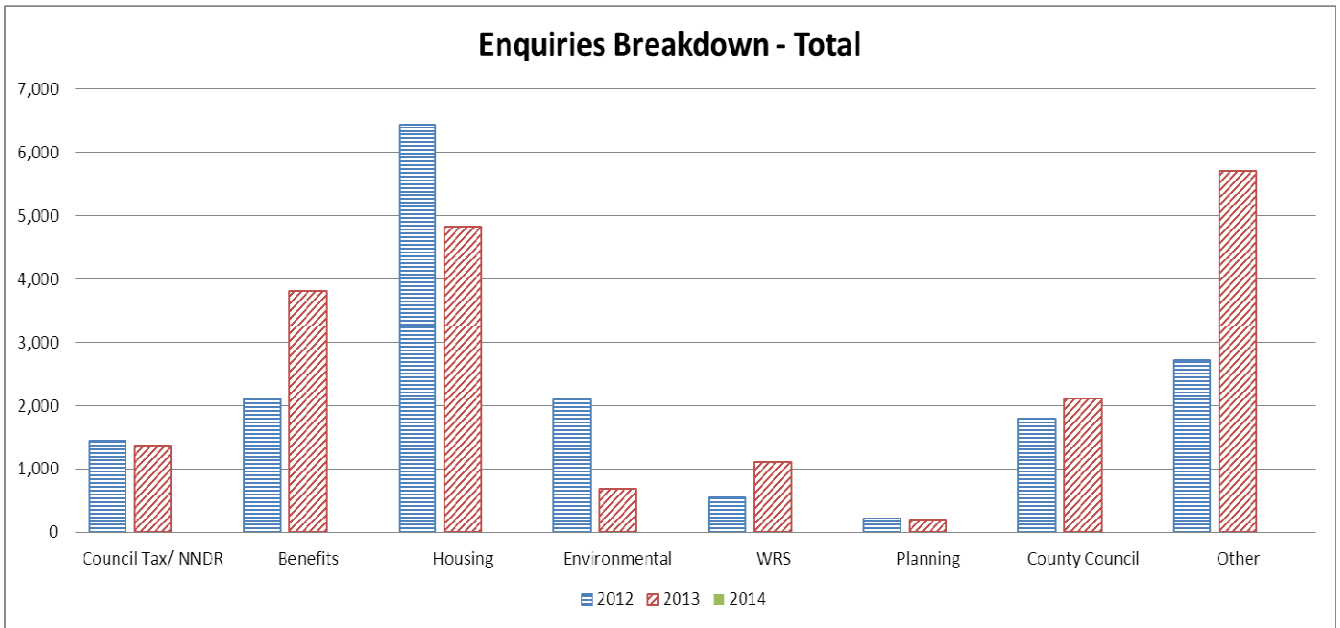
Face to face demand at the Customer Service Centre

The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre and One Stop Shops on a month by month basis from April 2012 to September 2013. It informs of patterns that occur and the data is then used to plan for busy times and to check the reasons for the peak, this may identify waste in systems which can then be addressed.



The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face enquiries received during the 2nd quarter of 2013/14, compared with the same period last year. Due to the change in recording during 2012/13 the data cannot be used as a comparison, only as an indicator of the spread of volumes.

