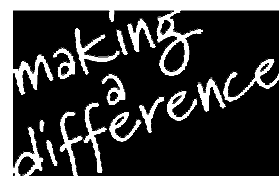




# Executive Committee

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April  
2014  
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2  
Town Hall  
Redditch



[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

# Access to Information - Your Rights

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Your main rights are set out below:-

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

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

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

# Welcome to today's meeting.

## Guidance for the Public

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### **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 Democratic Services Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

### **Running Order**

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

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

### **Decisions**

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

### **Members of the Public**

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

### **Special Arrangements**

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Democratic Services Officer.

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

### **Further Information**

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

### **Fire/ Emergency instructions**

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

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

**Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.**

**Do Not use lifts.**

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

**The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.**





# Executive

8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

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	

<b>1. Apologies</b>	To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
<b>3. Leader's Announcements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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; and</li> <li>2. any other relevant announcements.</li> </ol> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<b>4. Minutes</b> (Pages 1 - 8) Chief Executive	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2014.  (Minutes attached)
<b>5. Landscaping Task Group Final Report</b> (Pages 9 - 58)  Landscaping Task Group	To consider the final report and recommendations of the Landscaping Task Group.  (Report attached)  <b>All Wards</b>
<b>6. Football Task Group - Interim Report</b> (Pages 59 - 68)  Football Task group	To consider an Interim report from the Football Task Group.  (Interim report attached)  <b>All Wards</b>

# Executive

Committee

8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

<p><b>7. Planning Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy - Focussed Consultation: 2011 - 2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Sites Options</b></p> <p>(Pages 69 - 74)</p> <p>Head of Planning and Regeneration</p>	<p>To consider retrospective approval of a Redditch Borough Council Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy - Focussed Consultation: 2011 - 2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Sites Options.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>8. Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee</b></p> <p>(Pages 75 - 86)</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014.</p> <p>There are recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>(Pages 87 - 98)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014.</p> <p>There are recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p><b>10. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.</b></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><b>11. Advisory Panels - update report</b></p> <p>(Pages 99 - 102)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p><b>12. Action Monitoring</b></p> <p>(Pages 103 - 104)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>

## 13. Exclusion of the Public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to any items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

**“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (*to be specified*) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”**

**These paragraphs are as follows:**

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

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

**may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.**

## 14. 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

11<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## MINUTES

### Present:

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

### Also Present:

Councillor Andy Fry

Jim Stobie, Head of Estates Services, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police

### Officers:

C Flanagan, S Hanley, J Pickering and A de Warr

### Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

### 145. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Rebecca Blake.

### 146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 147. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that there were two matters which had appeared on the Executive Work Programme but which were not included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting as it had subsequently become apparent that Officers had the necessary authority to act in each case.

These were the approval of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Budget, where authority had been previously delegated to Officers by Council, and the Nomination of an Asset of Community

.....  
Chair

Value, where Officers had applied statutory tests to the nomination, in accordance with the Council's agreed policy, which demonstrated that the application could not proceed.

**148. MINUTES****RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**149. JOINT PROPERTY VEHICLE**

Jim Stobie, Head of Estates Services for Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, attended the meeting to provide Members with a brief explanation of the proposed Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) which was being put forward as a property management solution for public sector organisations in Worcestershire and the surrounding area. At the outset it was reported that the County Council had recently agreed to move towards a Full Business Case. Should the Borough Council decide to progress the initiative, the Full Business Case would be presented for approval in approximately 12 months time.

Jim Stobie explained that the JPV represented a unique proposition, an arms-length company limited by shares, wholly owned and governed by the participating public sector partners. Those partners who were in at the outset would have control of the function of the JPV and each partner would possess an equal vote and voice on the shareholder group. There would be scope for other public sector organisations to come on board over time but this would be with the agreement of the existing partners.

The most obvious benefit of this approach would be efficiency savings together with those realised from the rationalisation of management structures. Property portfolio costs could be reduced in all areas other than for Non-Domestic Rates. The JPV would contribute to the local environment and economy through the contracting of services from local suppliers, would lead to revenue savings and would also contribute towards regeneration through the Worcestershire LEP. The one town approach was a further benefit of the proposal.

Members were generally supportive of the proposal and sought assurances and clarification on a number of areas. It was made clear that only public sector partners would be able to collaborate as part of the JPV in order to be Teckal compliant. It was also explained that it was up to each authority who was appointed to the

Shareholder group but that the current proposal was for this to be a Director of the public body in question.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the Worcestershire Capital and Asset Partnership Outline Business Case for a Joint Property Initiative for the development of a joint Estates function across public sector organisations across the Worcestershire region, attached at Appendix 1, be noted;**
- 2) **the development of a Full Business Case, to be brought back to Members in due course, be agreed; and**
- 3) **the Executive Director for Finance and Resources and Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management be delegated to work with partners to support the development of the Full Business Case for a Joint Property Vehicle, to include exploring hosting and proposed governance arrangements.**

**150. GRANTS PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report setting out the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2014/15. An update report was considered which provided the outcomes of a meeting of the Grants Assessment Panel following dispatch of the original agenda.

In view of the fact that two applications had not even reached what was considered an acceptable standard, it was recommended that all future applications meet a minimum level before they might go forward for consideration by the Panel.

Members expressed their admiration for the work carried out by the voluntary sector in the Borough and thanked those involved for enhancing the lives of those within Redditch.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Section 4.6 of the report submitted; and**
- 2) **a minimum score of 50% of the available points be approved for all applications submitted to Redditch**

**Borough Council's Voluntary and Community Grants Programme.****151. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY**

Members received a report which enabled them to scrutinise the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision and consider a number of Capital Bids.

The Committee was informed that there was a statutory obligation upon Officers to produce this report on an annual basis. There was little change in the information contained within the report year on year but it did provide Members with reassurance that the Council was managing its borrowing, investment and cash-flow effectively. Members' attention was drawn to the Council's investment strategy which demonstrated that an appropriate balance was being struck between risk and return.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2014/15 be approved; and**
- 2) the Capital Bids detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved.**

**152. PAY POLICY 2014/15**

Members considered the Council's Pay Policy for 2014/15. This report was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted that around 100 staff were receiving below the Living Wage at present, but this situation would be remedied once Job Evaluation had been concluded and implemented and Officers hoped to achieve this within the next few months.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the Pay Policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.**

**153. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2013/14 - APRIL - DECEMBER  
(QUARTER 3)**

Officers presented what was a new-style Finance Monitoring Report which provided considerably more detail around departmental spending than had been the case previously.

The Leader commented that Members were taking a greater role in actively monitoring their relevant budgets of late and this was increasingly being evidenced.

Staff were thanked for achieving the savings to date which had resulted in a projected outturn for 2013/14 in line with the budget for the current year.

It was noted that there was still a small amount of ongoing expenditure in respect of Hewell Road Pool Works. Officers reported that they had raised this with the Housing Strategy Team and a position statement was expected within the current week. This position statement would be forwarded on to all Executive Committee members.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the current financial position on Revenue and Capital, as detailed in the report, be noted; and**
- 2) identified savings be used to offset the savings requirement that has not been fully identified, where available in discussion with Heads of Service.**

**154. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE-OFFS - THIRD  
QUARTER 2013/14**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the action taken by Officers with respect to the write off of debts during the first nine months of 2013/14 and which set out the profile and levels of outstanding debt.

Officers advised that much of the information contained within the report could only usefully be reported on an annual basis as in-year reporting only served to provide a misleading impression of the levels of outstanding debt. To this end it was proposed that the Executive Committee move to annual rather than quarterly reporting of this information henceforward.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and**

- 2) **an amendment be made to the Write Off Policy to allow for annual reporting of the write offs rather than quarterly.**

**155. CUSTOMER SERVICES - 3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT**

Members considered details of customer feedback data for the third quarter of 2013/14, along with transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

One of the headline figures for the third quarter was a reduction in complaints which was linked to the bedding in of new waste collection arrangements and a reduction in the complaints about that particular service change. Only one complaint that quarter had been escalated to the Head of Service and no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman. There had, however, been a considerable number of compliments.

Customer Services staff were complimented on the report, which demonstrated the benefits flowing through from transformation, and also on the changes to the arrangement in the Town Hall Reception area which had resulted in much reduced queuing in that space.

**RESOLVED that**

**the contents of the report be noted.**

**156. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 be received and noted.**

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

**158. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

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

**Executive  
Committee**

11<sup>th</sup> March 2014

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**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**159. ACTION MONITORING**

The Committee's Action Monitoring report was considered by Members.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.35 pm

.....  
Chair







Overview  
& Scrutiny

## Landscaping Task Group

2013/14

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

making  
a  
difference

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)



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### **Membership of the Task Group**

Councillors Hopkins (Chair), Baker, Braley, M. Chalk and Smith.

### **Support Officer**

Jess Bayley, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: (01527) 64252 Extn: 3268

Email: [jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

### **Completed**

April 2014

### **Contact**

Further copies of this report are available on request from:

Address: Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

Email: [scrutiny@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@redditchbc.gov.uk)



**FOREWORD**

The reason we, as a group, decided to scrutinise landscaping was because Redditch is a very green Borough with a great number of trees, a lot of open spaces and abundant areas with grass and hedges. In short, a beautiful place to live. We, as Councillors, probably get more queries about this subject than any other. I realised what a huge job it is to keep Redditch “well groomed” and attractive and was keen to see how this was achieved by our operatives and the mindset behind their work. We wanted to be able to inform other Councillors and the public how landscaping operatives delivered their service and what their remit was.

Our Task Group review was very timely as the whole process was undergoing transformation and at present we have the “new approach” and the traditional service both ongoing and starting to merge together. A new holistic idea was being delivered in Winyates called “place” which we found very exciting.

The subject we tried to cover was immense and we underwent field trips to see the operatives at work. We interviewed the place team and managers. We looked at the way data is logged and used by Environmental Services and even looked at what approaches could be adopted to create revenue for landscaping.

I should like to thank Jess Bayley for her invaluable help, advice and hard work. Guy Revans, Emma Aldrick, Carl Walker, Chris Franklin, Sue Horrobin, Dave Kesterton and Neil Partridge were very open and honest with us, answering our questions totally and providing all the information we needed.

All the Task Group, myself, Councillor Mike Braley, Councillor Mike Chalk, Councillor Joe Baker and Councillor Yvonne Smith, were very keen, interested and worked hard to come to our recommendations. We have put forward seven recommendations which we hope will be adopted and prove useful.



**Councillor Gay Hopkins**  
**Chair of the Landscaping Task Group**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS****Chapter 1: Communications with elected Members****Recommendation 1**

**New Members should be invited to visit teams responsible for tree maintenance, landscaping and cleansing services as part of the Member Induction process to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams.**

- a) A short briefing outlining the work of the place intervention, tree intervention and landscaping teams should be provided prior to a Council meeting early in the municipal year to provide those Members who are unable to participate in the member induction visit with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams.**

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in terms of the Officer time required to organise and facilitate the visit.

**Legal implications:** There are no legal implications for the Council.

**Recommendation 2**

**A contact list of key senior and operational Officers, containing the telephone and email details together with basic information about the Officers' responsibilities, should be provided for the consideration of Members.**

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in relation to the Officer time required to clarify the contact details and the key areas of responsibility for the Officers recorded on the list.

**Legal implications:** There are no legal implications for the Council.

**Recommendation 3**

**Members should be provided with updates on progress made addressing landscaping issues that they have referred to Officers at the request of residents including at the point of resolution.**

**Financial Implications:** As landscaping and cleansing operatives are already encouraged to update both residents and Councillors who report landscaping issues to the Council there are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation.

**Legal implications:** There are no legal implications for the Council.

**Chapter 2: Members influencing the delivery of landscaping services in their wards**

**Recommendation 4**

**Data relating to landscaping cases reported for each area be provided for Members' consideration on an annual basis. Every Member should receive data for the areas they cover.**

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this report except with respect to the time required from Officers to produce this data. The information is stored on the Environmental Services 'M3' system, an electronic database. Officers have provided this data for the areas within the five wards covered by Members of the group and Members were assured that it did not take much time to provide this data. Members do not feel it would be an onerous task to provide this data for every Councillor, covering the twelve wards within the Borough, if it was only required on an annual basis.

**Legal implications:** There are no legal implications for the Council.

**Recommendation 5**

**One of the Environmental Services teams' performance measures should be to monitor the number of landscape cases that take longer than six months to resolve. The information obtained through this monitoring process should be reported in the strategic measures for the consideration of Senior Officers and elected Members.**

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in relation to the Officer time required to obtain and monitor the information.

**Legal implications:** There are no legal implications for the Council.

**Chapter 3: Revenue Opportunities****Recommendation 6**

**Officers should undertake a feasibility study, risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to assess the potential for the Council to bulk plant trees in Council open spaces and other appropriate locations. This feasibility study should take into account the following matters:**

- a) **The legal implications, if any, of this action.**
- b) **The financial costs involved in planting and maintaining these plants.**
- c) **The availability of grants from the government and other sources to help pay for bulk planting in the Borough.**
- d) **Demand within the market.**
- e) **Where bulk planting would take place in the Borough.**
- f) **The size of the plots available for bulk planting.**
- g) **The implications for the Council's Planning Department in relation to the Local Plan.**
- h) **The potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council.**



**Financial Implications:** At this stage the group is simply proposing that Officers investigate this idea further through completing a feasibility study. There are no financial implications arising from this proposal, except with regard to the Officer time that would be required to conduct this study.

The group is keen to ensure that this option is investigated further as Members believe that bulk planting could potentially yield revenue for the Council in the future.

**Legal Implications:** Legally local authorities are not permitted to make a profit or to compete with the private sector. These legal requirements would need to be taken into account as part of any feasibility study. The Council would also need to ensure that if bulk planting does take place at a future date any revenue accrued from this action would be reinvested in service delivery.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**Officers should investigate how to dispose of logs in a way that would maximise income for the Council. Part of this investigation should involve a risk assessment. Any revenue from these sales should be reinvested in landscaping services.**

**Financial Implications:** At this stage the group is simply proposing that Officers investigate this idea further through completing a feasibility study. There are no financial implications arising from this proposal, except with regard to the Officer time that would be required to conduct this study.

The group is keen to ensure that this option is investigated further as they feel that the Council could derive more revenue from log sales. Officers have confirmed that there may be opportunities available to enable the Council to increase revenue in this area.

**Legal implications:** Legally local authorities are not permitted to make a profit or to compete with the private sector. These legal requirements would need to be taken into account as part of any feasibility study. The Council would also need to ensure that if bulk planting does take place at a future date any revenue accrued from this action would be reinvested in service delivery.

## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The subject of landscaping was initially raised as a topic that would potentially be suitable for further scrutiny during an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event in June 2013. During this event a number of elected Members identified landscaping issues as a subject that was frequently raised by residents for their consideration. Due to the interest of the local community in the subject the Overview and Scrutiny Committee concluded that it would be appropriate to launch a review of landscaping services in the Borough.

The group was commissioned to address two key objectives:

- To identify actions that could be taken to enable Environmental Services Officers to more effectively communicate with elected Members about their work.
- To get involved with and influence delivery of the Environmental Services interventions in their wards.

Members were also required to obtain further information about the Council's current approach to delivering landscaping services within the Borough and to clarify the powers of local government in relation to tree roots impacting on pavements and landscaping issues involving private properties.

The review took place at a time of significant change within Environmental Services at the Council. The ultimate objective of these changes was to enable Officers to adapt services in order to meet the Council's Strategic Purposes, a set of principles designed to focus service delivery on the needs of the customer rather than on simply implementing services in line with established practice. The key strategic purpose influencing changes to Environmental Services was the aim to 'Keep Our Place Safe and Looking Good'.

In this context the group found that their review coincided with a transitional phase in service delivery. They encountered three approaches to delivering landscaping services, including two methods which were being delivered as part of extended trials:

### 1) The Trees Intervention

A new approach to managing and maintaining trees across the Borough was launched in early 2013. The aim of this intervention was to reduce the amount of time spent on actions which did not lead to any discernible positive outcomes for the customer. Officers chose to focus on trees during this trial rather than hedges or grass cutting because of the high volume of trees in the Borough and the significant amount of enquiries received from residents about trees on an annual basis.

Prior to the introduction of the trees intervention the process for managing trees within the Borough had been more time consuming and resource

intensive. In the first instance an inspector had responded to an enquiry received from a customer and had assessed the need for action. Tree surgeons had then visited the tree and had been required to undertake maintenance works in line with written instructions provided by the inspector. Any additional landscaping issues observed by the surgeons could not be addressed at that stage but needed to be reported back to senior Officers and further inspections would then take place. Feedback to the customers, when available, would also be provided by senior Officers rather than the tree surgeons.

During the trial intervention the tree surgeons have been empowered to respond to customer enquiries directly. Where necessary the tree surgeons can still interact with senior Officers to obtain advice about more complicated cases using portable electronic devices. However, the surgeons have been provided with greater discretion to assess each case and to determine what action, if any, needs to be taken to address the resident's concerns. The tree surgeons can also resolve any other problems involving a tree or trees in that area which they might observe whilst on site, without having to refer back to an inspector.

The tree surgeons are also required to interact directly with the customer about each tree case. Wherever possible this should include face to face consultations about the work that can be undertaken to address a problem. Tree surgeons are also encouraged to explain the reasons why it may not be possible to undertake the work requested by a customer.

The group was advised at the start of the review that during the trial a backlog had developed in the number of tree cases that needed to be resolved within the Borough. The causes of these delays were numerous and included:

- Staff vacancies arising during the period which reduced the resources available to the Council.
- The significant level of demand during the growing season in the spring and summer months.
- The tree surgeons taking on cases that previously might not have been addressed by the Council in order to meet the needs of the Customer (for example cases involving overgrown trees that were impacting on TV reception in local properties).
- The legal requirement not to undertake work on trees where birds are observed to be roosting during the nesting season.

By the end of the review Members were advised that this backlog had reduced significantly. The group is confident that as time progresses the lessons learned during the trees intervention will lead to a further reduction in this backlog.

The group met with a number of tree surgeons during a field trip to Woodrow in October 2013. The tree surgeons were very enthusiastic about the work

they were doing. In particular, unsolicited positive feedback received from customers, both face to face and in writing, has had a beneficial impact on the tree surgeons' job satisfaction.



The trees intervention team has to work on a range of cases. This includes resolving emergency cases such as this tree which fell on a property located on Bromfield Road in December 2013.

