



# Council

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February  
2014

7.10pm (or following the  
ending of the Executive  
Committee meeting,  
should this be later)

Council Chamber  
Town Hall  
Redditch

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

*making  
a  
difference*

[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.
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- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council's Website:  
[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](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) Fax: (01527) 65216  
e.mail: [ivor.westmore@bromgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:ivor.westmore@bromgroveandredditch.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 Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

### **Running Order**

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

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

### **Decisions**

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

### **Members of the Public**

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

### **Special Arrangements**

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

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

### **Further Information**

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

### **Fire/ Emergency instructions**

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

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

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

**Do Not use lifts.**

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

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





# Council

24<sup>th</sup> February 2014  
7.10pm (or following the  
ending of the Executive  
Committee meeting, should  
this be later)  
Council Chamber Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Wanda King (Mayor)	Carole Gandy
	Pat Witherspoon (Deputy Mayor)	Adam Griffin
	Joe Baker	Bill Hartnett
	Roger Bennett	Pattie Hill
	Rebecca Blake	Roger Hill
	Michael Braley	Gay Hopkins
	Andrew Brazier	Alan Mason
	Juliet Brunner	Phil Mould
	David Bush	Brenda Quinney
	Michael Chalk	Mark Shurmer
	Simon Chalk	Yvonne Smith
	Greg Chance	Luke Stephens
	Brandon Clayton	Debbie Taylor
	John Fisher	Derek Taylor
	Andrew Fry	

<b>1. Welcome</b>	The Mayor will open the meeting and welcome all present.
<b>2. Apologies</b>	To receive any apologies for absence on behalf of Council members.
<b>3. Declarations of Interest</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Note: Under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any Councillor who is 2 or more months in arrears with their Council Tax payments cannot participate in any item at the Council meeting concerning the budget. This statutory provision overrides any dispensation granted.</p>
<b>4. Minutes</b> (Pages 1 - 6) Chief Executive	<p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014.</p> <p><b>(Minutes attached)</b></p>

<p><b>5. Announcements</b></p>	<p>To consider any exceptional announcements under Procedure Rule 10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Mayor's Announcements</li><li>b) Leader's Announcements</li><li>c) Chief Executive's Announcements.</li></ul> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<p><b>6. Executive Committee</b> (Pages 7 - 60) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes and consider the recommendations and/or referrals from the following meetings of the Executive Committee:</p> <p><u>11<sup>th</sup> February 2014</u></p> <p>Matters requiring the Council's consideration will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Revenue Account Initial Estimates / Rent Setting 2014/15;</li><li>• Fees and Charges (Appendices under separate cover);</li><li>• Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils – Annual Report and Recommendations for 2014/15;</li><li>• Redditch Borough Council Response to Birmingham Development Plan Pre-Submission Consultation; and</li><li>• Policy for Securing Repayment of Disabled Facilities Grants and Lifetime Loans.</li></ul> <p><u>24<sup>th</sup> February 2014</u></p> <p>Matters requiring the Council's consideration will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 – 2016/17</li></ul> <p>(Minutes, decisions and reports from the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014 attached; report for 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 to be included with the agenda papers for that Executive Committee meeting)</p>

<p><b>7. Urgent Business - general (if any)</b></p>	<p>To consider any additional items exceptionally agreed by the Mayor as Urgent Business in accordance with the powers vested in her by virtue of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>(This power should be exercised only in cases where there are genuinely special circumstances which require consideration of an item which has not previously been published on the Order of Business for the meeting.)</p>
<p><b>8. Exclusion of the Public</b></p>	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to any items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p><b>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (<i>to be specified</i>) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</b></p> <p><b>[Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>• Para 1 – <u>any individual</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 2 – <u>the identity of any individual</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 3 – <u>financial or business affairs</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 4 – <u>labour relations matters</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 5 – <u>legal professional privilege</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 6 – <u>a notice, order or direction</u>;</b></li><li><b>• Para 7 – <u>the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</u>;</b></li></ul> <p><b>may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.]</b></p>

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(Note: Anyone requiring copies of any previously circulated reports, or supplementary papers, should please contact Committee Services Officers in advance of the meeting.)