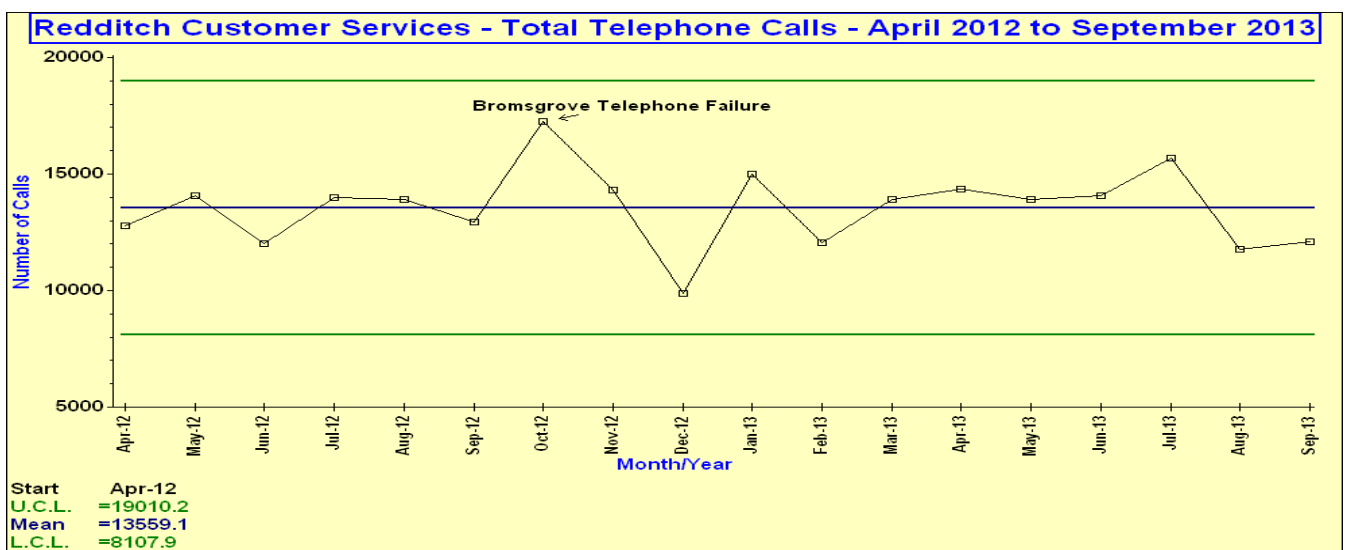
There appears to be a high volume of enquiries logged as “Other” and we are looking into the reasons for this.



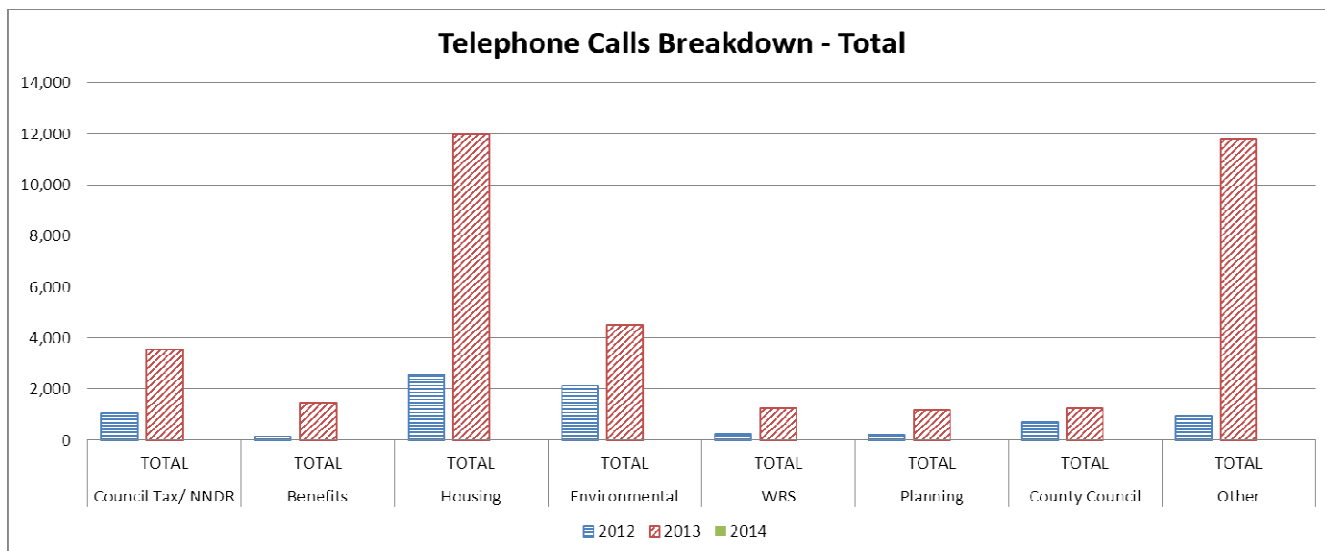
Telephone Demand Received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of September 2013.

In July we see an increase in calls, which was the impact of calls regarding Route Optimisation, with customers asking for clarification on the changes and an increasing number of calls for Housing services.