## 2) The Place Intervention

The place intervention was launched in July 2013. The purpose of this intervention was to trial a different approach to delivering Environmental Services in a specific location. Winyates was selected as the initial location for this intervention partly because Winyates was the focus for the Borough's Area of Highest Need project and also because Environmental Services operatives could learn from the Council's Housing Locality team which had a base in Winyates and had already trialed a different approach to delivering housing services in a specific location.

The group discovered during the review that the title 'place' encapsulated the focus of the team on improving the total environment in a given area. As part of the place trial operatives who had previously been employed to deliver distinct services, such as landscaping and cleansing services, have been required to work together in a unified Environmental Services team. Staff are

encouraged to learn from each other and to develop new skills so that in future they will become multi-functional operatives delivering an holistic service.

During the review Members learned that, as with the trees intervention, operatives involved in the place intervention have been provided with discretion to respond to customers' enquiries directly, rather than required to follow written instructions from an inspector. Staff work in zones within the locality where they are expected to take action in response to issues raised by residents as well as to identify other landscaping problems which may impact on the local community but which might not have been reported to the Council. In this context operatives involved in the place team should become increasingly familiar with the particular needs of their community and any landscaping issues which might recur in future years.

The Task Group visited the place team on two occasions; in November 2013 and January 2014. During these visits the group was advised about a number of actions that the operatives were taking which they felt were making a positive contribution to the local environment. This included:

- Operatives co-ordinating work so that landscaping and cleansing tasks took place at the same time thereby minimising disruption to the customer.
- Clearing drains and replacing drain covers.
- Emptying waste collection bins as and when required rather than in line with an established routine.
- Adopting a flexible approach to encourage residents to remove items disposed of through fly tipping in a more appropriate manner.
- Clearing Council house gardens prior to a tenant moving into the premises to enable the resident to have a manageable environment from the start of their tenancy.
- Interacting on a regular basis with local residents and businesses on a face to face basis thereby helping to develop good community relationships.
- Regular interaction with customers to ensure that they understood what action was being taken in response to their enquiries and received an explanation for any delays if these occurred.
- Removing shrubs and hedges impacting on the light in properties within the centre, thereby enabling residents to reduce electricity bills.
- Maintaining shrubs and plants beside footpaths to improve sightlines and feelings of safety within the community.
- Replacing bins in Winyates centre with new bins that have ashtrays attached to them.
- Removing or cleaning old and redundant signs.
- Clearing moss and grass from pathways to improve the appearance and safety of these paths for residents.

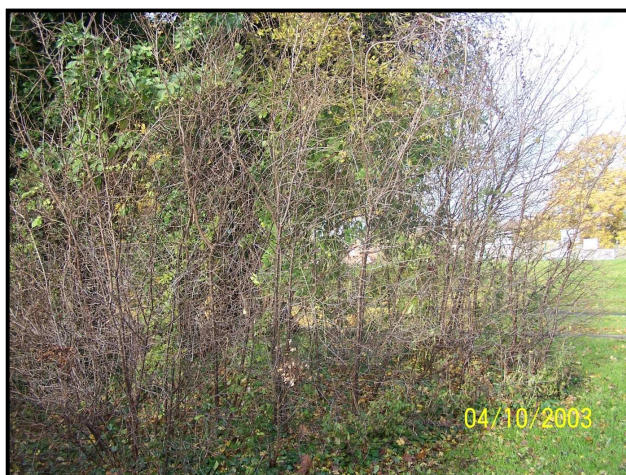


- Offering to provide assistance to residents and / or businesses in cases where, though the issue might not have been reported, the operatives had observed that these matters might have a negative impact on the local community.

Members have been advised that the Council is in the first phase of delivering the place intervention trial. During this first phase Officers are intending to clarify the varying requirements of Environmental Services in different geographical and topographical locations and to resolve long-standing and large scale problems within the environment so that they reach a standard where in future landscaping and cleansing services can be maintained at a manageable level.

The second phase of the intervention trial is not due to start until these initial lessons have been learned. During this second phase senior Officers will determine the size of geographical areas that operatives will be required to cover when delivering an holistic Environmental Service and the number of multi-skilled operatives required to work in each of these locations.

During the review Members concluded that the place approach to service delivery was positive for both staff, the wider community and the Council. In particular the opportunities provided for employees to learn new skills and to gain different experiences is considered likely to help motivate staff. In addition, Members recognise that the focus on the needs of the environment in a local area and on addressing problems observed by operatives familiar with that environment has the potential to benefit the community.



The place team undertook landscaping works in Sutton Close, Winyates, in October 2013 to improve the appearance of the local environment. These works may have also helped to reassure residents using the footpath in the background of this picture because as a consequence pedestrians now have a clear view of the surrounding area.

At the end of their review Members were advised that the place intervention was being expanded to take place outside Winyates. The first stage of this expansion has already started in Matchborough, though the place intervention approach to service delivery is also due to take place in Wythall in Bromsgrove district to enable Officers to identify service requirements in rural locations. In the long-term Officers have advised the group that they are intending to extend the place approach to service delivery across the whole of the Borough.

### 3) 'Traditional' Landscaping Services

A significant proportion of landscaping operatives employed by the Council continue to deliver their services in a more traditional manner. In line with this approach operatives continue to receive written instructions from inspectors about the landscaping work that needs to be undertaken. Tasks are not necessarily co-ordinated with the cleansing team, which remains separate. The landscaping operatives in this team operate throughout the Borough, though not within the locations covered by the place intervention team.

A number of modifications have, however, been made to the working practices of the traditional landscaping team within the last 18 months. This has included groups of landscaping operatives working in particular locations on specific dates to undertake extensive landscaping works. These projects should enable operatives to resolve landscaping problems and to ensure that in future minimal maintenance works are required at these locations.



The traditional Landscaping Team delivers a variety of services. For example, in 2013 landscaping operatives cleared this pathway in Woodrow to improve residents' access to residential buildings.

The traditional landscaping team, working with the trees intervention and place intervention teams where appropriate, has also increasingly been working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council. In particular Landscaping Officers and Highways Officers have co-operated over road closures on the main highways within the Borough and have undertaken works at the same time. As a consequence of this co-operation it has been possible for Officers to minimise the level of disruption experienced by local residents and businesses. At the same time the financial costs for the Council has reduced from £15,000 to £8,000 per road closure.

The Task Group were impressed by the work of all of the teams and the dedication of all staff. Members did recognise that the interventions will lead to improvements to service delivery as well as provide opportunities in the long-term for all operatives to learn new skills and to gain new experiences. However, they did identify a small number of additional actions that could be taken, as detailed in their recommendations, which are designed to help facilitate further improvements.



**CHAPTER 1: COMMUNICATIONS WITH ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee originally launched this review because Members reported that they consistently received enquiries from residents about landscaping services and it was felt that there was a need for Members to clarify how these services were delivered. The following three recommendations detail some of the actions that the group believes could be taken to improve the ways in which Environmental Services Officers communicate with as well as provide information about their services to elected Members.

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	<p><b>New Members should be invited to visit teams responsible for tree maintenance, landscaping and cleansing services as part of the Member Induction process to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams.</b></p> <p><b>a) A short briefing outlining the work of the place intervention, tree intervention and landscaping teams should be provided prior to a Council meeting early in the municipal year to provide those Members who are unable to participate in the member induction visit with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams.</b></p>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in terms of the Officer time required to organise and facilitate the visit.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications for the Council.

During the review the group obtained a lot of information about the changing approach within the Council to delivering all Environmental Services. This information was obtained from a variety of sources, including formal interviews, written evidence and practical visits to observe staff working in the tree and place interventions.

The group concluded that the field trips in particular were a useful source of information for elected Members. These visits provided Members with an opportunity to observe staff in action and were considered to be more demonstrative of working practices than written reports and presentations. These visits also provided Members with an opportunity to further clarify the role of the trees intervention and place intervention teams and the benefits of the changes that they were pioneering both for the customer and for staff.

At the forthcoming elections in May 2014 there is the possibility that a number of new Members will be elected to serve on the Council. These new Members will not necessarily have the same background information about Council services that is available to more experienced elected Members. In a context where services are being transformed the group believes that new Members would particularly benefit from having an opportunity to participate in fieldtrips to observe staff in the trees and place interventions. This will ensure that new Members are able both to learn about service delivery through practical observation and to meet with useful contacts at the Council.

Concerns have been expressed by Officers about whether this proposal will represent value for money. This is because Officers would need to commit time to organising this type of field trip and the participation of sufficient number of Members would need to be secured to justify the expenditure on this process. The group is keen to address these concerns. For this reason Members are suggesting that it may be appropriate for the opportunity to visit the trees intervention and place intervention teams to be offered on a trial basis in 2014/15. Based on feedback received from new Members regarding the value of this experience and an analysis of the number of eligible Members who have participated a decision could be taken by the Member Development Steering Group as to whether to continue to offer this opportunity to new Members as part of the Member induction process in future years.

The group recognises that some new Members, particularly those with work commitments, may struggle to participate in a visit that would need to take place during daylight hours. In these circumstances the group concluded that it would be useful for this information to also be made available through alternative means. Members believe that a short briefing, delivered prior to a meeting of Council, would be the best way to achieve this objective.

Briefings on the subject of the place and tree interventions have in the past and continue to be provided at meetings of the Shared Services Board. However, the group is concerned that these meetings are not always well attended. By contrast, a meeting of Council, which all Members are scheduled to attend, is more likely to attract a greater audience of elected Members. A briefing before a Council meeting, therefore, is more likely to reach a larger audience of elected Members.

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	<b>A contact list of key senior and operational Officers, containing the telephone and email details together with basic information about the Officers' responsibilities, should be provided for the consideration of Members.</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in relation to the Officer time required to clarify the contact details and the key areas of responsibility for the Officers recorded on the list.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications for the Council.

Members of the group have commented during the course of the review that it is often helpful for Councillors to know which Officers to contact to discuss issues relating to particular services. Circulation of a list of contact details for relevant lead Officers representing each service area would therefore be useful for Members.

In previous years contact lists, containing basic contact details for senior Officers, has been provided for the consideration of Members. However, members of the group suggested that the content of these lists in the past had not always been easy to use; whilst job titles and contact details had been provided clarification had not always been available about the roles and responsibilities of those Officers. Where a description had been provided local government terminology had sometimes been used and this could be confusing for new Members in particular.

Consequently the group is proposing that a new contact list should be provided for the consideration of elected Members. As elections are due to take place in May 2014, and it is possible that a number of new Members who have no previous experience in local government will be elected to the Council, the group is suggesting that it would be useful for this contact list to be made available to Members in the new municipal year. Furthermore, wherever possible, the group is suggesting that updated versions of this list should be reissued to Members during the year, such as when there has been significant staff turnover or service restructuring, to ensure that Members retain access to relevant information.

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	<b>Members should be provided with updates on progress made addressing landscaping issues that they have referred to Officers at the request of residents including at the point of resolution.</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	As landscaping and cleansing operatives are already encouraged to update both residents and Councillors who report landscaping issues to the Council there are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications for the Council.

During the review Members discussed their own experiences of receiving enquiries from residents about landscaping problems that had been observed in the local community. In many cases Members refer the issues reported by the resident to relevant Officers in the Environmental Services team and request that action be taken to resolve the issue. All environmental tasks, regardless of whether they are referred by a resident, Officer or Councillor are recorded on the services' central M3 database for future action.

In previous years regular updates were not always provided by Officers to residents or Councillors who had reported a landscaping problem to the Council. Early in the place and trees intervention process Officers learned that this lack of communication often caused frustration for both residents and Councillors. By contrast even brief communications explaining progress with a particular case and / or the reasons for any delays were generally appreciated by the customer.

Consequently, as part of the place intervention operatives are required to keep the individual(s) (including Councillors) who have reported an issue to the Council informed about any progress made with resolving the problem. This approach appears to be welcomed by residents and may have helped to contribute to reportedly good relationships between the operatives and the local community, particularly in Winyates where the place intervention trial has been taking place for some time.

The group has been advised that the place approach to service delivery is due to be extended across the Borough by approximately the start of winter 2014. As such these enhanced communications should become standard practice within the next 12 months, though senior Officers have advised the group that all Environmental Services operatives are being encouraged to encompass improved communications into their working practices with immediate effect.

Despite this the group concurs that it is important to reiterate the need for elected Members to be kept informed about progress with issues that they have raised on behalf of local residents. This is particularly useful for elected Members as it ensures that they can keep concerned residents updated and answer any further enquiries that may be received from the local community on the subject.

**CHAPTER 2: MEMBERS INFLUENCING THE DELIVERY OF LANDSCAPING SERVICES IN THEIR WARDS**

Another key objective of the review was for Members to influence the delivery of landscaping services in their wards. Elected Members have knowledge about issues impacting on their wards which may not be available to Officers. This knowledge may have developed over time as a result of frequent interaction with constituents both in person and in writing. In some cases Members will be in a position to provide a solution to a problem impacting on a resident without the matter needing to be referred on to Officers.

The knowledge that elected Members have about the areas within their wards and the particular needs of local communities can be invaluable to Council services. In particular, the place intervention approach to service delivery, which involves a holistic approach to delivering services that meet the needs of the local community and the environment in which they live, could benefit from the local knowledge of elected Members.

The group recognises that elected Members can make positive contributions to services based on their local knowledge. The following two recommendations are designed to enable Members to contribute in this positive manner whilst minimising involvement in operational delivery which the group appreciates is the responsibility of Officers.

<b>Recommendation 4</b>	<b>Data relating to landscaping cases reported for each area be provided for Members' consideration on an annual basis. Every Member should receive data for the areas they cover.</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report except with respect to the time required from Officers to produce this data. The information is stored on the Environmental Services 'M3' system, an electronic database. Officers have provided this data for the areas within the five wards covered by Members of the group and Members were assured that it did not take much time to provide this data. Members do not feel it would be an onerous task to provide this data for every Councillor, covering the twelve wards within the Borough, if it was only required on an annual basis.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications for the Council.

All enquiries received from residents and Councillors are recorded by Officers on the Council's M3 Environmental Services database. The information is logged by area rather than ward on the database as this reflects the current geographical remit of different teams operating in the Borough.

During the review Members received data relating to the landscaping issues that had been reported by residents for the geographical areas within their wards. The information provided in this feedback was collated and presented for Members' consideration in the form of a series of graphs (attached at Appendix 4).

There were a number of key themes that stood out to Members from this feedback. In the majority of locations problems involving trees were more frequently reported than other issues (such as hedges or overgrown grass). However, the data provided for Astwood Bank and Feckenham was different; problems with hedges were more frequently reported than trees. Woodrow was also different because whilst the majority of problems reported involved hedges the Council received more enquiries from residents (including multiple enquiries) about trees in this area.

A large number of cases had been reported for some streets more frequently than for others. In some cases this reflected the fact that a road covered a particularly large geographical area. In other cases, however, multiple reports had been received for smaller roads. Often in these instances Members were able to identify reasons for the frequency of enquiries based on their knowledge of the local topography and of the needs of the local community. The group is suggesting that if similar data for all areas was shared with all Members they would be in a position to use their local knowledge to help Officers clarify potential causes of landscaping problems as well as to identify where preventive action might be useful.

Concerns have been expressed that provision of this data on an area basis for each of the twelve wards may not represent best use of resources and could require a significant amount of Officer time. However, the group was assured when they were provided with the data for the areas within their wards that it had taken very little time to gather this information.

The group are aware that there will be issues reported for some areas that fall within a different ward; for example some properties in the geographical area of Headless Cross are located in West ward. However, the group is suggesting that Members are familiar with the boundaries of their own wards and will be able to identify relevant data in the feedback without difficulty. For this reason they are not suggesting that Officers should undertake additional work to separate data to reflect patterns on a ward basis.

<b>Recommendation 5</b>	<b>One of the Environmental Services teams' performance measures should be to monitor the number of landscape cases that take longer than six months to resolve. The information obtained through this monitoring process should be reported in the strategic measures for the consideration of Senior Officers and elected Members.</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation except in relation to the Officer time required to obtain and monitor the information.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no legal implications for the Council.

The group has learned during the review that wherever possible operatives will resolve a landscaping problem as quickly as possible. Members understand that delays can occur where cases are complex or as a result of a backlog developing in particular seasons. Active communication with concerned residents can provide some reassurance. However, the group concluded that where a case has been delayed for a significant amount of time there may be additional problems that need to be addressed within the wider service. The group is therefore proposing that Officers should monitor all cases that take longer than six months to resolve to ensure that any such problems can be identified and resolved as soon as possible.

The Environmental Services team is currently in the process of reviewing their service measures. Teams are encouraged to regularly review performance measures to ensure that they focus on measuring activities that will make a useful contribution to improvements in service delivery and remain relevant to current circumstances. For Environmental Services the measures should also, wherever possible, relate to one of the Council's key strategic purposes: To Keep our Place Safe and Looking Good. The group therefore believes that this recommendation is timely.

Members have also concluded that whilst Officers would need to spend some time monitoring data relating to this measure implementing this recommendation would not require any significant additional investment of resources. Indeed, Officers are already committed to investing time in monitoring the performance measures for their services. Senior Officers have also confirmed that they feel this measure could make a useful contribution to improvements in the quality of services received by the customer.



The group is aware that elected Members should in future have access to the Council's performance dashboard, a central database which monitors performance measures. This should include information about progress in relation to the performance measure that is being proposed by the group. Whilst the dashboard remains unavailable for elected Members to access the group feels that progress in relation to this measure should be reported to Members separately. This will ensure that Members can advise Officers of any local problems that may be contributing to delays whilst these issues are still relevant.

### **CHAPTER 3: REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES**

Budget considerations have also directly informed Members' proposals in relation to two of the group's recommendations. At meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th January and 4th February 2014 Officers advised Members that they would be looking at alternative ways to deliver savings whilst improving services to the community. The group agrees that in this context opportunities to generate further income from sales of landscaping materials should be investigated further.

The group is aware that there is the potential for local authorities to generate revenue from sales of logs, wood chips and other materials generated through landscaping services. Whilst researching this subject the group learned that a number of Councils already offer these types of materials for sale. This includes Warwickshire County Council, which promotes firewood and kindling sales, and Rochford District Council, which advertises sales of materials produced through woodland management.

Redditch Borough Council already sells some landscaping materials through the Council's Woodland Management Scheme to a private sector firm. This includes sales of wood chip and "waste" wood, which is wood that has not been treated in order to make it suitable for use as firewood in an open fire. In 2012, the last year for which figures were available for the group's consideration, the net revenue generated from these sales varied from £13.80 to £188.88 per month. All revenue generated through this process is reallocated to the operation of the Woodland Management Scheme.