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## Council

27<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Wanda King (Mayor), Councillor Pat Witherspoon (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, Alan Mason, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Luke Stephens, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor

### Also Present:

Mr N Stote (Save the Alex Campaign)

### Officers:

K Dicks, C Felton, S Hanley, K-L Johnson, S Jones, S Mould and S Sellers

### Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

### 73. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Brenda Quinney.

### 74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 75. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

.....  
Chair

**76. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (a) The Mayor's communications and announcements were as follows:

i) Craig Prentice-Underwood

The Mayor informed the Council of the very sad death before Christmas of Craig Prentice-Underwood. Members were reminded that Craig's parents, Robert and Margaret, had founded and been tireless campaigners for the Redditch Heart Safe Charity following the death of their daughter, Charlotte, three years previously. A letter of condolence had been sent to the family in response to this tragic loss.

ii) Special Council – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2013

The Mayor formally advised the Council of the intention to call a special meeting of the Council on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at which consideration would be given to the conferring of the Freedom of the Borough upon 37 Signal Regiment which was based in the town.

iii) Mayoral Functions

The Mayor advised that since the last meeting of the Council she and the Deputy Mayor had attended a number of engagements including a visit to the Alexandra Hospital on Christmas Day, a skittles evening with Redditch One World Link, the opening of a new Specsavers store, a Wassail event at Headless Cross Orchard, a Special Olympics event in Bromsgrove, a Black Country Night, also in Bromsgrove, the Holocaust Memorial Day Event in the Town Centre and a Redditch Special Olympics Awards Ceremony the previous weekend.

iv) Forthcoming Events

The Mayor advised that forthcoming events included a Charity Ball in Kidderminster, a Race Night in Evesham, an Inner Wheel Club Lunch at the Golf Club, a Mayoral Quiz at Stourport-on-Severn, the Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth Event at the Town Hall, a performance of The Merry Widow at the Palace Theatre and a sponsored climb of Ben Nevis by herself and Councillor Joe Baker.

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(b) The Leader's Announcements were as follows:

i) Special Olympics Awards Ceremony

The Leader advised that he had attended a very enjoyable Special Olympics Awards evening the previous weekend at the Town Hall.

ii) Holocaust Memorial Event

On the preceding Saturday the Leader had attended the Holocaust Memorial Event and reported that it had been a very moving event, a highlight of which had been an address by Eva Clarke, the third Holocaust survivor to have addressed the Redditch event over the years.

iii) Meadow Hill Road House Fire

The Leader advised the Council of his wish to recognise Mr Naheem Akhtar for his heroism in helping his neighbours to escape from a recent house fire on Meadow Hill Road.

iv) Save the Alex Campaign

The Leader advised the Council that the Save the Alex campaign had achieved a tremendous success in helping to retain Accident and Emergency Services at the Alexandra Hospital, although this was tempered by the uncertain future for a number of other key services, such as a consultant-led Maternity Service. The Leader placed on record his gratitude to the Chief Executive, Kevin Dicks, and his Personal Assistant, Susan Tasker, for their work in helping to coordinate efforts to protect hospital services and also to the Save the Alex Campaign Group.

Councillor Carole Gandy added her thanks to those of the Leader and included a number of additional individuals who had helped the cause, including other local Council Leaders, the local MP and the Chair of the local Clinical Commissioning Group.

Mr Neale Stote was invited to address the Council on behalf of the Save the Alex Campaign. Whilst the Group was pleased at the recent good news, there was concern over the effect on the Birmingham Women's Hospital and the Worcester Royal Infirmary of proposed maternity changes. Given that there was still considered to be a risk of down-grading services at the Alex, the Group was committed to continue fighting to retain the current status of the Hospital and its services.

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**77. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

No questions had been submitted.

**78. MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

No Motions had been submitted.

**79. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Council considered the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

**RESOLVED that**

1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 be received and all recommendations adopted subject to, in relation to Minute 96 (Options for Threadneedle House) it being noted that Officers were to provide Councillor Michael Braley with clarification as to whether the Post Office would remain on site as a continuing tenant of either a new owner or the Council in the event of a sale of the site; and**

2) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 be received and all recommendations adopted subject to,**

i) **in relation to Minute 113 (Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15), it being further RESOLVED that**

**the seventh bullet point in the main features of the Council Tax Hardship Fund as listed in Paragraph 1 (Background) of the Policy be clarified to provide that new applicants for funding can apply and be considered on a case by case basis as and when they become eligible for Council Tax Support; and**

ii) **in relation to Minute 115 (Polling Districts and Polling Places – 2013/14 Review), it being further RESOLVED that**

**the new Polling District (BYD) referred to at Recommendation 1 b) be named Brockhill East.**

**80. REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

Members received the minutes of a number of recent meetings of the Council's Regulatory Committees.