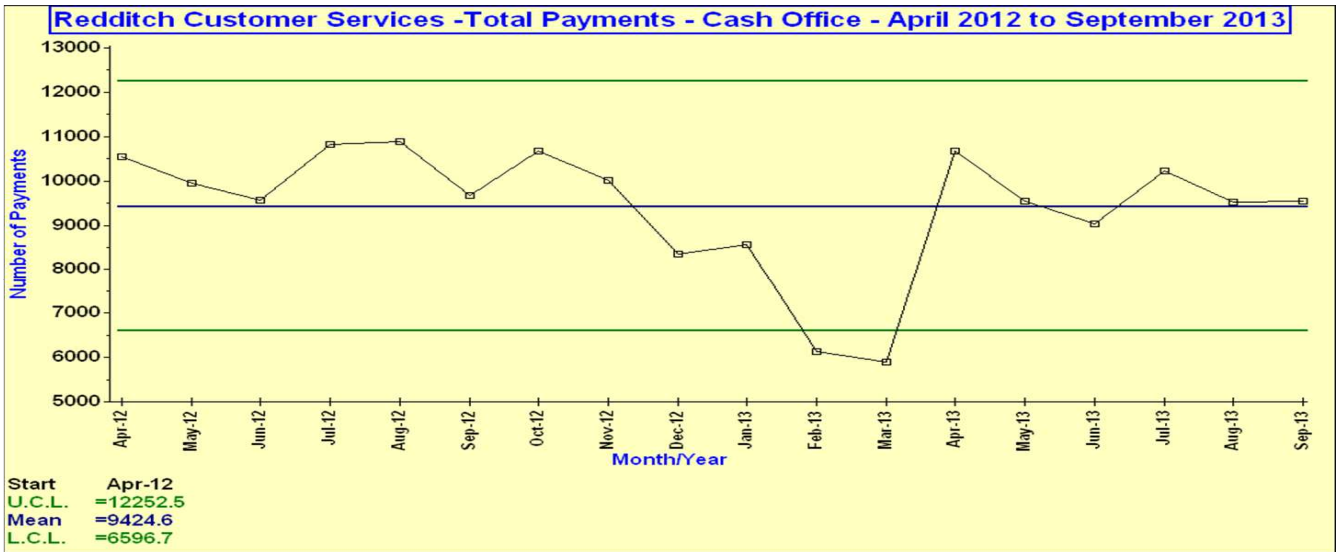
The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer service centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.) The 2012 data does not include switchboard calls which accounts for the significant difference when comparing years.



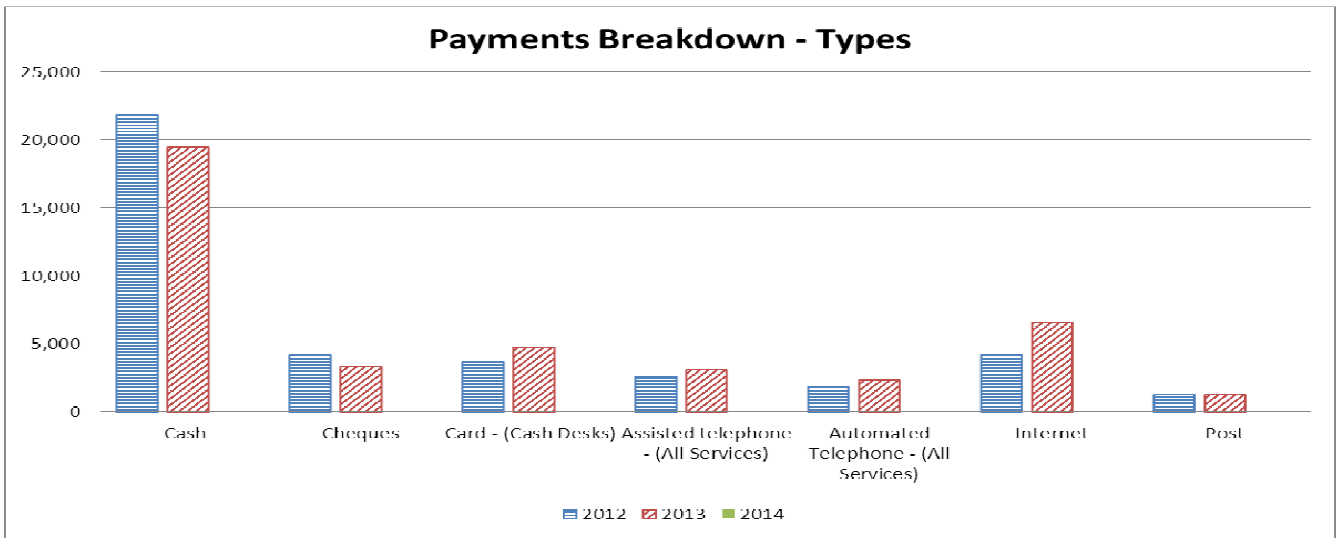
We can see a high volume in both face to face enquiries and telephone calls in the “Other” reporting. In August we did split out some enquiries into specific services, however the volume recorded remains high. It is increasingly difficult for our staff to know every member of staff and the service they work within, and the system they currently use does not identify both. For this reason staff log calls as ‘other’ when they do not know the department to which they relate. We are working to resolve this with IT service.