The group has been informed that some of the materials generated through landscaping services are reused by the Council in order to maintain Council land and open green spaces. For example, wood chips can be used in flower beds or for woodland management purposes. This use of landscaping materials, whilst not generating an income, does help to save expenditure for the Council as otherwise these materials would need to be purchased from an external source.

However, Officers have advised the group that it may be possible to generate further income from both the Woodland Management Scheme and through sales of materials generated by landscaping services across the Borough. Members concur that the ideas they are proposing in the following two recommendations would enable the Council to achieve any such increase in income whilst also potentially improving services available to the customer. They recognise that in both cases the feasibility of the action proposed, together with the financial and legal implications, needs to be investigated in further detail by Officers.

Indeed during the review Members learned that local authorities are not legally permitted to generate a profit from service delivery and may not compete with the private sector. These legal constraints would need to be taken into account as part of both of the feasibility studies proposed in these two recommendations.

<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p>	<p>Officers should undertake a feasibility study, risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to assess the potential for the Council to bulk plant trees in Council open spaces and other appropriate locations. This feasibility study should take into account the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The legal implications, if any, of this action.</li> <li>b) The financial costs involved in planting and maintaining these plants.</li> <li>c) The availability of grants from the government and other sources to help pay for bulk planting in the Borough.</li> <li>d) Demand within the market.</li> <li>e) Where bulk planting would take place in the Borough.</li> <li>f) The size of the plots available for bulk planting.</li> <li>g) The implications for the Council's Planning Department in relation to the Local Plan.</li> <li>h) The potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Implications</b></p> <p><b>Legal Implications</b></p>	<p>At this stage the group is simply proposing that Officers investigate this idea further through completing a feasibility study. There are no financial implications arising from this proposal, except with regard to the Officer time that would be required to conduct this study.</p> <p>The group is keen to ensure that this option is investigated further as Members believe that bulk planting could potentially yield revenue for the Council in the future.</p> <p>Legally local authorities are not permitted to make a profit or to compete with the private sector. These legal requirements would need to be taken into account as part of any feasibility study. The Council</p>

	would also need to ensure that if bulk planting does take place at a future date any revenue accrued from this action would be reinvested in service delivery.
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During the review Members did discuss potential options to generate further income from sales of landscaping materials with relevant Officers. Following an interview in January 2014 Officers suggested that bulk planting of trees could be considered as an option to generate revenue for the Council in future years. A mixture of softwood and hardwood trees could be planted on open spaces of land owned by the Council. The timber could start to be harvested approximately five years after planting, for softwood such as Willow trees, and 15 – 20 years after planting for hardwood trees.

The potential revenue that could be generated from harvesting trees planted in this manner would vary according to; the amount of space allocated to bulk planting, the species of trees planted, and the type of planting required, such as sustainable forestry or short term crops that could yield maximum returns. The potential revenue would need to be offset against the initial costs involved in planting the trees, which could include ground preparation works and installing stakes, as well as the financial costs involved in maintaining the trees during the growing period.

The group has been advised that there may be the potential for the Council to apply for external grant funding to help finance bulk planting of trees within the Borough. It is also possible that the Council could obtain advice from a woodland consultant about forms of grant funding available to local authorities. However, Officers have suggested that further time is required to clarify exactly which sources of grant funding are available and the eligibility criteria.

In addition, consideration would also need to be given to suitable locations for bulk planting to take place. Officers have advised that an appropriate amount of land would need to be made available to make this option financially viable. However, current uses of any land and any requirements for public access would need to be taken into account. In addition, Officers would need to consider any implications for the planning process, particularly with regard to designated use of current open spaces for future housing development in the Council's Local Plan.

Market research has not, to date, been undertaken to assess the level of demand for landscaping materials within the Borough. There is therefore no way of knowing at this stage whether local residents and businesses would be interested in purchasing extra timber from the Council. The group recognises that market research is required before any action is taken to implement bulk planting in order to assess the potential demand for timber.

For all of these reasons the Task Group has concluded that it would not be appropriate at this stage to propose that bulk planting should definitely take

place. Instead, they feel that a feasibility study, incorporating a cost benefit analysis, is required to assess the viability of this idea further.

<b>Recommendation 7</b>	<b>Officers should investigate how to dispose of logs in a way that would maximise income for the Council. Part of this investigation should involve a risk assessment. Any revenue from these sales should be reinvested in landscaping services.</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	<p>At this stage the group is simply proposing that Officers investigate this idea further through completing a feasibility study. There are no financial implications arising from this proposal, except with regard to the Officer time that would be required to conduct this study.</p> <p>The group is keen to ensure that this option is investigated further as they feel that the Council could derive more revenue from log sales. Officers have confirmed that there may be opportunities available to enable the Council to increase revenue in this area.</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>Legally local authorities are not permitted to make a profit or to compete with the private sector. These legal requirements would need to be taken into account as part of any feasibility study. The Council would also need to ensure that if bulk planting does take place at a future date any revenue accrued from this action would be reinvested in service delivery.</p>

The group was advised during the review that the quality of timber determines the price at which it can be sold. High quality logs are often split, seasoned and stored for a period of approximately 12 months in order to be dried. Currently, logs sold by the Council have not been put through any of these processes and this is reflected in the price for which the logs are sold. Officers have estimated that if logs were processed in this manner the Council could generate £60.00 to £70.00 per tonne of logs sold rather than the Council's charge of £17.50 for sales of logs per cubic metre per bag (from 1st April 2014).

Capital investment would be required from the Council to improve the quality of logs processed by the Council. This would include investment in machinery to split the logs and Members have been advised that a second hand processor for this purpose would cost a minimum of £10,000. In addition the Council would need to invest in providing appropriate space in which the logs could be stored which would need to be protected using appropriate security measures to

discourage theft of the timber. At present the Council does not have access to any suitable storage facilities of this nature. Investment might also need to be made to provide transport suitable for moving timber between growing sites and timber yards as well as potentially to customers. In total, Officers have estimated that the Council would need to invest between £50,000 and £100,000 to offer high quality processed timber.

The group recognises that the Council would struggle to meet these capital costs at present and this may limit the extent to which the Council can progress to providing processed logs to potential customers. However, Officers have advised the group that there is still the potential for the Council to make improvements in this area. As part of this process Members have been advised that there are three options available to the Council in relation to selling logs:

- a) The Council could sell logs directly to the customer. This could include selling unprocessed logs. The capital investment outlined in the paragraphs above is more likely to be required for this model if Members wish to make processed timber available for sale.
- b) The Council could work in partnership with a private firm. Under this model the Council would take a share of the revenue from sales. One of Redditch Borough Council's current customers has already offered to split the logs on the Council's behalf, subject to payment of a charge for the service. This would involve splitting 35 logs over the course of three days.
- c) The Council could sell logs to a private sector firm. This is the model that Redditch Borough Council currently follows.

It was not possible during the review for Officers to confirm the exact comparative costs and potential revenue that each option could generate for the Council. Further investigation therefore would be required to clarify these details. However, as there is the potential that changes to the ways in which the Council sells landscaping materials could generate an increase in revenue the group feels that these options should be assessed by Officers as part of a further feasibility study.

**CONCLUSION**

The Landscaping Task Group has completed a thorough review of landscaping services in Redditch. Members recognise that to some extent it is likely that the current situation with regard to service delivery in this area will change further as transition within Environmental Services continues to progress. However, the group has concluded that this was a timely review as it has enabled Members to clarify the extent of changes that are taking place and the implications for local residents.

Evidence was gathered by the group in a variety of ways. However, a key feature of this review was the group's field trips to visit the place and trees intervention teams. Through interacting with staff and observing them in action Members obtained a practical understanding of the challenges faced by Environmental Services operatives and the benefits of the new practices pioneered through the interventions.

All of the proposals contained within the report are informed by the evidence that was gathered by the group. Members anticipate that if their recommendations are approved and implemented they will have a beneficial impact on Environmental Services in Redditch.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Scrutiny Proposal Form**

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

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

Proposer's name and designation	Councillor Gay Hopkins	Date of referral	13/08/13
Proposed topic title	Landscaping Task Group		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	Redditch Borough Council Strategic Purpose – Keep my place safe and looking good.		
Background to the issue	<p>There are a significant number of trees and green spaces in the Borough of Redditch. Trees and hedgerows were planted during the development of the new town and form a distinctive feature of the Borough. This greenery also creates an aesthetically pleasing view for both residents and visitors. However, many of these plants have now reached a mature stage and need to be managed carefully.</p> <p>Many elected Members will have experience of being contacted by local residents to discuss landscaping issues in their wards. In particular, tree maintenance, grass cutting, hedgerow management and the impact of tree roots on pavements are frequently raised by local residents. The fact that tree maintenance and landscaping were identified as being suitable for further scrutiny by three of the four elected Member groups that participated in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event in June 2013 indicates that this remains a common area of interest for local residents.</p> <p>I am aware that the landscaping team at Redditch Borough Council works very hard and delivers an</p>		



	<p>excellent service to customers. Indeed, this service appears to be improving further as a result of the efforts of the transformation work on trees and the 'place' team which has recently started work in Winyates. However, Councillors are not always familiar with the team's work and therefore sometimes struggle to respond to residents' queries about this subject or to identify genuine issues that may need to be addressed through further work.</p> <p>I believe that a review of this subject would be timely. In recent weeks a number of letters and articles focusing on this subject have featured in the local press including: a letter in The Redditch Advertiser on the subject of grass cutting (26th June 2013); an article in The Redditch Standard on the subject of grass cutting (28th June 2013); and a letter to The Redditch Standard on the subject of hedge maintenance (5th July 2013). There is therefore clearly public interest in this subject at the time of writing.</p> <p>This Task Group exercise will also give Members an opportunity to learn more about the transformation work that is being carried out and to get involved and influence the process.</p>
<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<p>1) To investigate the Council's basic approach to maintaining trees, hedges, grass cutting and tree roots impacting on pavements.</p> <p>This could be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an initial presentation to Members by managers and staff about the old and new ways of working;</li> <li>b) visiting the teams working on landscaping and those involved with the transformation of trees, place; and</li> <li>c) considering the content of relevant Council policies which can be provided to Members via a brief information sheet.</li> </ul> <p>2) For Members to get involved and influence the environmental services interventions in their own wards as transformation proceeds and to explore actions that could be taken to improve communications between the landscaping teams and elected Members and residents.</p>

	<p>This could be achieved by: interviewing the Head of Environmental Services, other officers and the relevant Portfolio Holder as needed.</p> <p>3) To clarify the types of enquiries received by Councillors in relation to landscaping issues and to report the group's findings for consideration as part of the trees and place transformation interventions.</p> <p>This could be achieved by: circulating a survey amongst all elected Members for comment.</p> <p>4) To scrutinise the impact of tree roots on pavements and action that could be taken to address this.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) reviewing information provided by officers through a brief information sheet</li><li>b) consulting representatives of Worcestershire County Council's Highways Department.</li></ul> <p>5) To investigate the legislative position for local authorities responding to complaints from residents about landscaping problems involving private properties and the approaches available to the Council to resolve these issues including informal arbitration and enforcement action.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) reviewing information provided by officers regarding the legal position on both hedges and trees on private property through a brief information sheet; and</li><li>b) interviewing an Environmental Services Manager, a Planning Enforcement Officer and a representative of Legal Services.</li></ul> <p>6) To clarify the financial implications of any actions proposed by the group.</p> <p>This could involve: interviewing the Council's Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.</p>
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How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)	This review should take a maximum of six months to complete.
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**Please return this form to: Jess Bayley or Amanda Scarce, Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH**

**Email: [jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) / [A.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:A.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

**APPENDIX 2**  
**Witnesses**

The Landscaping Task Group would like to thank the following Officers for their assistance with this review.

Emma Alldrick (Environmental Services Improvement Officer)  
Wayne Beard (Senior Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Officer)  
Tarek Bell (Tree Surgeon)  
Gavin Boyes (Senior Arboricultural Officer)  
Scott Chaloner (Place Operative)  
Clare Flanagan (Legal Services Manager)  
Chris Franklin (Landscape and Ground Maintenance Officer)  
Darren Hawkins (Place Operative)  
Sue Horrobin (Environmental Services Manager until February 2014)  
Ian Jones (Place Operative)  
Sheena Jones (Democratic Services Manager)  
Elliott Kessey (Tree Surgeon)  
Dave Kesterton (Environmental Senior Improvements Officer)  
Neil Partridge (Environmental Operations Supervisor)  
Colin Pitts (Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Officer)  
Guy Revans (Head of Environmental Services)  
Ailith Rutt (Development Management Manager)  
Jason Simon (Arboriculture Officer)  
Daniel Wagstaff (Place Operative)  
Andy Walker (Environmental Operations Supervisor)  
Carl Walker (Environmental Services Manager)  
Andy White (Tree Surgeon)

The group would also like to thank the five elected Members who responded to their request for information about the landscaping issues that have impacted in their wards.

**APPENDIX 3**  
**Timeline of Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task Group Activity</b>
14th October 2013	Scoping discussion.
25th October	Interview with Officers to discuss the place and trees interventions.
6th November	Interview with an Arboriculture Officer to discuss the trees intervention in more detail and a visit to Woodrow North, Greenlands, to observe Tree Surgeons in action.
15th November	Visit to Crossgates Depot to discuss the traditional approach to delivering landscaping services with Officers.
18th November	Visit to Winyates to discuss the place intervention approach to delivering Environmental Services with Officers.
26th November	Meeting to reflect on progress with the review, the initial lessons that had been learned and the next steps in the investigation.
4th December	Meeting to discuss the place intervention approach to delivering Environmental Services with Officers in more detail.
11th December	Interview with the Head of Environmental Services.
7th January 2014	Meeting to reflect on progress with the review. During this meeting Members identified an initial list of draft recommendations.
15th January	Interview with Officers to discuss potential opportunities for the Council to generate further income from sales of logs and other landscaping offshoots. Members also received a demonstration on use of the M3 system, the Council's electronic database for logging Environmental Services enquiries.

23rd January	Visit to Winyates to observe the place team in action.
28th January	Interview with Officers to discuss the legal position with regard to landscaping problems involving plants growing on private property and action that can be taken to address tree roots impacting on the condition of pavements.
11th February	Consideration of landscaping data for areas within the Members' wards for the period of 1st January – 31st December 2013. Discussion of the group's draft recommendations.
25th February	Consideration of feedback received from Officers regarding the financial and legal implications of the group's proposed recommendations.
20th March	Finalisation of the group's report.

**APPENDIX 4: LANDSCAPING DATA 1ST JANUARY – 31ST DECEMBER 2013**

**Astwood Bank**

Figure 1: Landscaping cases reported in Astwood Bank in the period Jan – Dec 2013. This includes data for repeat enquiries/reporting of cases during the period.

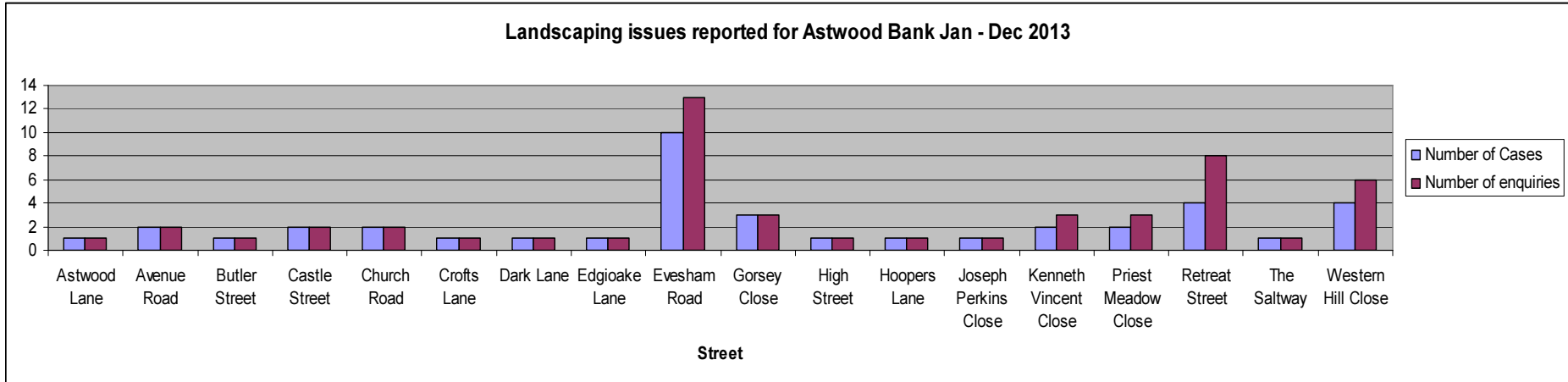
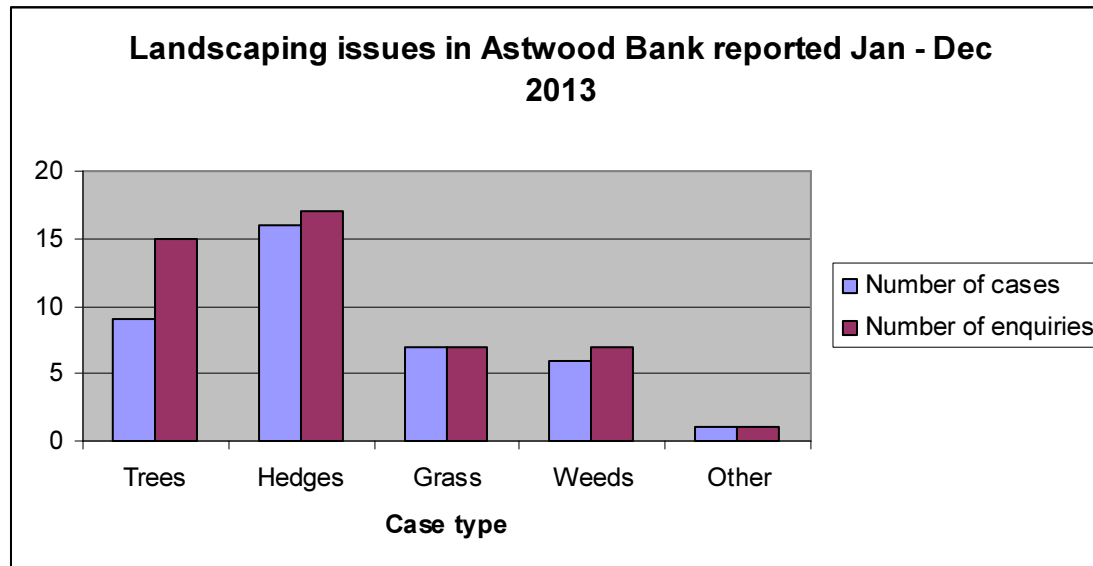


Figure 2: Landscaping Issues in Astwood Bank in the period Jan – Dec 2013. This includes data for cases that were reported more than once.