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013 be received and adopted.**

**81. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS**

The Council considered a decision that had been taken under its urgency procedures in respect of a decision to not Defend Elements of the Reasons for Refusing a Planning Application at a Planning Appeal in order to Mitigate the Reputational and Financial Risk to the Council.

There was considerable discussion around the determination of the original application at the Planning Committee and the subsequent decision to not defend the decision at appeal. It was suggested that the agreement to not defend the decision, albeit on the advice of Counsel, would render the Borough vulnerable to further appeals from large developers in the expectation that future appeals might not be defended when applications were refused against the recommendations of Officers. This was considered pertinent in view of a number of potential applications expected in and around the Borough in coming years. There was also consideration given to whether the refusal was indefensible as Counsel had suggested and to what extent efforts could have been made to obtain evidence to support the Council's position. Officers made it clear that the decision in this case was an isolated example which had been taken in the unusual circumstance of the Council being informed that the case was considered indefensible and that very substantial costs might be awarded against the authority.

It was generally agreed that members of the Planning Committee should be offered as much training as could reasonably be provided but Planning Committee members were also reminded that they had every opportunity to ascertain from Officers the recommended reasons for refusal or approval of any application prior to a decision being reached at such meetings.

**RESOLVED that**

**the decision be noted.**

(The Council adjourned at 8.26pm for a comfort break. The Council reconvened at 8.30pm)

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**82. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL**

There were no separate items of urgent business to consider at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.02 pm  
and closed at 8.43 pm

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Chair



## Executive

### Committee

11<sup>th</sup> February 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 Andrew Brazier

#### Officers:

E Baker, R Cooke, C Flanagan, S Green, S Hanley, S Horrobin, S Morgan, J Pickering and L Tompkin

#### Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

#### 125. APOLOGIES

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

#### 126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 127. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Items 5, the Medium Term Financial Plan, and 6, the Housing Revenue Account Initial Estimates / Rent Setting 2014/15, were included in an Additional Papers pack.

The Leader expressed sympathy to all those in Worcestershire and other parts of the country who were suffering from the recent flooding and also his gratitude to workers in local government, the emergency services and the Environment Agency who were doing what they could to assist.

.....  
Chair

Finally, the Leader wished to place on record the gratitude of the Council to Sue Horrobin, Environmental Services Manager, who was leaving the authority after more than a quarter of century of loyal and dedicated service to take up a new post in Scotland.

**128. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**129. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Committee considered a report which set out the financial position for the revenue budget for 2014/15. Given the difficult financial situation in which this and other Councils found themselves, Officers were presenting a one year budget at this stage. A further report would be submitted to the Committee in September / October 2014 which would look ahead to the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.

Officers highlighted the decrease in central Government funding over recent years which was, in part, being masked by the aggregation of specific grants into the overall financial settlement. Alongside this reduction in the Revenue Support Grant there were a number of other unavoidable budget pressures with which the Council was having to contend, such as pensions costs, reductions in funding from the County Council and reductions in specific revenue streams such as the Department of Work and Pensions administration subsidy. The Council was only being asked to consider a single revenue bid, that for the Eastern Gateway, which it was anticipated would result in economic development opportunities.

A number of measures had been undertaken to reduce the projected shortfall, including the redesign of a number of service areas, an increase in income through services such as CCTV and Lifeline and a proposed 1.9% increase in Council Tax for the coming year - there remained a small outstanding shortfall but Officers intended to address this prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Leader advised that he had written to the Government concerning the poor Financial Settlement as agreed at the previous meeting and thanked Jayne Pickering, Section 151 Officer, Sam Morgan, Deputy Section 151 Officer, and the Financial Services



Team for their hard work in developing the current budget proposals under difficult circumstances.

Concern was expressed that specific accumulated reserves were being used to meet the current deficit with the result that the Borough would be left in a far from ideal financial situation for ensuing years and administrations. The Eastern Gateway bid was also discussed, with the use of consultants being contrasted with a previous decision to remove a budget heading for consultants. Officers confirmed that expenditure for the use of consultants was presently being met through savings on vacant posts or through budgets already available to support transformational activity.

The Committee considered the comments upon the Medium Term Financial Plan from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and

**RESOLVED that**

**the current position for 2014/15 be noted and Officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget.**

**130. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INITIAL ESTIMATES / RENT SETTING 2014/15**

Members considered the Initial Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account for 2014/15 and the proposed dwelling rents for 2014/15.