Payments

The following chart shows a month on month comparison of payments received by the cash offices and customer services staff during the period April 2012 to end of September 2013. Quarterly bills for Lifeline and sundry debt letters increased volumes of payments during July.



This chart shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels and evidences a small reduction of payments made by cash. We are seeing a continued consistent increase in the use of automated payments channels, online and on the telephone.



Lynn Jones
 Customer Services Manager
 September 2013



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8th October 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor David Bush (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

S Hazelden and S Lewis (Rotala PLC)

Officers:

C Felton, J Godwin, J Pickering and J Staniland, Exec Director - Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and M Craggs

55. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alan Mason.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

57. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th September 2013 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

58. VACANT REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL PROPERTIES

Officers provided a summary of the report that explained the current position regarding Council owned vacant non-dwelling properties in the Borough.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8th October 2013

It was clarified that a report to the Executive Committee on the future options for Threadneedle House was expected to be considered early in the New Year. Redditch Borough Council would accrue additional income by accommodating Officers from Bromsgrove District Council in Redditch Town Hall and therefore Bromsgrove staff would no longer need to use Threadneedle House.

A buyer had yet to be identified for the former REDI Centre on South Street. A report seeking approval for the property to be marketed for disposal was scheduled to be considered by Council on 14th October 2013. Any final decision to sell the property to a community group would be taken by Officers. The Executive Committee would be notified in advance of any sale being sanctioned. Furthermore, it was confirmed that any community group could apply to purchase Upper Norgrove House on Church Road as an asset of community value.

The Committee was advised that the retail units adjacent to the former covered market area outside the Debenhams Store in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre were owned by the Council. However, none of these units were empty but were predominantly being used by local charities for storage.

Members expressed concern regarding the former covered market area in general, including whether the area could legitimately be used for car parking. The safety implications of using this area as a car park were debated and Members commented that this could potentially be hazardous for pedestrians. Concern was also raised about the closure of a public toilet in the area that was previously used by customers and staff.

A representative from the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) informed Members that the TCP was planning to introduce new all-weather play facilities to help redefine it as a public owned outdoor play area, though a number of issues remained to be resolved. Due to their interest in this subject the Committee agreed to receive a report at a forthcoming meeting on future plans for the former covered market area.

Members also received clarification that there were currently 74 empty Council House properties in the town. The condition of many of these properties was being assessed to ensure that they were fit for occupation.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8th October 2013

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a report on future plans for the former covered market area adjacent to the Kingfisher Centre be included on the Committee's Work Programme; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

59. PROMOTING SPORTING PARTICIPATION - UPDATE REPORT

Officers presented an update on actions taken to implement two of the recommendations from the Promoting Sporting Participation Task Group review which the Executive Committee had approved in June 2012 and which remained outstanding.

Regarding recommendation one, Members were informed that good progress was being made to improve the Council's website in line with the aspirations of the Task Group. In particular, it was expected that the Council's new Content Management System (CMS), to be introduced in 2015, would provide far greater flexibility than the existing system for Officers to tailor the content of the sports pages closer to what users actually wanted. This could involve placing a clear emphasis on promoting sporting activities in Redditch rather than the Council's sporting facilities. Social media would also be utilised more often to publicise these activities. Sufficient resources and staff capacity would need to be provided to make this work successful.

In terms of recommendation three, it was acknowledged that mistakes had been made, both internally and externally, which had contributed to delays in the introduction of some informal games areas. This was principally attributed to communication issues.

Officers were working to ensure that the following facilities were installed within specific timeframes:

- A circular table tennis table would be installed at Morton Stanley Park by the Easter Holidays in 2014.
- Volley Ball posts and court markings were due to be installed at Arrow Valley and Morton Stanley Parks by April 2014.
- Sports grids, measuring a total of 60metres by 40metres, would be installed in suitable locations within the Borough by the Easter Holidays in 2014. These would incorporate a number of different sporting activities, including rounders and softball.
- Improvements were due to be made to the new disc golf courses, including increased signage, course markings, and

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8th October 2013

revised ground maintenance work, and completed by the Easter Holidays in 2014. This activity had already proved to be very popular since the courses had been introduced.