## Feckenham

Figure 1: Landscaping cases reported in Feckenham in the period Jan – Feb 2013, including repeat enquiries.

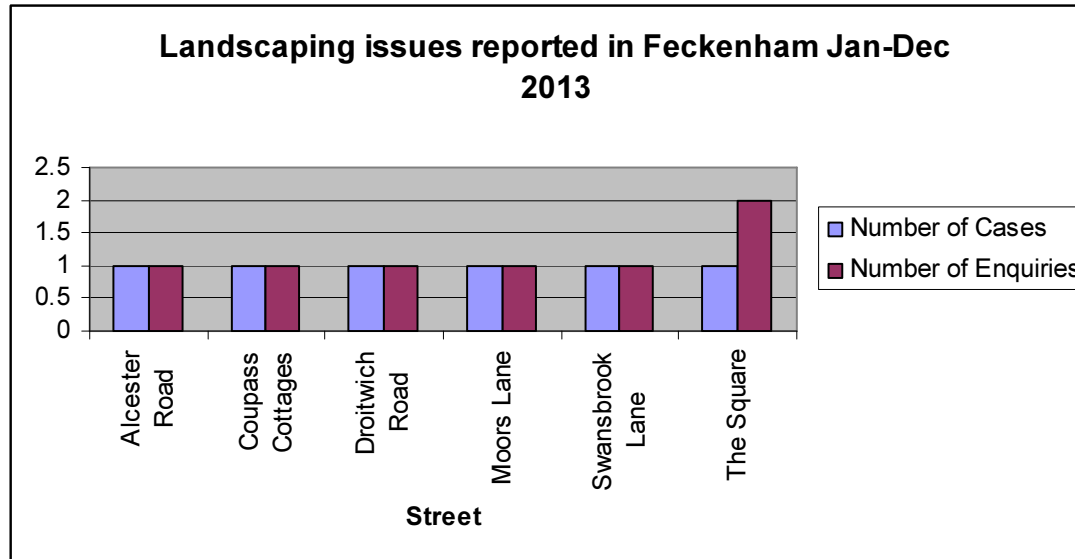
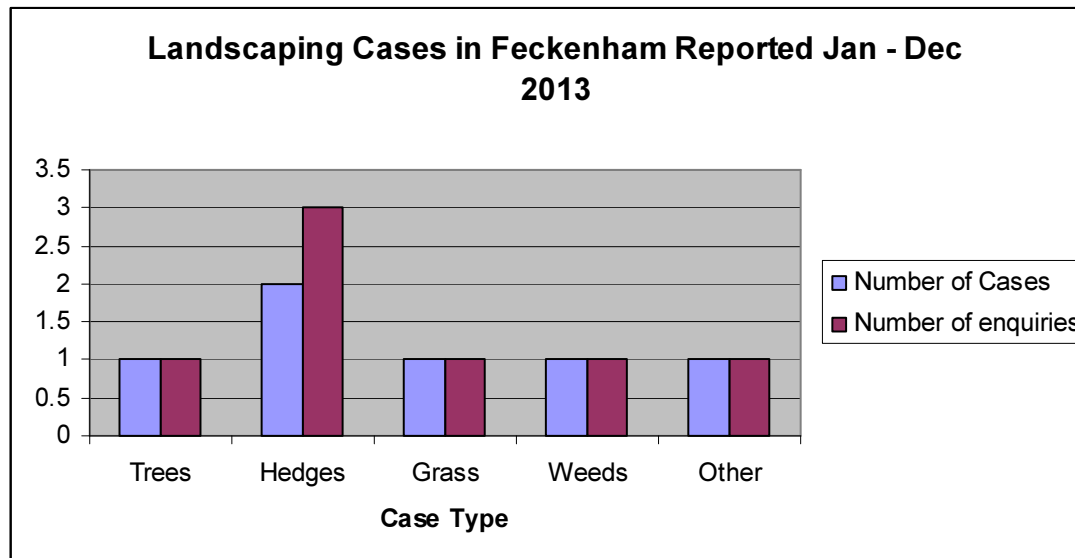


Figure 2: Landscaping cases in Feckenham reported during the period Jan – Dec 2013, including repeat enquiries.





## Hunt End

Figure 1: Landscaping cases reported for Hunt End (the section of Hunt End in Astwood Bank and Feckenham ward) in the period Jan – Dec 2013. (Members are asked to note that the figures for Avonbank Close have been omitted from both of these charts as Officers have been advised that this close is located in Crabbs Cross ward).

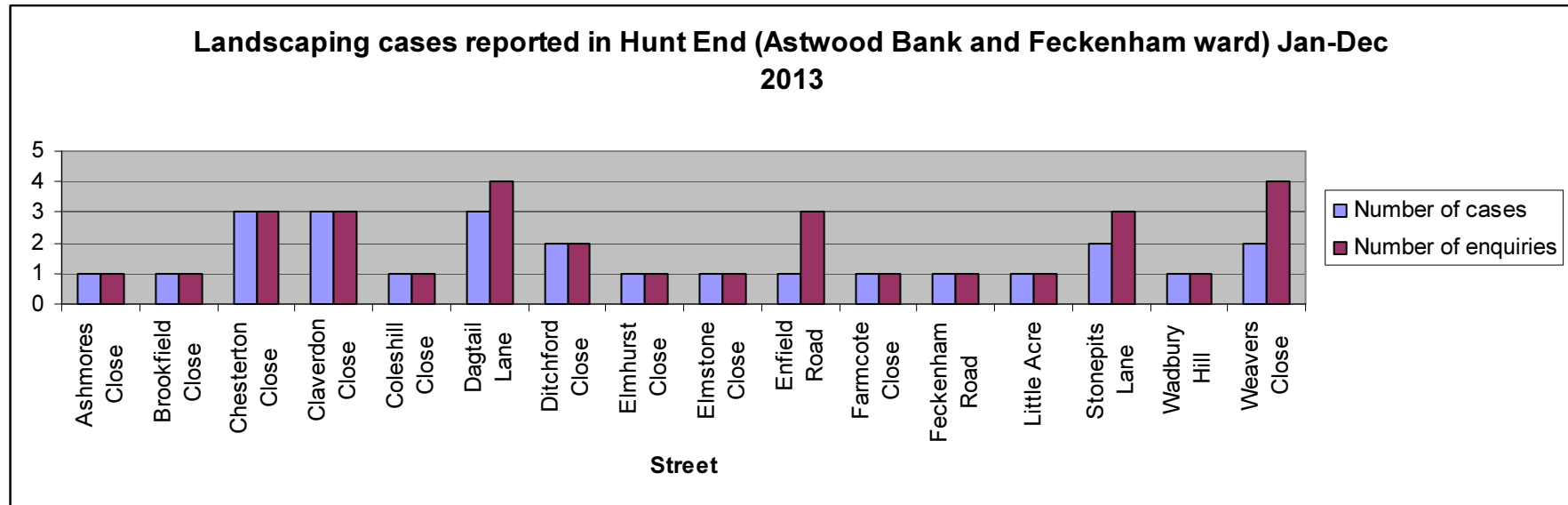
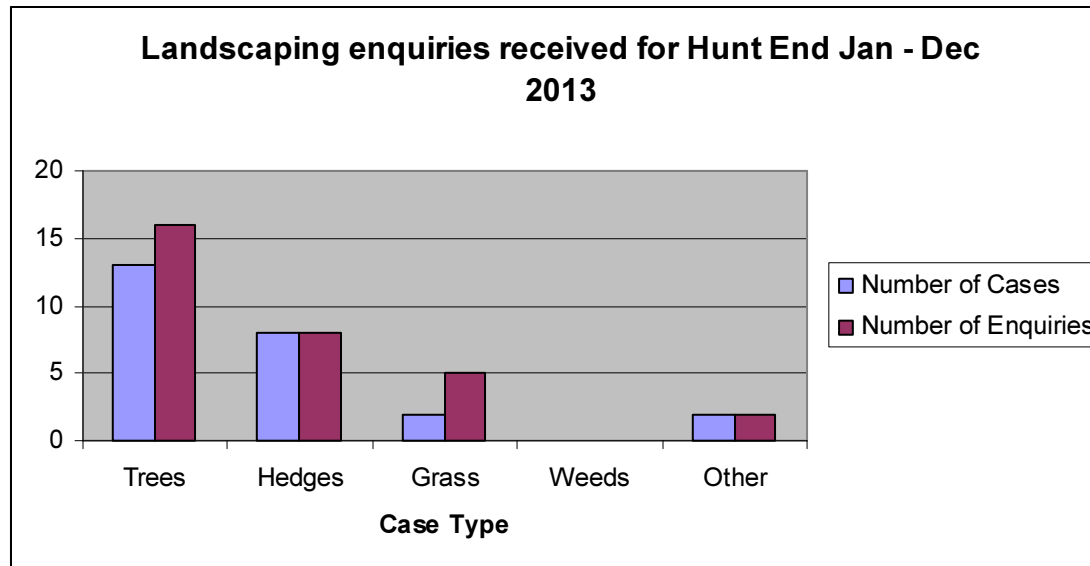


Figure 2: Landscaping issues reported for Hunt End in the period Jan –Dec 2013, including data for cases reported more than once.



## Greenlands

Figure 1: Landscaping issues raised per location in Greenlands during the period Jan – Dec 2013

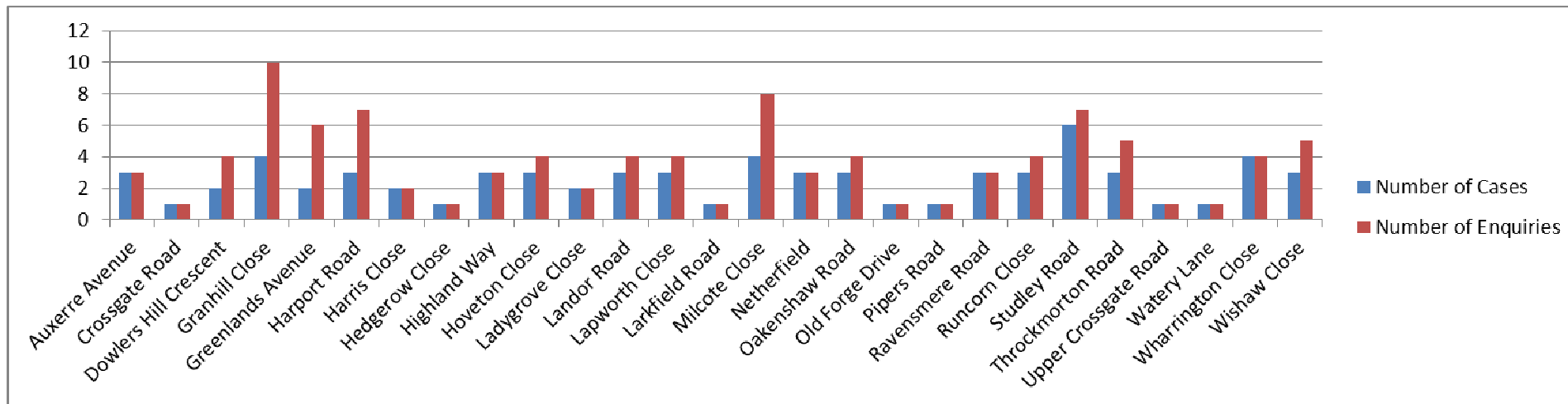
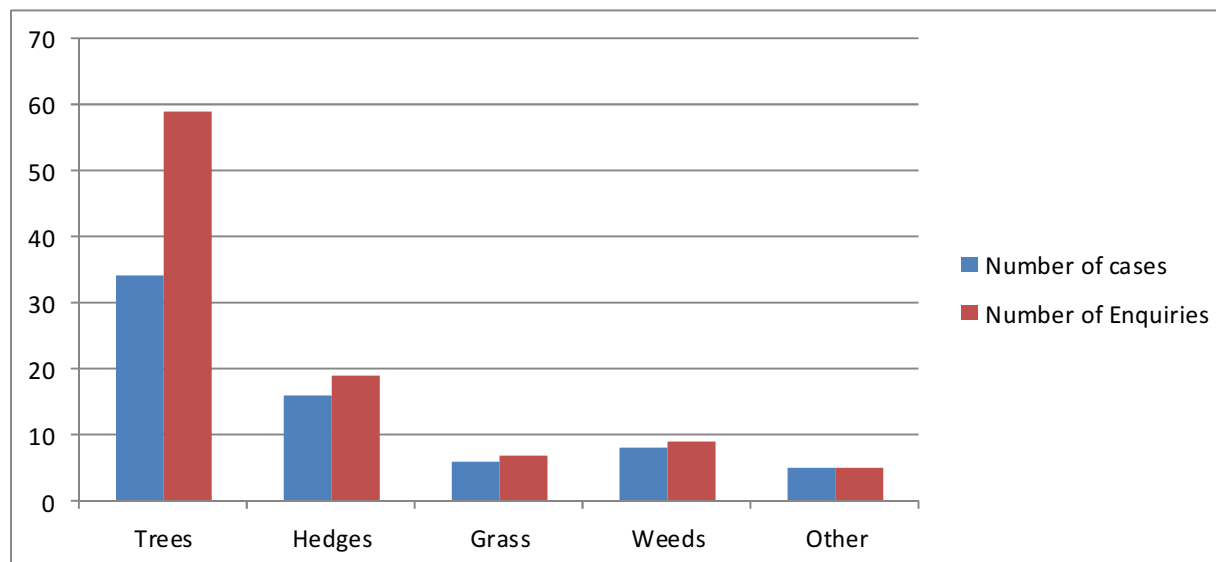


Figure 2: Landscaping Cases reported in Greenlands for the period Jan – Dec 2013



## Woodrow

Figure 1: Landscaping Issues reported per location in Woodrow Jan – Dec 2013

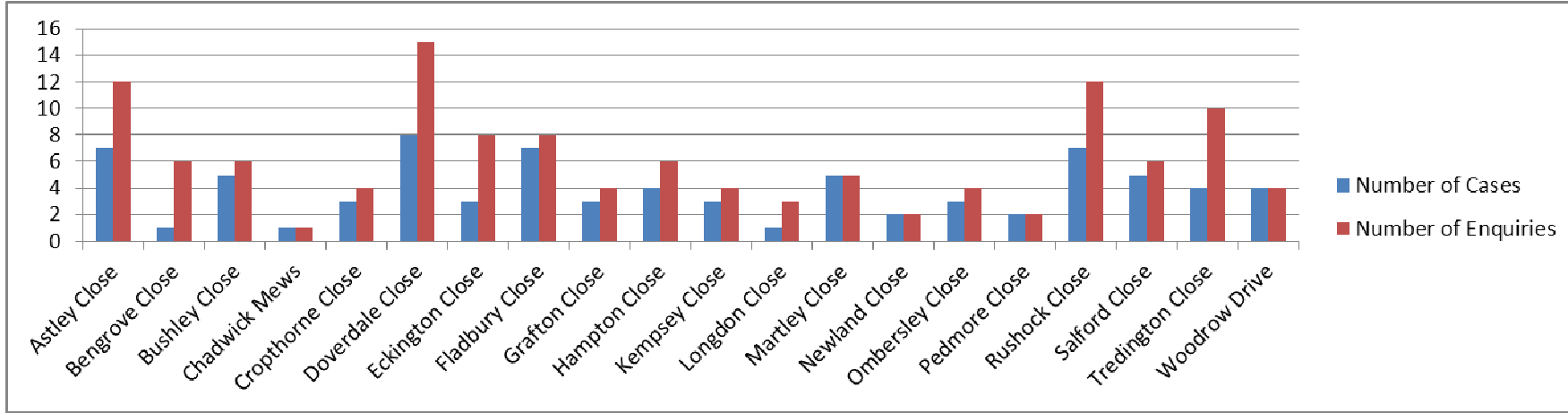
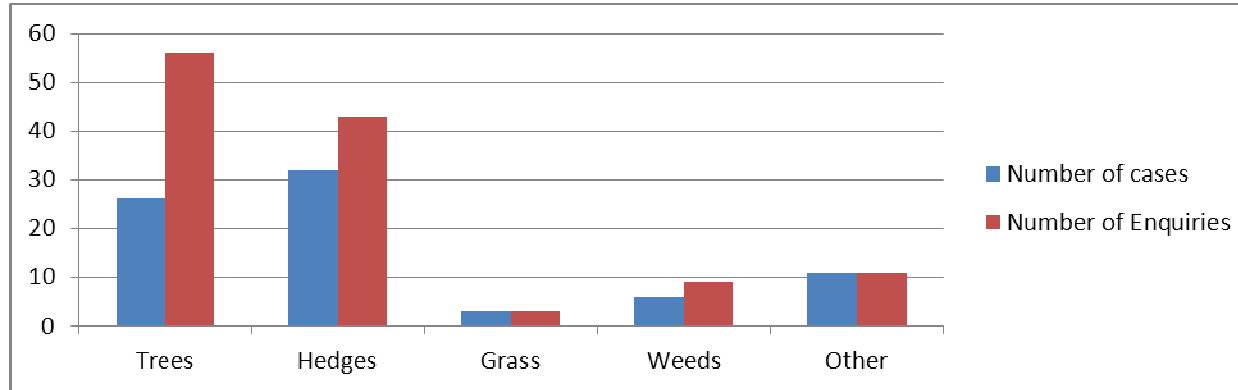


Figure 2: Landscaping Cases reported in Woodrow between Jan – Dec 2013



## Headless Cross

Figure 1: The number of landscaping cases reported in Headless Cross per location in the period Jan – Dec 2013.