- Two new orienteering courses would be finalised in suitable locations by April 2014. Feedback received from a local orienteering club had been extremely positive.

The Committee was informed that suitable locations for the installation of giant chess or draughts boards had not yet been identified. Members suggested that Officers consider both the Forge Mill Needle Museum and town centre as potential venues. Support for these facilities was expressed by Members, who commented that the facilities would be well received, especially by elderly and minority ethnic local residents.

Members expressed their support for the proposed new sporting facilities within the Borough. However, Officers were urged to learn from the mistakes that had been made and to ensure that future plans were realistic and well communicated to help avoid any further disappointment.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

60. TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION PROPOSALS - PRESENTATION

The Committee noted a presentation that had recently been delivered by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Officers at a private Planning Advisory Panel meeting on the potential impact of the Local Plan 4 on highways and actions that could be taken to mitigate that impact. (Appendix 1)

Member expressed their disappointment that WCC Officers had declined the Chair's invitation to attend the meeting to deliver the presentation. It had been communicated via Borough Council Officers that they did not feel it would be appropriate to deliver the presentation in a formal public meeting environment given that WCC was a statutory consultee on Local Plan 4 and was still considering its position ahead of its final submission. However, Members reiterated that the WCC should have been represented at the meeting as this would have been in accordance with an open and transparent consultation process. Members of the public in attendance also expressed regret that WCC Officers were not present to take questions regarding the proposals.

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Representatives of the local bus provider in attendance informed Members that they had not been consulted by WCC on the specific proposals outlined within the presentation regarding the proposed public transport routes in the suggested new developments in Foxlydiate and the potential alternative development in Bordesley, although they had earlier held general discussions with WCC regarding Local Plan 4. However, Members suggested that a previous bus operator in Redditch had been consulted about the potential costs implications of the two proposals.

Members queried whether there was any mechanism for including the current bus operator in the discussions regarding the viability of the proposed public transport routes in Foxlydiate and Bordesley. They were informed, however, that it was customary for bus operators to be excluded from costing up potential bus routes to help ensure that a fair tendering process resulted. The commissioning authority, in this case WCC, would therefore be expected to provisionally cost up the potential routes according to its own data.

The Committee raised a number of concerns and questions about the information within the presentation which could not be answered at the meeting. In particular, Members sought reassurance that this information did not in any way contradict the information they had already received during the Local Plan 4 consultation process. It was subsequently suggested that the relevant WCC Officers be invited to meet with Members to answer their questions regarding the proposed routes at a public meeting.

RESOLVED that

a public meeting be arranged between Officers from Worcestershire County Council and all Borough Councillors regarding the transport assessment and mitigation proposals within draft local plan No 4.

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

Members noted that a report on the issue of *Delivering New Affordable Housing* had recently been included on the Executive Committee Work Programme to be considered as an urgent item at its next meeting on 15th October 2013. Members agreed that they should contact the relevant Officers in advance of the meeting if there were any questions or comments they wished to raise.

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RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 17th September 2013 and the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

62. WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Smith informed the Committee that, in advance of presentation of a report on footpaths and pathways that was scheduled for consideration by the Committee in November 2013, she had recently met with relevant Officers in the Environmental Services Team to discuss the level of available information about footpaths and pavements in the Borough. Officers had produced a map of Woodrow which illustrated which pavements the County Council were responsible for maintaining, and those which were the responsibility of the Borough Council. It had become evident that it would be very onerous and an ultimately costly exercise for Officers to produce similar maps for the rest of the Borough.

As an alternative it was suggested that each Member could be provided with access to a Geographic Information System (GIS) that would identify which authority was responsible for maintaining each particular pavement in the Borough. However, the Committee felt that it would be simpler and more cost-effective if all Members referred to the relevant Officers who would be able to answer their individual queries about a particular pavement or pathway.