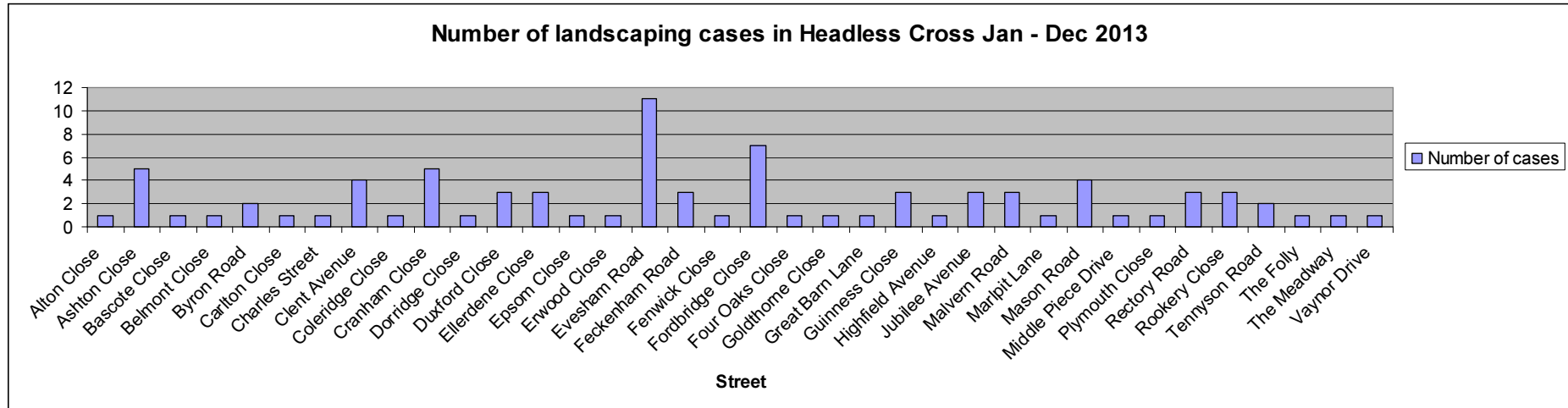


Figure 2: The number of enquiries/reports received by Redditch Borough Council from the customer about landscaping issues in Headless Cross. This includes repeat enquiries/reports about the same case.

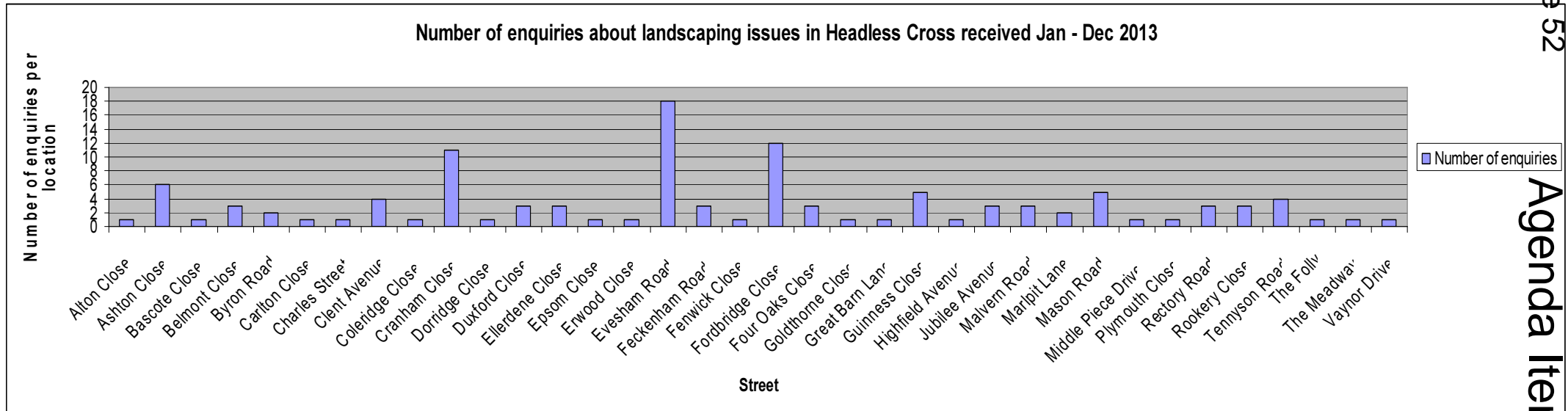
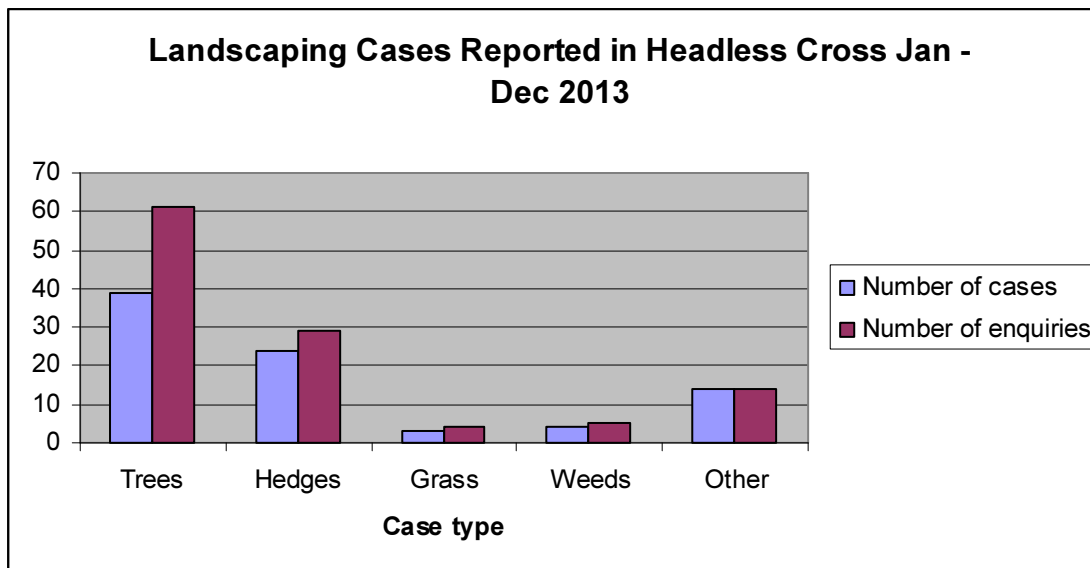


Figure 3: Landscaping Cases reported in Headless Cross in the period Jan – Dec 2013. The enquiries include repeat enquiries/reports about the same case.



## Oakenshaw

Figure 1: Outlines the number of all landscaping cases in Oakenshaw reported for the consideration of the Council during this period.

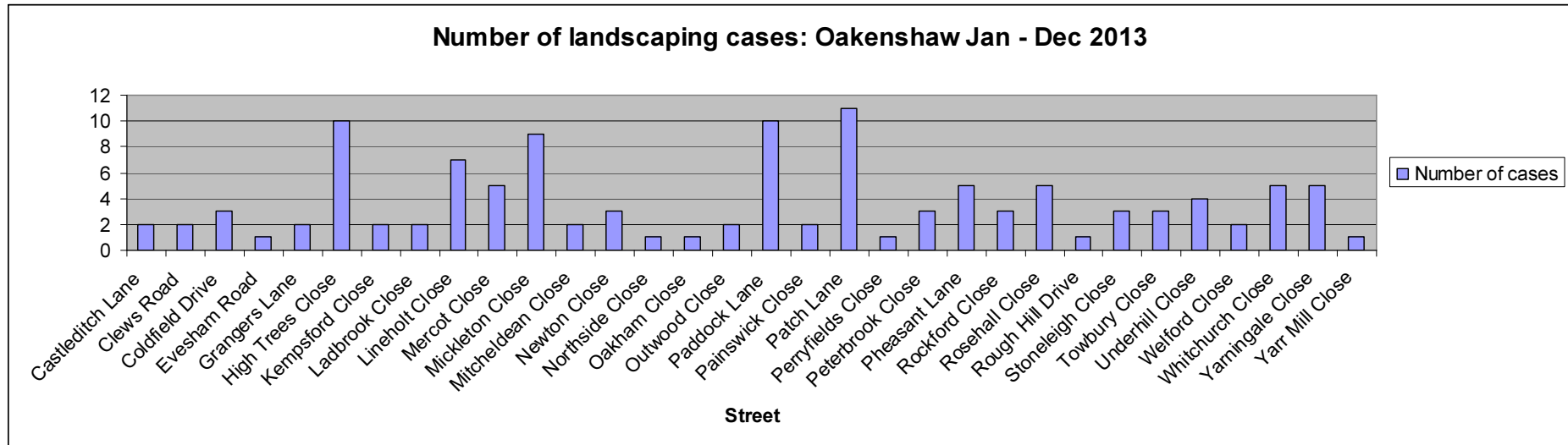


Figure 2: Number of enquiries received from the customer reporting landscaping issues in Oakenshaw in the period Jan-Dec 2013. This

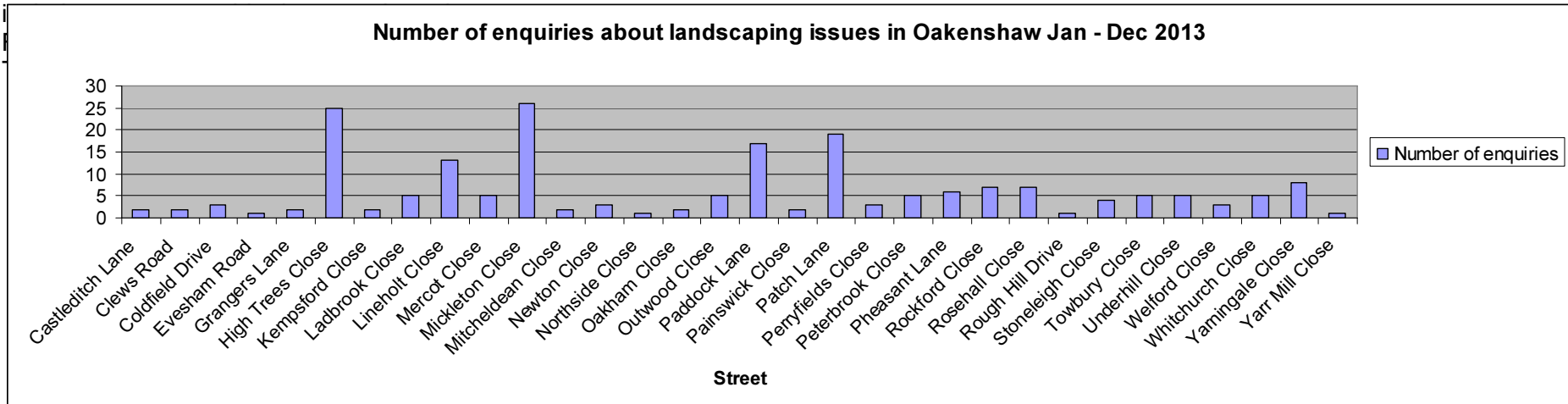
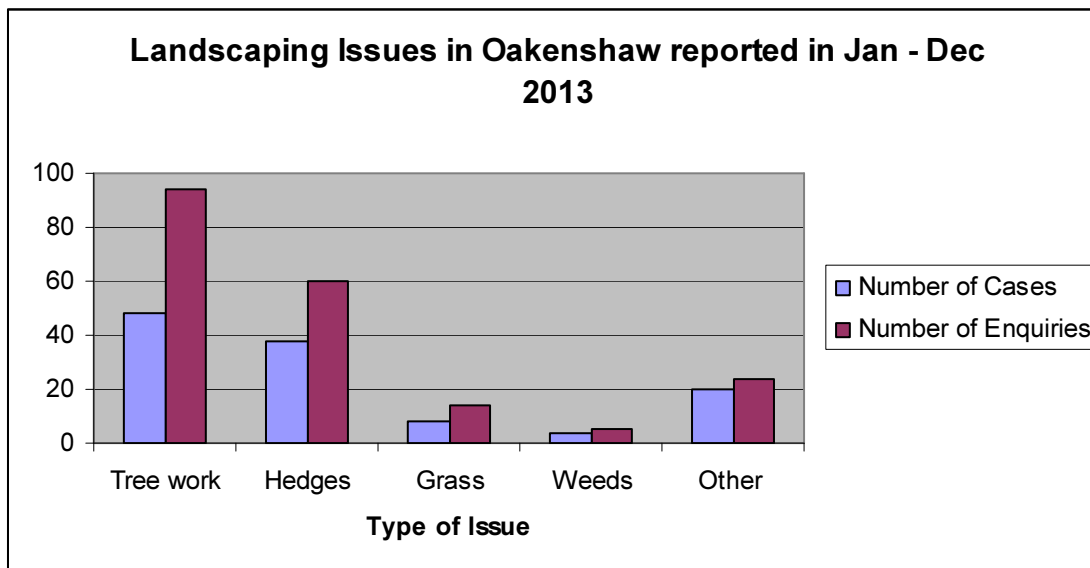


Figure 3: Landscaping issues reported in Oakenshaw in the period Jan – Dec 2013. This table also displays cases which have been reported more than once.



## Webheath

Figure 1: Landscaping issues in Webheath reported per location between Jan – Dec 2013.

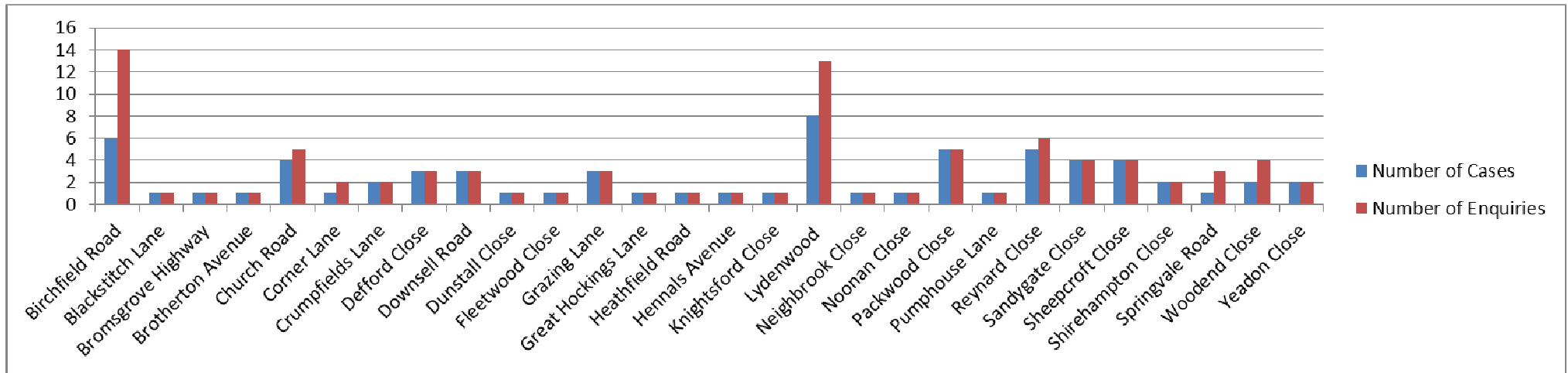
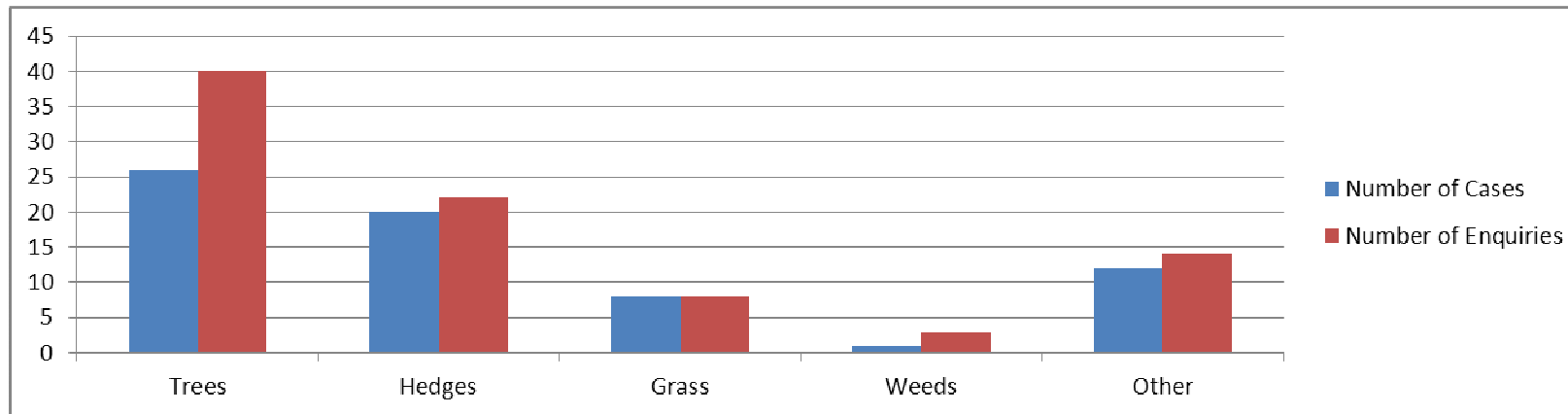


Figure 2: Landscaping Cases in Webheath reported in the period Jan – Dec 2013





## Winyates

Figure1: The number of landscaping cases reported in Winyates as per location in the period Jan – Dec 2013

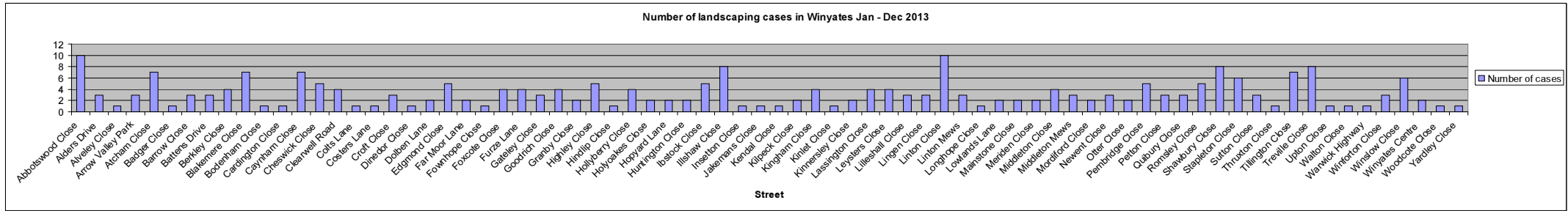


Figure 2: The number of enquiries/reports received by the Council about landscaping issues in Winyates in the period Jan-Dec 2013

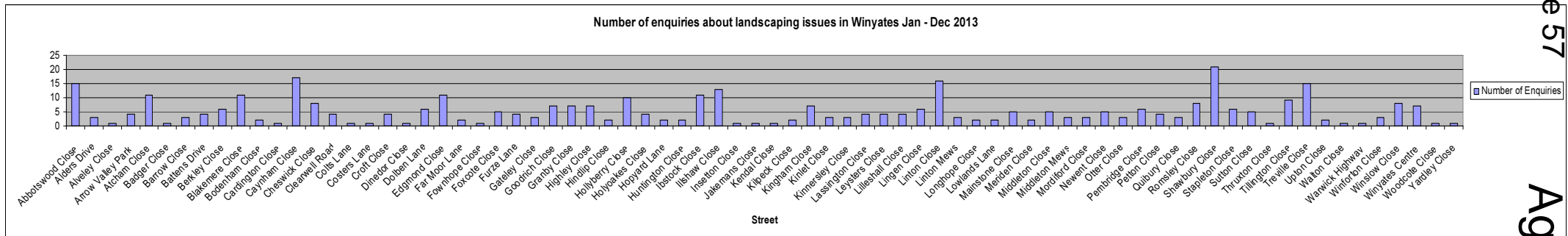
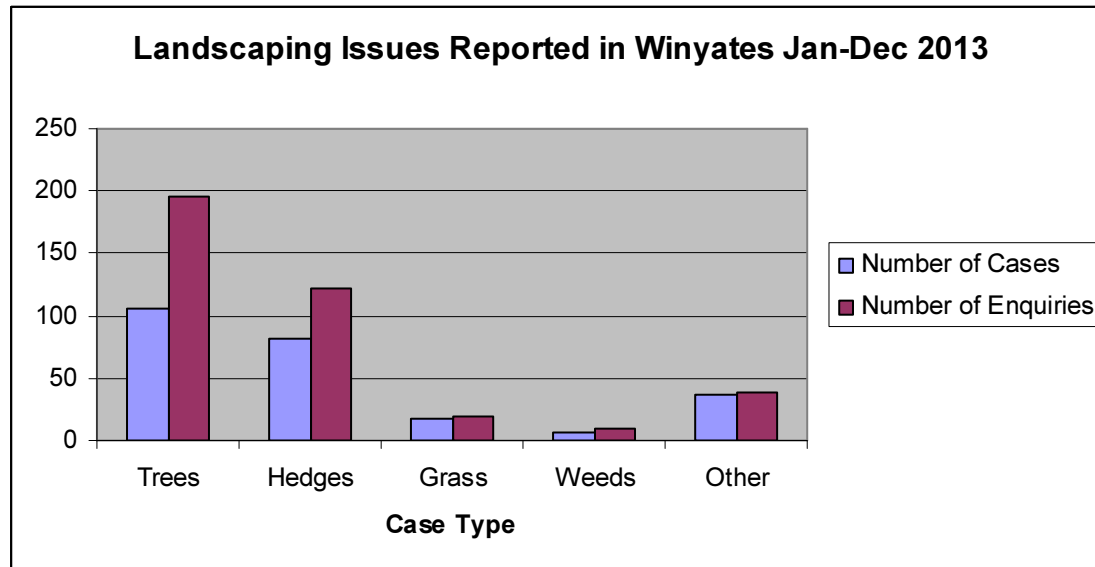


Figure 3: Landscaping issues reported in Winyates for the period of Jan – Dec 2013 by case type.



**Redditch Borough Council**  
**Football task Group Interim Report**

**Introduction**

The Football Task Group was set up by Overview and Scrutiny Committee partly in response to a request from the Executive Committee to look at the demand for future footballing provision in the Borough. The Task Group's key objectives are:

1. To establish the current and future need for community football in Redditch, including existing provision in the Borough, potential alternatives and how provision can be helped and supported;
2. **To investigate the sustainability of Redditch United FC for the future, with particular focus on the current relationship with the Borough Council and how this has been affected by recent events;**
3. To understand the potential impacts for community football in the Borough if Redditch United FC relocates or if it is unable to do so.

The Group was asked to report back in April 2014. The Task Group has met on 5 occasions so far and has concentrated on the second of its objectives. It is this objective which is the subject of this interim report.

Members of the Task Group are Councillors David Bush (Chair) Andrew Brazier, Andy Fry, Carole Gandy, Pattie Hill and Pat Witherspoon.

**Summary of Recommendations**

- 1. That the interim report of the Football Task Group be received and noted;**
- 2. That Redditch United Football club be encouraged to discuss with officers how to make the best use of the current football club site;**
- 3. That the second objective of the Task Group, namely “to investigate the sustainability of Redditch United FC for the future, with particular focus on the current relationship with the Borough Council and how this has been affected by recent events” be signed off as having been achieved;**
- 4. That the final report deadline for the remainder of the Task Group’s Objectives be postponed and reviewed at the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2014.**

**There are no financial implications for the Council arising directly from this report.**

### Sustainability of Redditch United Football Club for the Future - Process

In looking at the sustainability of the club, the Task Group re-examined the business case considered by the Executive Committee in November 2013 and evidence presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013.

In doing this, the Group met with the following people:

Date of meeting	Witnesses
5 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	<p>Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director – Leisure, Environment and Community Services;</p> <p>John Godwin – Head of Leisure and Cultural Services</p> <p>Dave Wheeler – Sports Services Manager</p>
10 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	<p>Chris Swan, Chairman of Redditch United Football Club;</p> <p>David English, Director, Stadium Operation</p> <p>Simon Rowberry, Child Welfare Officer;</p> <p>Julian Workman, Director, Community;</p> <p>Otto Deweizer and Tim Ralphs from Dutch Architects and Design Limited (consultants to Redditch United FC)</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> March	<p>Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning and Regeneration;</p> <p>Clive Wilson, Senior Water Management Officer, North Worcestershire Water Management</p>
17 <sup>th</sup> March	<p>Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor</p> <p>Paul McLaughlin, Estates Team Leader - North - Property Services</p>

## Issues

### 1. The current position and future options

When the Group met with representatives of the Football Club, we explored which options for the future had been considered by them and why relocation was favoured above others.

The Club currently rents the Valley Stadium from the Council at a reduced rent of £2,000 per year. The rent reduction recognises the valuable contribution the Club makes to supporting community football in the Borough, including a broad spectrum of teams for juniors, women and those with disabilities. The Club is working to develop a “Redditch United” spirit and culture where young people feel part of the bigger club and aspire to play for the first team.

The Council therefore has a relationship with the Club as landlord and also in terms of leisure and health provision.

The Club told us that for the first team, the future is far from secure. Despite impressive efforts by the current Board and particularly by the Chairman, the Club does not have sufficient revenue to enable it to carry on at the current site in the longer term. It is likely that if the Club does not have a firm commitment to a workable relocation plan by May of this year that it will be put up for sale.

First team football does not pay for itself. The Club’s current location and facilities also do not enable it to raise funds through off field activities such as social events. The current arrangement of facilities restricts the community football activities; for example, a lack of appropriate changing facilities means that women’s football is played off site.

The Club has had discussions with Council officers during the last two years to explore options for the future. These were:

- (a) Remaining on the current site and upgrading facilities
- (b) Relocation to a new purpose built facility

The Club confirmed to the Group that they do not have any other options.

### 2. Remaining at the current site

Facilities at the current site are a full size football pitch currently used for non-league football; terracing on three sides; a 1970s built stand with seating, changing rooms and a function room with a bar. There is also an area of hardcore surfaced car parking.

In considering the option to remain at the current site, Council officers and Club representatives explored the potential to improve existing facilities. This included

possibly installing a 3G or similar artificial surface pitch on adjacent land (Terry Memorial Playing Field) to maximise the ability for community football of different age groups to be played throughout the season.

Legal advice about restrictions placed on the use of Terry Memorial Playing Field meant that this option was not pursued in detail. The Group heard that the Memorial Field was given to the Town with the intention of it being open to public access. There is a legal query over the status of the gift – whether it was a charitable Trust when gifted – which only the courts could decide. However, the Council should still use the land for statutory purposes and is obliged to follow certain procedures if it decided to change its use. Installing a 3G pitch on the Field might be viewed by some members of the public as closing it off from public access if managed by the Football Club and there is a reputational risk to the Council of pursuing this.

Whilst a detailed financial appraisal of likely expenditure to bring the facilities up to date has not been carried out, the Club stated that there are significant costs involved and ultimately the potential income for the club would not increase. Potential financial support from the FA would also reduce. The current facilities restrict how many community teams can play on the current site and this situation would not improve either.

For these reasons the Club and Council officers explored the potential to relocate, on the basis that the Club is a current tenant of the Borough Council and would seek to relocate to land also owned by the Council.

### **3. Relocation**

Following discussions with Council officers, the Club prepared a business case for relocation to a site at Washford in the Arrow Valley Park. This case was reviewed in a report to the Executive Committee meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> November, which decided that the Council's assets should not be deployed to support the implementation of the business plan of the football club.

The main features of the relocation proposal are:

- Redditch BC sells the current club site for residential development, providing a capital receipt to the Council;
- The capital is spent on developing a football stadium site, including two floodlit pitches, one of which would be 3G; 8 changing rooms, hospitality facilities and car parking;
- In the event that the capital received from the sale of the land is not sufficient to meet the costs of the new development, FA and other grants would make up the difference in cost;

- The Club would rent the new facility from the Borough Council.

In reviewing the basis for the Executive's decision, the Group looked at the following elements of the proposals:

#### **4. Extent to Which the Council can support the Club**

The Council is bound by EU law which prohibits the use of public funds to support a private entity. The Group sought clarification on this point relating to the proposed Council involvement with the relocation of the Club. (The Council's support in terms of a reduced rent for the current site is allowed under Regulations because of the contribution made by the Club towards community football).

The background to this is complicated, but basically a decision to build a new facility for football, intended for rent by a specific body, might risk the Council being in breach of the EU law on State Aid. This aspect was not explored in detail at the time of the report considered by the Executive as the basis for any arrangement between the Council and Club was not entirely clear at that stage.

#### **5. Land Value and impact on the business case – affordable housing requirement, Section 106 and other costs**

One of the reasons for the Executive gave for not proceeding with the business case was that the potential capital receipt for the current site quoted by the Club was not matched by the valuation of the site provided for the Council by the District Valuer. This then could expose the Council to substantial financial risk if the proposed relocation went ahead on the basis outlined above.

The Group has explored this aspect in detail. In particular we have looked at the basis on which the valuation and offers were given. The valuation was based on 78 dwellings, with 40% of these being affordable dwellings in accordance with current planning policy.

The Club had received indicative offers from developers, the details of which we cannot make public for commercially sensitive reasons, which were substantially higher than the valuation. These had been used by the Football Club as outline valuations in the business case. The highest of these bids did not include for any of the development to be affordable homes, nor did it include any allowance for S106 contributions.

We are grateful to Paul McLaughlin from Property Services who has been able to clarify the situation for us. He researched the current "market rate" for the site, both with and without the affordable housing requirement. Feedback from the agents he contacted indicated if the site did not have any requirement for affordable homes, it would be likely to attract offers between 30 and 50 % higher than the valuation provided to the Council by the District Valuer. However, further deductions would



have to be made for any abnormal development costs and Section 106 requirements and the actual valuations placed upon the site would depend in part on other factors such as the type of housing to be built.

The income received from a sale of the Council land for development is a key element of the proposals for development of a new football facility. The current planning policy of requiring developments to include affordable housing up to 40% (30% in the emerging local plan) clearly adversely affects the ability of the capital receipt to meet the costs of any proposed new development in the proportion originally planned.

In exploring this aspect of Council policy, on behalf of the Group the Chair asked the Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mark Shurmer, whether the Executive would support reducing the social housing requirement for the current football club site and, if so, to what extent.

In his response, Councillor Shurmer told the Group that planning officers had advised that planning policy should be adhered to unless there is sound evidence to the contrary.

He pointed out that the percentage of social housing required for residential development on the current football club site would be a planning decision which he should not attempt to influence. Current and emerging local plan policies are set by full Council and a portfolio holder or the Executive Committee cannot unilaterally change these; if the Executive was to decide to dispose of the current site it could not impose a requirement on any sale that ignored the Council's policies.

## **6. Land value and impact on the business case - highways requirements**

This element applies both to the current site and the proposed residential development and the site at Washford.

Current site – access to the site currently is along a single track from Bromsgrove Road. The Highways authority declined our request to meet the Group to discuss policy relating to this site as their advice is usually given in relation to firm applications, but advice has been obtained outside of the meetings.

We understand that for residential developments in excess of 50 units, Highways require a minimum 5m highway, one 2m footpath and one 2m verge. Initial comments from Highways had indicated that a maximum number of 50 houses could be accessed from the existing access from Bromsgrove Road. This would be on the basis that the access road would be 4.8m wide with one 2m footpath and one verge. If a second similar access was achieved elsewhere, then the number of units could be increased. This could add to the costs of a potential development and reduce the market value of the land.

If a 5m wide carriageway was possible from Bromsgrove Road, then up to 100 houses could be accessed from that point.

## **7. Planning Considerations**

The Group checked the planning considerations that apply to the current and Washford sites.

Whilst all policies have a degree of flexibility, planning policy R.1 states that planning proposals that lead to the total or partial loss of primarily open space would not normally be granted unless it could be demonstrated that the need for the development outweighed the value of the land as an open area. There are various criteria in the policy which determine this and any prospective developer would have to argue how their application met the policy.

Looking at support for football in the Borough generally, we noted that planning policy requires one pitch to be built for every 405 dwellings. This might lend weight to the desirability of the new facility. However, any pitch provided can be for other sports, not specifically for football.

## **8. The new site – considerations**

Specific concerns raised during consideration of the proposed new facility at Washford were the restrictive covenant at Arrow Valley Park and the potential for flooding or a new development increasing the risk of flooding.

The Group has explored both these aspects.

Restrictive covenant – legal advice on the covenant which applies to Arrow Valley Park was included with the report to Executive Committee in November. In summary, the advice given was that the covenant applies but there is some doubt as to how enforceable it is. The Council could decide to develop the land, but there are reputational risks associated with this.

Flooding – the Group explored the potential impact of a new development on the potential for flooding at Washford. We have been advised that any application for development within potentially vulnerable areas for flooding require a supporting, fully modelled, flood risk analysis. These replicate existing flood risks and revised flood risks as a result of proposed development and take into account “river” and sewerage assets.

Clive Wilson, Senior Water Management Officer with North Worcestershire Water Management, told the Group that in his view the proposed development would almost certainly result in:

- Some loss of flood plain storage;

- Some loss of sewerage system storage – a compromised Washford balancing area;
- Some encroachment into the existing flood plain areas, and
- Additional attenuation measures to accommodate increased run off from any new buildings, parking and other impervious surfaces.

Costs for the modelling and attenuation works required have not been included in full in the outline business case and could reach £250k.

## **9. Conclusions**

In reviewing the options available to Redditch United Football Club we have been conscious that the Chairman of the Club wishes to have some certainty as to the Club's future. We are therefore keen that this element of our review is completed and the Club can be advised accordingly.

In reviewing the proposals for relocation of the club, we consider there are a number of risks, particularly in financial terms, which are now clearer than they were at the point the decision was made. In particular:

- Restrictions on the land adjacent to the current site which prevented a full business case being prepared for remaining at the current site;
- the potential land value relating to the current site and the impact on this of the planning policy requirement for affordable homes;
- the potential flooding impact of the proposed new facility and associated costs;
- the risk of the Council's involvement contravening EU law on State Aid.

The scale of these risks lead the Group to conclude that it would not be appropriate to pursue this business case for relocation as proposed to the Executive in November 2013.

In investigating the proposals, the Group considers that there may be potential for improving the facilities for football at the Valley Stadium site. For this reason we are recommending that the Club discusses this with Council officers.



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**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO STRATFORD-ON-AVON  
FOCUSED CONSULTATION – 2011–2013 HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND  
STRATEGIC SITE OPTIONS**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Greg Chance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	YES
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report requests that the Redditch Borough Council (RBC) officers response (attached at Appendix 1) to the Stratford on Avon Draft Focused Consultation – 2011- 2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Site Options be approved to formalise the Officer response submitted to Stratford On Avon District Council on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014 (in order to be received during Stratford's consultation period dates).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that**

**the RBC officer response (attached at Appendix 1) to the SOADC Focused Consultation be approved.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

None

**Legal Implications**

All Local Authorities have a legal obligation to produce a Local Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.1 Based on new technical evidence Stratford on Avon District Council have taken the decision to increase their housing requirement to 10,800 homes between

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2011 – 2031 (from 9,500 between 2008 – 2028). Stratford on Avon District Council are considering various options for meeting the proposed increase in the housing requirement. One of the options is 'further dispersal' which is a strategy to disperse housing development across the district. With regard to this issue, officers considered a response to Stratford's Focused Consultation to be necessary.

Officers included the following key points in their submission to Stratford as a response to the Focused Consultation: 2011-2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Site Options (the full response can be seen at Appendix 1):

- 3.2 RBC officers recognised that the option of further dispersal could result in additional homes being distributed at the Main Rural Centre of Studley and Local Service Village of Mappleborough Green.
- 3.3 RBC officers considered that development around Studley and Mappleborough Green would have the potential to reduce the gap between these settlements and Redditch which could give rise to issues of coalescence. This issues has been raised in previous responses from RBC to Stratford.
- 3.4 RBC officers supported one of the principles of Policy AS.8 of Stratford's consultation, which is a policy to retain the separate and distinct identity of Studley and maintenance of open gaps with Redditch.
- 3.5 RBC officers supported the inclusion of statements under section 7.8 of the consultation which recognise the significance of the land between Studley in preserving its separate identity from Redditch, and that it is important for the gap of open countryside between the two settlements to not be encroached on by development.
- 3.6 The officers response was sent to Stratford on Avon District Council before the close of their consultation. Before it was sent, Planning Advisory Panel informally considered the contents of the response as described above.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

None

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Under the 'duty to cooperate' local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies in relation to planning for sustainable development are duty-bound to cooperate when preparing Development Plan Documents. If the Officer response to the Focused Consultation is not approved then this would affect the influence RBC can have on the content of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy. In

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turn this could affect the content of the Redditch Plan and may lead to both documents being found unsound should the content of these two plans conflict.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Redditch Borough Council response to the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy, Focused Consultation: 2011-2031 Housing Requirement and Strategic Site Options

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

SOADC - Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy - July 2013

SOADC - Draft Core Strategy - February-March 2012

SOADC - Consultation Core Strategy – February 2010

SOADC - Housing Growth Scenarios – July 2009

SOADC - Draft Core Strategy 2008

SOADC - Issues and Options November May/June 2007

**7. KEY**

RBC - Redditch Borough Council

SOADC – Stratford-on-Avon District Council

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Stratford-on-Avon District Council

12<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Dear Mr Nash,

### **2011 – 2031 Housing requirement and Strategic Site Options**

Thank you for consulting Redditch Borough Council (RBC) on the above mentioned consultation. This is a response relating to the strategic options proposed to meet the increased housing need.