Ultimately, Members questioned the benefits of considering a report on this matter at their next meeting in November. It was consequently agreed that this report should be removed from the Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report on footpaths and pavements maintenance, scheduled for consideration on 4th November 2013 be removed from the Committee's Work Programme; and**
- 2) the Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

63. LANDSCAPING TASK GROUP - CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE GROUP

The Committee was advised that Councillors Joe Baker, Michael Braley, Michael Chalk and Yvonne Smith had been nominated to sit

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on the Landscaping Task Group. Councillor Hopkins had previously been confirmed as the Chair of the group.

RESOLVED that

Councillors Joe Baker, Michael Braley, Michael Chalk, Gay Hopkins and Yvonne Smith be appointed to the Landscaping Task Group.

64. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The following updates on current Task Group reviews were provided:

a) Abbey Stadium Task Group – Chair, Councillor Carole Gandy

Councillor Gandy informed the committee that the Task Group had visited the Abbey Stadium on Thursday 26th September, which had provided them with some ideas about how the facility could potentially be improved. This was further backed up by informal discussions with a number of customers who had made their own suggestions. However, customers were generally satisfied with the stadium, its facilities, and the services that were provided.

Ahead of the site visit, Councillor Gandy had been informed by relevant Officers that the impending new business case for the stadium, due to be considered by the Executive Committee at the end of the year, would focus on reconfiguring the layout of the gymnasium and the dance studio. The group was therefore aiming to revise its original terms of reference to exclude any reference to the gymnasium and dance studio as it was not felt that they could realistically undertake a thorough scrutiny of these areas in the tight timescales required.

b) Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services – Redditch Member, Councillor Alan Mason

In Councillor Mason's absence, Members received a brief summary of the first meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) joint review which took place on Thursday 26th September.

The Committee was also informed that the joint review was conducting a consultation with all elected Members in Worcestershire to find out about their experiences of working with WRS. Members were invited to post their comments

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before the consultation closed on Thursday 31st October to give the joint review group a clearer understanding of the current perception of the service in Redditch.

c) Landscaping Task Group – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Following the Committee's earlier ratification of the Task Group's membership, Councillor Hopkins confirmed that the first meeting of the review would take place on Monday 14th October.

d) Voluntary Sector Task Group – Chair, Councillor Pat Witherspoon

At their first meeting on Tuesday 1st October, the group received an overview of the Council's grants process. This included a summary of the work of the Grants Panel, and the Council's relatively new Concessionary Rents Policy. The group also considered the merits of co-opting a member of the local community onto the review, however, the Chair explained that the group would no longer be pursuing this option.

RESOLVED that

the update reports be noted.

65. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Witherspoon provided the Committee with a brief verbal summary of the most recent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) meeting on 8th October 2013.

Members were informed that the HOSC was very disappointed with the level of progress regarding the development of acute hospital services in Worcestershire, following the conclusion of the Joint Services Review (JSR) in March 2013. A new twelve week consultation, led by the Worcestershire's four Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), had recently opened into the future of acute hospital care in the county. Two options remained on the table.

Elsewhere, the HOSC considered an update report on the Well Connected Programme that was intended to improve the coordination of health and care for local patients. This would include the introduction of a new information technology system for GPs in Worcestershire by March 2014.

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The issue of fifteen minute care visits for elderly patients at home was also discussed. The HOSC had been informed that these visits were geared towards meeting the needs of the patient and were not necessarily time specific.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.05 pm

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**12th November 2013**ADVISORY PANELS, WORKING GROUPS, ETC - UPDATE REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
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	Last meeting – 15 th May 2013
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr John Fisher John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Last meeting – 21 st October 2013

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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 meetings – 12 th November and 10 th December 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	Next meeting – 25 th November 2013.
7.	Grants Panel	Chair: Cllr David Bush / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Donna Hancox	Next meeting – January 2014.
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

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9.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair: Mr R Key / Sheena Jones	Last meeting – 7 th October 2013
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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**12th November 2013**ACTION MONITORING**

Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer	Action requested	Status
15th October 2013		
Cllr Hartnett/ D Allen / M Bough	<p>Delivering New Affordable Housing</p> <p>The Leader undertook to seek to provide an example to Councillor Brandon Clayton of a Registered Social Landlord's (RSL) rents that were comparable to Council rents following the meeting.</p> <p>As grant funding for a Mortgage Rescue Scheme was only available until 31st March 2014, it was suggested that urgency procedures might be required following the meeting to expedite the recommended course of action.</p>	<p>Information provided to Councillor Clayton on 23rd October.</p> <p>Urgency procedures used to bring this about.</p>
<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: 15/10/13 to present