It is understood that Option A: Further Dispersal is based on an extension of the strategy of dispersal of housing development across the district as detailed in the Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy.

In respect of this option it is recognised that further dispersal could result in additional homes being distributed at the Main Rural Centre of Studley and Local Service Village of Mappleborough Green.

As stated in previous correspondence from RBC it is considered that development around Studley and Mappleborough Green has the potential to reduce the gap between Studley and Redditch, and Mappleborough Green and Redditch where this land serves an important Green Belt purpose to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another. Allocation of further sites around Studley and Mappleborough Green should be mindful of the coalescence issues between these settlements and Redditch.

Policy AS.8 of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy includes a principle “to retain the separate and distinct identity of Studley and maintenance of open gaps with Redditch”. This policy is supported and should be used in determining the options of further dispersal and allocation of sites around Studley towards Redditch.

In reference to Studley paragraph 7.8 notes that “While the village is surrounded on all sides by Green Belt, this area is particularly significant in preserving the separate identity of Studley from Redditch”. In addition the future development strategy under section 7.8 also states, “It is evident that the most critical feature about Studley

which should be preserved is its separate identity from Redditch. One of the key purposes of the Green Belt is to prevent settlements from merging into one another and it is important that the gap of open countryside between the two is not encroached on by development.” RBC supports the inclusion of these statements.

It should be noted that this is an officer response and that retrospective members endorsement is being sought at Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Yours sincerely

Emma Baker  
Acting Development Plans Manager

**WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT C O U N C I L S AND COUNTY COUNCIL****WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES****MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE****THURSDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY 2014 AT 4.35 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. B. Behan, R. Berry, M. A. Bullivant (Vice-Chairman), R. Davis, Mrs. L. Denham, P. Harrison (during Minute No's 37/13 to 41/13), M. Hart, Mrs. L. Hodgson (Chairman), D. Hughes and Mrs. Y. Smith (substituting for J. Fisher)

Observers: Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council

Invitees: Mr. I. Pumfrey, Worcestershire Regulatory Services Management Board

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Jordan, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. M. Kay and Mrs. P. Ross

**33/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. B. Taylor, Bromsgrove District Council, J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council, B. Clayton, Redditch Borough Council, A. N. Blagg, Worcestershire County Council and K. Jennings, Wychavon District Council.

**34/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**35/13 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 21st November 2013 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee be approved as a correct record, subject to the following:

That it be noted in respect of Minute No. 23/13 that Councillor Mrs. L. Denham, Worcester City Council had informed Members that she was a Member of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service on the advice of the Host Authority's Principal Solicitor that she should do so.

After the meeting Councillor Mrs. L. Denham had sought advice from Julie Slater, Monitoring Officer, Worcester City Council. Councillor Mrs. L. Denham informed Members that she had received written confirmation from the Monitoring Officer, Worcester City Council that the item under discussion, and from which she was excluded, related to the provision and funding of the telephone answering service provided to Worcestershire Regulatory Services by the Worcestershire Hub. The Worcester City Council Monitoring Officer stated that after reviewing the Council's constitution she advised that in her view there was no conflict of interest. A copy of the letter received by Councillor Mrs. L. Denham was provided to the Democratic Services Officer for noting.

At the request of the Chairman, the Host Authority's Principal Solicitor Ms. C. Flanagan responded to Councillor Mrs. L. Denham and in doing so informed Members that she had been in contact with the Monitoring Officer, Worcester City Council with regard to the concerns raised by Councillor Mrs. L. Denham. The Principal Solicitor further informed Members that the role of a Councillor was to be open and transparent about personal interests. The letter received from the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service (WHSS) Management Board was, at the agreement of the Chairman, received as an urgent item at the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee meeting on 26th September 2013. Minute Number 21/13 of that meeting details that Councillor Mrs. L. Denham informed Members that she was a Member of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Board and had been present at a meeting of the WHSS where the letter had been discussed. On that basis there may have been a conflict of interest which would need to be identified.

Ms. C. Flanagan explained to Councillor Mrs. L. Denham that it was relevant to minute that she was a Member of the WHSS in the interests of openness and transparency during a public meeting, to avoid any conflict of interest or pre-determination being perceived and that she supported the view that any such interest should be declared and noted. Following any legal advice given it did not exclude her from participating in the agenda item under discussion should she chose to participate.

Councillor Mrs. L. Denham stated she felt she had been given conflicting legal advice. She was here to represent the citizens of Worcester City and had wanted to seek clarification that she was able to speak and participate on the agenda item in question.

36/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING REPORT APRIL - DECEMBER 2013**

Members considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Budget Monitoring Report for the period April to December 2013.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the projected underspend for the year of £87,000, which was due to a significant number of staff vacancies, long term sick (LTS) and maternity leave. There was a projected underspend within salaries of £521,000. This

would be offset by the anticipated overspend on the Agency Staffing Budget of £479,000 to cover employees who had been seconded to the ICT project and staff required in order to meet the demands of the service to ensure the efficiencies could be delivered in future years. There had been difficulty in recruiting to the level required. The projected underspend for 2013/2014 was higher than originally anticipated due to additional vacancies, the impact of approved voluntary redundancies and grant funding secured.

Appendix 3 to the report detailed the redundancy/pension strain for each partner authority. The redundancies which were all voluntary redundancies, had been accepted by the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Management Board and all participating partner authorities.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) responded to Councillor Mrs. L. Denham with regard to the ICT projected costs, as detailed on page 12 of the report. The Head of WRS informed Members that there was a saving from the costs included in the original business case as a cheaper ICT system had been agreed. Members were further informed that WRS were still in negotiation with regard to compensation for the delays experienced. The next stage of the project would be the channel shift.

The Head of WRS highlighted that senior officers were working to reduce long term sick and helping staff to return to work after a period of long term sick. This would help reduce the number of agency staff required. There would be an end to the use of agency staff as from 1st April 2014 as WRS was aware of further future funding restrictions.

**RESOLVED** that the financial position for the period April to December 2013 as detailed in the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Monitoring Report be noted.

37/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET 2014/2015 – 2016/2017**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the proposed revenue budget for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for 2014/2015 – 2016/2017.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to page 22 of the report which highlighted the agreed recommendations from the last meeting of the Joint Committee in November 2013. The report had been a complex piece of work with the savings requested from Worcestershire County Council (WCC), Wyre Forest District Council and Worcester City Council. An officer working group had been set up to look (collectively) at the constraints and savings of all partner authorities. Officers looked at fixed costs, hosting costs and the minimum level of service for WCC, more specifically around Trading Standards.

A review of the costs associated with the services delivered to WCC was undertaken with a restructure of staffing to realise the required savings. As a result of the review £405,000 per annum was identified in relation to WCC

services for 2014/2015, together with £8,000 from the reduction in hosting costs. In relation to the staff savings, due to the time required for consultation and staff termination periods, there was only a part year effect of these changes in 2016/2017. This has resulted in a shortfall of £222,000 in relation to the part year effect to meet the level of reduction required for 2014/2015 for WCC services, WCC had accepted this. However it was accepted that due to the timing of potential restructures that there would be this level of shortfall.

As part of the budget review for Wyre Forest District Council savings of £49,000 had been delivered in 2014/2015, with a further £37,000 being requested during this year. The £37,000 per annum had been identified but again only £28,000 could be realised in 2014/2015 due to staff restructures and the reduction in hosting costs. There was a remaining £9,000 to be delivered in 2014/2015 should the partner request be fully met.

As part of the budget review for Worcester City Council savings of £22,000 had been delivered with a further £34,000 requested for 2014/2015. The £34,000 per annum had been identified but again only £27,000 could be realised in 2014/2015 due to staff restructures and the reduction in the hosting costs. There was a remaining £7,000 to be delivered should the partner request be fully met.

The savings requested from Worcester City Council and Wyre Forest District Council had been realised within 2014/2015 by identifying specific areas of work that could be redesigned to deliver savings solely for these two partners. This pilot could be rolled out to other partner authorities should it prove to be successful in 2014/2015.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council highlighted that no further savings had been requested from the other partner authorities. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the financial framework for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. This included the total reductions in budget requested by all partner authorities which were required. Officers were currently working through the levels of fixed costs and partner requirements with the aim to reduce costs to the level requested. Future year's budgets would continue to be reported to Joint Committee Members as more information became available.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) responded to Councillor D. Hughes, Malvern Hills District Council, who asked if he was comfortable that the savings would not hinder his ability to provide the service? In his response he highlighted that during the next financial year there would be significant cuts which would affect the service. As a result of the level of savings identified, Worcestershire County Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcester City Council had all received a risk assessment.

Councillor M. Hart, Wyre Forest District Council was content as to where the savings were coming from for the second year and year on year, but not at the expense of WRS statutory duties and residents. He would carefully watch the Worcester City Pilot and wanted to congratulate the Head of WRS for the

savings achieved. The Head of WRS responded that it was a 3 year financial plan and future savings would have to be identified. He would ensure that the team remained extra committed and there was no effect on residents or the service.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revenue budget for 2014/2015 of £4.637 million to be allocated as follows, be approved;

	<b>£'000</b>
Bromsgrove	489
Malvern	413
Redditch	579
Worcester City	574
Wychavon	751
Wyre Forest	547
Worcestershire County	1,284
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,637</b>

- (b) that the financial framework for 2015/2016 – 2016/2017 as detailed below be noted;
- 2015/16 £3.879m
  - 2016/17 £3.250m; and
- (c) that officers continue to review the fixed costs and all other charges to ensure the revenue savings currently required could be delivered over the 3 year period.

**38/13 WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - STRATEGIC PARTNER PROCUREMENT**

Following on from the meeting held on 21st November 2013, consideration was given to a report that provided Members with an updated position of the progress made on the Strategic Partner Procurement project and the Scope and Evaluation Criteria to be included within the procurement process. The report highlighted that Worcestershire Regulatory Services was faced with the prospect of managing a dwindling service over the next two to three years as a result of partners continued financial pressures.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so expressed his thanks to Members and officers who had attended the Joint Management Board and Joint Committee workshop on 20th January 2014. The thoughts and feedback from the workshop had been incorporated into the draft Evaluation Criteria, as detailed on Appendix 3 to the report. The common themes that came out of the workshop, as detailed on page 31 of the report, had also been incorporated into the Evaluation Criteria. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the scope of the Strategic Partnership procurement process, the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) would detail other functions that a private company may be able to deliver at a later stage.



The Head of WRS drew Members' attention to the resolved items, as detailed on pages 29 and 30 in the report agreed by the Committee at the meeting held on 21st November 2013. Agreement had been reached to include South Worcestershire Building Control within the scope, it was agreed that this would be built into the Evaluation Criteria.

Further discussion followed with regard to the inclusion of Customer Services within the scope. The Head of WRS informed Members that Customer Services had not been fully encapsulated, but agreed that it could be included within the scope and built into the Evaluation Criteria.

Since the Joint Committee meeting held in November 2013, soft market testing had been undertaken involving three commercial companies. Page 30 of the report detailed the key findings from the soft market testing.

During this part of the meeting, and at the request of the Chairman, the Committee considered whether or not to exclude the public from the meeting to enable the Head of WRS to provide brief information on Agenda Item 6.

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this part of the item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Paragraph

7

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services provided the Committee with brief information of the three commercial companies involved in the soft market testing.

The Chairman announced at the conclusion of the above item, the exclusion of the public be lifted and the meeting continued in open session.

Governance was seen as a key issue that would need to be worked through as part of any on-going discussions, acknowledging that it was important to strike the right balance between a streamlined process that supported growth yet retained partner's ability to influence at a strategic level. Members agreed that the legal framework around statutory functions should be more explicit in the Evaluation Criteria, number 7, as detailed on page 37 of the report. The Head of WRS further informed Members that the competitive dialogue process would highlight the need to include the legal framework and statutory functions as part of the final solution.

Member engagement was seen as critical to ensure that all partner authorities remained on board. A range of activities would be undertaken to ensure that Members and staff remained fully informed and engaged. The Joint Committee and Management Board were seen as critical to the success of this, particularly when it came to decision making.



The next stage of the project was the Project Management role. The Head of WRS reminded Members that during the last meeting of the Joint Committee a proviso was agreed that should the costs of £20,000 be exceeded, Joint Committee Members would be informed. The Head of WRS informed the Committee that an additional £30,000 would be needed to fund the Project Management Costs.

Further discussion followed on the need for Members to be kept fully informed and provided with progress updates.

Councillor M. Hart suggested two further recommendations be added with regard to progress reports and additional funding for the Project Management Costs as detailed in the pre-amble above.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the outcomes of the soft market testing, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (b) that the scope of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services offer, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
- (c) that the Evaluation Criteria to be used in the procurement process, as detailed at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved;
- (d) that progress updates be provided to all partner authorities before or at the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and
- (e) that an additional amount up to £50,000 be taken from the £87,000 underspend for the year, to fund the Project Management Costs, be approved.

39/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2014-2015**

The Committee was asked to consider a report detailing the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2014/2015.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so highlighted that the financial uncertainty faced by the service had made it difficult to create the WRS Service Plan. Members were informed that the WRS Service Plan followed the pattern of previous years and had an Executive Summary, as detailed on page 44 of the report. The Executive Summary outlined how the service would operate over the next twelve months to deliver on both national and local priorities and what activities the service would carry out to achieve or address those priorities and how success would be measured.

The service would continue to shape its work around the strategic priorities, as detailed on pages 47 and 48 of the report. The implementation of the new ICT system would enable the service to report more accurately on activities. The service had continued to work with Members to demonstrate the service's performance and current core performance indicators; which had been amended following the comments and feedback received from Joint Committee Members who had attended the Joint Management Board and

Joint Committee workshop on 20th January 2014 at Wychavon District Council.

The Head of WRS drew Members' attention to Appendix C to the report which detailed the new 'slimmed down' WRS Management Structure. The Head of WRS responded to Members' questions with regard to staff morale due to the restructuring and redundancies faced within the service. The Head of WRS highlighted that staff were fearful of potential redundancies. A series of workshops for staff and robust communication had been developed to ensure both staff and unions were kept informed.

Following further discussion on the WRS Service Plan, Members agreed that the Head of WRS incorporated the following amendments as suggested during the discussion:

- Page 47 of the report – the paragraph that refers to 'Local Elections in May 2014' be removed;
- Page 74 of the report, section 4.6, Legal Background to include the following statement, 'That Regulatory Services in Worcestershire would endeavour to engage with the elected Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) in order to ensure there was a stronger link/profile for the service.
- Include the recent 'Good News' stories in respect of Trading Standards, Illegal Money Lending Team.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the amendments as referred to in the preamble above, the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2014/2015 be approved.

#### 40/13 **WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL PILOT - UPDATE**

Following on from the meetings held on 22nd November 2012 and 27th June 2013, consideration was given to a report that provided Members with an update on the Worcester City Council Pilot.

As requested at the previous meetings of the Committee, Mr. M. Kay, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) provided Members with an update on the Worcester City Council pilot. Members were informed that the pilot exercise had arisen from a request by Worcester City Council to examine ways of delivering £40,000 additional in year savings during 2013/2014. The original intention was to agree service reductions/changes that had the potential to achieve the required level of savings and implement them as a pilot from 1st April 2013.

As detailed in the report a 'menu' of fully costed options was prepared and discussed with Worcester City Council for consideration. Following further discussion, it was jointly decided to proceed with a pilot that delivered with respect to planning consultations and some categories of nuisance complaints. After preparing the necessary processes and documentation, which required significant input and officer time from WRS and Worcester City Council, the pilot commenced on 10th June 2013.

The report provided detailed information on the two parts of the pilot, Planning Consultations and Nuisance Complaints. The report highlighted that the intention of the pilot for Planning Consultations was to reduce the number of consultations significantly in order to achieve potential savings of up to £20,000. Initially Worcester City Council submitted approximately 150 applications a year with an estimated cost to WRS of £30,000 to £40,000. The intention of the pilot for Nuisance Complaints was to encourage complainants to help themselves, by initially dealing with the problem and only refer back to WRS if unsuccessful. If the complaint was from multiple sources, and/or a statutory nuisance, or from someone classed as vulnerable, then WRS would deal with the complaint from the outset.

**Planning Consultations** – The pilot involved WRS producing detailed advice for planning officers and an algorithm that enabled planning officers to make decisions on applications without the need to refer to WRS officers. In addition internal management systems within Worcester City Council were altered so that managers had to approve any referrals to WRS. As a failsafe WRS officers also checked the weekly planning list. For the pilot period 10th June to 17th December 2013 the number of planning applications referred for consultation was compared with the number referred over the same time period during the previous year:

- Consultations in 2012 numbered **74**
- Consultations in 2013 numbered **67**

There was a very small reduction in referrals, but Worcester City Council Development Control department indicated that there had been a 17% increase in the total number of applications received by the planning department over the same period. So, the number of referrals to WRS had remained about the same, at a time when Worcester City Council had experienced a 17% increase in workload. It was accepted that the time period for the pilot had been limited, the longer the pilot continued then the outcome and indications of potential savings would be more accurate.

**Nuisance Complaints** - Having considered the statutory responsibilities and the professional advice of officers it was decided to include the following three areas of nuisance complaint within the scope of the pilot:

- Air pollution (mainly garden bonfires)
- Rubbish and miscellaneous complaints
- Drainage

To aid with self help, changes were made to the Worcester City Council website with advice and letter templates made available to download. Duty officers were given advice and training on how to deal with complaints at the first point of contact. It was accepted by all involved that effective communication was essential for the pilot to work and for members of the public to understand what the new process involved. Regular update meetings were held to gauge the number of complaints received and to review comments received from Members and the public. It was accepted that initially the messages provided were not as clear as they could have been and

more work was required to identify potentially vulnerable persons. This resulted in changes to the training of WRS Duty Officers to reinforce the correct message and information on the web site was amended as a result of the feedback received. These areas of work were estimated to cost WRS around £25,000 - £40,000 with approximately 150 to 200 complaints per year. The figures for the relevant categories were compared with the same time period for the previous year, 10th June to 30th November 2013:

- Complaints in 2012 numbered **59**
- Complaints in 2013 numbered **64**

Of those 64 complaints, 30 were referred for self help. Of that 30, 15 complainants returned to WRS to deal with their complaint. Of those 15 complainants referred to self help and who did not return to WRS, no feedback was received from local Members or staff to indicate that the complaints had not been satisfactorily resolved without involving WRS. Overall WRS dealt with 49 complaints compared with 59 the previous year, with 23% of this year's complaints successfully diverted to self help. The numbers coming in each year are roughly similar and so the self help route seems to be delivering real benefits. Both WRS and Worcester City Council have reported that, following initial concerns, both the public and Members appeared to be happy with this new approach.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Worcester City Pilot report be noted. Members agreed that the pilot had produced a model for real cashable savings in respect of the areas of nuisance covered during the pilot carried out by Worcester City Council and 17% efficiency savings for Worcester City Council in respect of planning application referrals;
- (b) that Worcester City Council be provided with in year 2013/2014, savings of £3,746 to be funded from a top-slice of the projected end of year underspend to reflect the changes in the service provided, and reflecting six months of savings during 2013/14; and
- (c) that preparatory work be undertaken by Worcestershire Regulatory Services in consultation with partners, to consider options for extending the concept of "self-help" into other areas of work.

**RECOMMENDATION** that all partner authorities consider introducing the Worcester City Council pilot methodology to their own organisations when dealing with planning consultations and introduce the self help element for certain classes of nuisance complaints.

41/13 **PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITY DATA QUARTER 2 AND QUARTER 3, 2012/2014**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Activity Data for Quarter 2 and 3, 2013/2014.

Mr. M. Kay, The Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that the report was presented in the new format, which was initially introduced to the

Joint Committee Members who had attended the Joint Management Board and Joint Committee workshop on 20th January 2014.

The report showed that Trading Standards complaints from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) had remained down so far this year compared with the historical figures from Consumer Direct. WRS officers will raise this with colleagues within the region to see if this was a common trend, suggesting a failing in the promotion of the CACS number. The highest areas of demand remained as home improvements, second hand cars and furniture supply. The report highlighted that a significant proportion of complaints were not linked to a district within Worcestershire. This was partly a data issue, which WRS were looking into, but also a significant proportion of complaints had arisen from people not resident in Worcestershire or the complaints related to goods/services purchased out of the county by Worcestershire residents.

The nuisance data showed the summer spike in complaints quite clearly, with a total of 1475 complaints being recorded between July and September. Complaints peaked at 650 per month in July and August then fell over the autumn period to 208 in December. Previous reports had included maps showing the location of noise issues in each district. Following discussions at the Joint Management Board and Joint Committee workshop on 20th January 2014, the report now detailed a table of wards with the highest levels of complaint. Officers felt that this would enable Joint Committee Members to engage more with other members in their authorities on particular problems.

The report also provided detailed information on the food inspection programme.

The data continued to highlight the large volumes of demand coming into the service for Licensing. Officers had identified some issues with the data transfer, which would need to be rectified before the service could report more fully on licensing activity from the Uniform system. A full update on Licensing would be provided in future reports. The final data pages contained improved end to end time reporting, with a breakdown by various categories of complaint, as detailed on page 99 of the report.

It was noted at the end of the last report that a significant volume of casework had gone through legal process during Quarter 3. Officers had agreed to keep Members informed of these. The four cases were detailed on page 99 of the report.

Members agreed that the area codes used on the graph, as detailed on page 111 of the report, should be shown in full in future reports.

Councillor Mrs. L. Denham expressed her thanks to officers for taking into account the feedback from the Joint Committee Members who had attended the Joint Management Board and Joint Committee workshop on 20th January 2014.

**RESOLVED** that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity Data Quarter 2 and 3 report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.01 p.m.

Chairman



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 4th March, 2014

## MINUTES

### Present:

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

### Officers:

R Griffin, S Hanley, P McLaughlin and J Pickering

### Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

### 107. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Simon Chalk. Councillor Roger Bennett attended the meeting as his substitute.

### 108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Item 9, Task Group Progress Reports (b) Football Task Group. She left the room during the delivery of this update and took no part in the discussions about this item.

### 109. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th February 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair



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## 110. DIAL A RIDE - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

Officers presented the report on Dial A Ride Extended Service Monitoring and reminded Members that provision of the Dial A Ride vehicles out of standard operating hours for the service had followed a recommendation from the Youth Services Provision Task Group in 2012. In particular, Members had felt that use of the vehicles out of standard operating hours would provide a useful means of transport for young people. The following points were raised:

- The service had been dependent upon the good will of the drivers working outside of their contracted hours.
- Seven trips had been carried out over a 12 month period. This had included use by Leisure Services, the Redditch Older Peoples Forum and Environmental Services.
- Dial A Ride had obtained approximately £2,000 from the service.

Officers confirmed that the service was provided outside of the normal Dial A Ride operating hours which were Monday to Friday. In the future Officers hoped to be able to attract youth organisations and encourage them to use the service. Members discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The use of the service for sheltered housing schemes and in particular Mendip House.
- Promotion of the scheme to other organisations for example Scouts Groups.
- How the financial costs of a trip were calculated. Officers confirmed that this calculation was made in accordance with the drivers' hourly rate, fuel costs, a sum for wear and tear on the vehicle and a small fee to cover administration costs.
- The vehicles available were a 6 x 9 seater and 1 x 14 seater all of which provided disabled access.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Dial A Ride Extended Service Monitoring Report be noted.**

## 111. THREADNEEDLE HOUSE - INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee received a presentation in respect of the sales arrangements for Threadneedle House following a request from the Committee at its previous meeting. Officers provided background information and informed Members that there was a void rate



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across Redditch of commercial office space estimated at between 25-30%.

The following areas were highlighted within the presentation and discussed by Members:

- Confirmation that Barclays bank had first discussed surrendering its lease in 2012 and the loss of income following the surrender.
- The financial benefits to receiving revenue included within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- The assumption which had been made in respect of staff moving from Bromsgrove District Council into the vacant property and the income that could be generated from it.
- The impact of the empty unit and the refurbishment costs and the negotiated dilapidations sum received.
- Members questioned the valuation of the building and in particular the reduction in value when considered as an empty building and the calculation of the current value.
- The impact on business rates in respect of short term lets to charitable organisations.
- The area of the unit let to the Post Office and the continued rental received from this together with the number of years remaining on the lease and any formal discussions with them in respect of the possible sale of the unit.
- Members expressed concerns as to whether a developer would be happy for the Post Office to be retained in its current position. Members were keen to ensure that it remained in that position.
- A comparison in the rate of rental units per square foot in various parts of the Borough.
- The reduction in demand for large unit spaces and the length of leases available.
- The reference within the Local Plan in respect of the need for office space within the Borough.
- Tentative interest shown from organisations such as the NHS and the Police Authority.
- How the units were currently being marketed.
- The shortfall of housing within the Borough and the possible conversion to residential use (it was suggested that the ground floor should be retail with residential above) and any interest from developers.
- The impact of residential use on the surrounding area and car parking issues which may arise from such a development.
- It was confirmed that the market area would not initially be included within any negotiations.

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Members were informed that Threadneedle House would be marketed nationally as it was felt that a national group would have more appropriate contacts and cover a wider scope of potential developers. Local commercial agents tended to deal with much smaller units. Quotes had already been received and discussions had taken place in respect of guidelines and strategies in respect of potential bidders. Members were also provided with details of the potential fees charged for the sale of the building. There would be a guide price and an auction would be considered as an option. A final decision would be made following consideration of all the available professional advice. It was confirmed by Officers that actively marketing Threadneedle House had not as yet been progressed, pending the outcome of the discussions by the Committee at the meeting.

The Committee discussed the limited control which the Council had within the town centre and the potential impact on the surrounding area and the Palace Theatre in particular should Threadneedle House be sold and redeveloped for residential use. It was hoped that the development would bring a mix of both residential apartments together with retail units which would encourage a thriving café community and increase the footfall within the town centre. Planners had indicated that they would only allow retail units to be developed on the ground floor.

Members also discussed the following areas in more detail:

- Any involvement of the Redditch Town Centre Partnership to encourage community interest groups use of the building and to support works to make improvements to the building.
- The three small businesses which had been set up in the market area and problems it was understood they had encountered due to location.
- The use of rental income to offset borrowing and the loss of that rental income if the building was to be sold.
- The cost to the Council if the building was refurbished and/or breaking it up into individual units.
- The potential for joint venture working and whether this had been explored.
- The development of the market area and whether if this development work was carried out it could have a positive impact on the sale in the long term.
- The inclusion of the voluntary sector and how they preferred to be independent rather than sharing the use of a building.

Following further discussion it was

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## RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **Property Services explore all options for use of Threadneedle House including sale, rent and joint venture; and**
- 2) **there should be very active marketing of Threadneedle House for let either as a whole building or in units.**

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

## 112. DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

Officers informed the Committee that the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report contained details of the work of the Committee and the Task Groups carried out during the past 12 months and that it would be presented to Council at the meeting to be held on 31st March 2014 by the Chair of the Committee. It should be noted that there were additional photographs to be included prior to this presentation. The report recognised that a number of the Task Groups were continuing. It was noted that the photograph of Councillor Fry was slightly distorted and required adjustment.

The Chair thanked both Members of the Committee and Officers for their continued support with special recognition being given to Jess Bayley, Democratic Services Officer.

## RESOLVED that

**subject to the changes detailed above, the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be submitted for the consideration of Council on 31st March 2014.**

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

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings held on 11th and 24th February 2014 together with the most recent edition of the Executive Work Programme.

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## RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 11th and 24th February 2014 and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.**

### 114. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Gandy requested to bring forward an item on the subject of Members' IT. She informed Members that following a recent Task Group meeting it was apparent that a number of Members were experiencing similar problems and that in many cases these had not been report or Members had made alternative arrangements and therefore the IT Team were not aware of any issues.

Councillor Gandy did not believe that a Task Group was required to investigate this matter further, but that a presentation from the Head of Service together with a representative from the IT Team would be helpful. This would also be an opportunity for the IT Team to bring Members up to date with the forthcoming changes in respect of the PSN Secure Network implementation and the move towards the use of Ipads.

Particular areas of concern raised by Members were:

- Any relevant training and support that would be provided in respect of Ipads.
- The role out of Ipads.
- Appropriate IT for new Members.
- The process of reporting problems to the IT Helpdesk.

Those Members who already had the use of an Ipad commented on how useful they were and the improvements they had found when compared to previous equipment with which they had been issued. Councillor Bennett informed the Committee that he was a member of the Member Development Steering Group and at its last meeting the use of Ipads and the PSN Secure Network, which was an initiative from Central Government, had been discussed.

Following further discussion it was agreed that Officers would contact all Members for information about their IT needs and experiences and compile a list of issues that were raised prior to the meeting in order to give the IT Team an opportunity to prepare responses and focus their presentation.

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## RESOLVED that

- 1) the Committee receive a presentation from the Head of Business Transformation and a representative from the IT team as detailed in the preamble above at the meeting to be held on 1st April 2014;
- 2) Officers to canvass all Members and compile a list of problems which have been raised; and
- 3) the Work Programme be noted subject to the inclusion of the above.

## 115. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The following updates in respect of current Task Group reviews were provided:

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

Councillor Gandy informed Members that the group had visited Stratford Leisure Centre which had been an interesting and useful visit and a good comparison to the visit they had made to Evesham Leisure Centre. The group had also interviewed Councillor Mould as Portfolio for Leisure and Tourism and discussed with him the plans for the Abbey Stadium and the forthcoming business case.

At a subsequent meeting Officers from Human Resources had been interviewed in respect of employment opportunities at the venue. The group had also interviewed an apprentice working within the Democratic and Legal Services team to get an inside view of the support she was receiving and why she had chosen to take up an apprenticeship.

b) Football Provision within the Borough Task Group – Chair, Councillor David Bush

Councillor Bush raised concerns in respect of comments which had been made at the full Council meeting on 24th February 2014 by some Councillors. Councillor Bush's understanding of these comments in respect of Redditch United Football Club (RUFC) was that a decision had been made and that the work of the Task Group was unnecessary.

Members discussed how the Task Group's terms of reference covered football provision and its availability throughout the Borough and that consideration of RUFC was simply an element of the work being carried out. Officers confirmed that

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a decision had been made at a meeting of the Executive Committee in November 2013, but that due process was being followed and any recommendations from the Task Group would be considered within that process. However, Officers currently had no mandate to take any further action.

Councillor Fry informed Members that no decision, other than that made by the Executive Committee in November 2013, had been made and that the Council was awaiting the outcome of the Task Group. Councillor Bush expressed concerns that two Portfolio Holders had made public statements, which he believed were to the detriment of the work of the Task Group. It was confirmed that this matter would be discussed further at the next meeting.

Councillor Bush informed Members that from the meetings that had already been held the work of the Task Group had been very productive. Members had interviewed relevant Officers from leisure services, including senior Officers. Concerns had been raised in respect of football access throughout the Borough and Members had gained an understanding of issues in respect of pitch size and the requirements of both the Football Association (FA) and Football League. The Task Group had also received a presentation from RUFC which had highlighted a major issue in respect of insufficient playing facilities and playing less time on the pitches. The Design Team appointed by RUFC had also been in attendance and had highlighted that they were unable to share the concerns raised in respect of the roundabout for the proposed new site, which would be taken forward.

Planning Officers were due to attend the following meeting and the FA had also been invited to attend. There had been some difficulty in arranging meetings and it was anticipated that the investigation would take four months rather than the original estimated three months. The issue of flooding from the River Arrow at the proposed new site was discussed and Councillor Bush confirmed that this would be taken up with Officers at the following meeting. Councillor Fry commented that he was enjoying the review and had learnt a lot particularly from RUFC and their architects' presentation, although he noted that their position and that of the Executive Committee were quite some way apart.

Councillor Gandy explained that the comments from the coaching staff at RUFC in respect of their work with young

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people would have been useful for all Members and highlighted the work undertaken outside of the main team and within the community, which people might not have been aware of.

c) Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services Scrutiny Task Group – Redditch Member, Councillor Alan Mason

Councillor Mason had been unable to attend the last meeting of the Task Group, however a written update had been provided within the agenda.

Officers informed Members that at the previous meeting of the group Members had interviewed a representative of the host authority's Legal Team together with the Chair of the Management Board. The main topic of discussion had been the governance arrangements for Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The following meeting of the group would take place on 19th March during which Members would reflect on the progress they had made to date. The review had reached a stage where Members were beginning to discuss possible recommendations and remained on track to be completed in time to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's June 2014 meeting.

d) Landscaping Task Group – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Councillor Hopkins informed Members that the group had formulated some draft recommendations and the draft report was in the process of being written. A final meeting had been arranged where this would be discussed prior to presentation to the Committee at its meeting on 1st April and then the Executive Committee on 8th April 2014.

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

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that Members were due to hold a meeting later that week to interview a representative of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN), an infrastructure organisation which worked with most Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in the Borough. Meetings were also planned for 14th and 19th March which included a visit to the Sandycroft Wellbeing Centre as a comparison to see what work was being carried

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out at the other side of the Borough. The investigation would be completed in time for the final draft report to be presented to the Committee's July 2014 meeting.

(During consideration of this item the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources declared an other disclosable interest in the update on the Football Task Group. She left the room and was not present during the delivery of this update).

## **RESOLVED that**

**the update reports be noted.**

### **116. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that the main topic at the last meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) had been in respect of the plans for urgent care. Members present had been made aware that this would be going out to consultation with three events being held in Redditch and three in Bromsgrove. Members of the HOSC had not been happy with the document provided; it contained lots of acronyms, which many people had found difficult to understand, and there had been several complaints about the general language used within the document. The HOSC had asked that the document be reviewed after taking on board the comments received from Members.

The GP Ambulance service had also been discussed and concerns continued to be raised and which needed to be taken up by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). There had also been a further incident on the Bromsgrove Highway bridge and concerns had been raised again in respect of this. It was understood that the notices mentioned at a previous meeting had in fact been installed at the instigation of the local Community Safety Team, but there remained concern that this was not sufficient action. The Chair of HOSC had written to the Health and Wellbeing Board asking for this issue to be given further consideration. There had also been a similar incident in a different area and the cost of such incidents had been raised.

There had been limited discussion about the future of the Alexandra Hospital although this would be going out to further consultation shortly.



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## **117. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED that**

**Under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act, as amended, in respect of Threadneedle House – Information Report (as detailed in Minute 111 above).**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 9.12 pm



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**8<sup>th</sup> April 2014**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**

	<b><u>Meeting :</u></b>	<b><u>Lead Members / Officers :</u></b> (Executive Members shown <u>underlined</u> )	<b><u>Position :</u></b> (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 <sup>th</sup> May 2013
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr John Fisher</u>  Georgina Harris	Last meeting – 4th December 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 meeting – 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2014

B. OTHER MEETINGS

5.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Sheena Jones	Next meeting – Date to be established.
6.	Member Support Steering Group	Chair: <u>Cllr John Fisher</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Phil Mould</u> Sheena Jones	Last meeting – 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2014.
7.	Grants Assessment Panel	Chair: Cllr David Bush / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Donna Hancox	Last meeting – 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2014
8.	Procurement Group	Chair: <u>Cllr Bill Hartnett</u> / Vice-Chair: <u>Cllr Greg Chance</u> Jayne Pickering	In abeyance pending Transformation.

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9.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair: Mr R Key / Sheena Jones	Last meeting – 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**8<sup>th</sup> April 2014**ACTION MONITORING**

Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer	Action requested	Status
<b>26<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b>		
<b>Cllr Mould / Cllr Fisher</b> S Jones / C Felton	<b>Redditch United Football Club – Ground Relocation</b>  Councillor Brunner requested information on the cost of holding the meeting to consider the proposal for ground relocation by Redditch United Football Club.	Officers are carrying out work around the cost of democracy.
<b>14th January 2014</b>		
<b>Cllr Fisher / K Dicks / J Pickering</b>	<b>Impact of Worcestershire County Council Budget Proposals</b>  Officers undertook to bring back to the Executive Committee further details around costs and likely impact of changes on Lifeline service.	
<b>11th March 2014</b>		
<b>Cllr Fisher / S Hanley</b>	<b>Finance Monitoring Report 2013/14 - April - December (Quarter 3)</b>  It was noted that there was still a small amount of ongoing expenditure in respect of Hewell Road Pool Works. Officers reported that a position statement was expected within the current week and this statement would be forwarded on to all Executive Committee members.	
<b>Note:</b>	<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: 26/11/13 to present