Officers explained that the Council was at its borrowing limit in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and that this coming year represented the final year of the rent restructuring regime. Members noted that the provision for bad and doubtful debt had doubled for the coming year to reflect concerns over the introduction of Universal Credit. In addition, the point was made that the Council's rents still represented very good value for money, given the comparative levels of rent charged by other providers and the quality of accommodation provided.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the draft 2014/2015 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A, be approved;**
- 2) the actual average rent increase for 2014/2015 be 5.13% (3.2% RPI plus 1.93% due to rent restructuring); and**

- 3) **that £3.5m be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme and repay borrowing.**

### **131. FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee considered a report setting out the proposed Fees and Charges for the Council's chargeable services for 2014/15. Officers reported that an overall 3% increase in fees and charges would be achieved through approval of the proposals and the income target for the year had been increased by £91K when compared to the previous year.

Officers highlighted that the fifth row on Page 51 of the Executive Committee report should have read 'Bulky Collection – four items or more'. It was also explained that percentage increases had not been incorporated for all charges for practical and presentational reasons. In several instances, larger than 3% increases were attributed to charges not being increased for a number of years and the practical implications of amending printed scales of charges on an annual basis where the volume of transactions did not warrant it.

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the fees and charges for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1- 9 to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-**
  - a) **fees or charges are statutory,**
  - b) **fees and charges are set externally, or**
  - c) **other Council- approved circumstances apply.**
- 2) **the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services has delegation to alter the Leisure fees and charges by a variation of up to 30%**

### **132. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS - ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014/15**

The Committee received the latest report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of the level of allowances to be paid to members of Redditch Borough Council for 2014/15.

The IRP had not proposed an increase in its recommended level of allowances for the coming year, but it was noted that the Council

had agreed a considerably lower level of allowances for 2013/14 than the IRP had recommended. The comparative figures for what was being recommended and what was being received by members was set out in the Appendix to the IRP report.

Members once again expressed their disquiet at having to make a decision on their own levels of remuneration.

### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the Council has regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel;**
- 2) **the Council does not accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, set out in detail in Appendix 1 to its report, for the following allowances:**
  - Basic**
  - Leader**
  - Deputy Leader**
  - Portfolio Holders**
  - Executive Members without Portfolio**
  - Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
  - Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
  - Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups**
  - Chair of Audit and Governance Committee**
  - Chair of Planning Committee**
  - Chair of Licensing Committee**
  - Chair of Standards Committee**
  - Political Group Leaders;**
- 3) **the Council accepts the Panel's recommendations for travel, subsistence and dependent carers allowances;**
- 4) **for 2014-15, the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances continue at the level set for 2013-14, as set out in detail in the final column in appendix 1 to the Panel's report;**
- 5) **the Panel's recommendation relating to the Parish Council be noted.**

### **133. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a request to approve a response from Redditch Borough Council to the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) Pre-Submission Draft. The response was required by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014.

Members noted that the matter had previously been considered by the Planning Advisory Panel but that there was little detail of any potential impact on the Borough contained within the Plan on which to base a meaningful response.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the Redditch Borough Council response (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) to the BDP Pre-Submission Draft be approved to be sent to Birmingham City Council.**

**134. POLICY FOR SECURING REPAYMENT OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND LIFETIME LOANS**

The Committee considered a report which set out a proposal for reviewing the process for securing Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Home Repair Assistance Loans (Lifetime Loans) paid to residents for works or adaptations to their homes.

Officers explained that the present system, which was unduly onerous for customers and Officers, had been adopted in 2009 as a result of a recommendation in an internal audit report. Officers were now recommending that the registration of any charge on the Local Land Charges Register was a more than adequate means of securing the Council's financial position.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**repayment of Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair Assistance Lifetime Loans should be secured by means of registration on the Local Land Charges Register.**

**135. 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 9<sup>th</sup> January 2014 be received and noted.**

**136. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

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

# Executive Committee

11<sup>th</sup> February 2014

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**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 be received and noted.**

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

**138. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

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

It was noted that the Grants Assessment Panel was meeting at present and would be reporting its recommendations on the allocation of grants to the next meeting of the Committee in March.

**139. ACTION MONITORING**

The Committee's Action Monitoring report was considered by Members. Councillor Brandon Clayton confirmed that Officers had dealt with both the queries he had raised and which were included. Councillor Juliet Brunner noted that the action from November referring to the cost of a meeting had been removed from the list although the information had not, as yet, been forthcoming. She had discussed the matter with Officers and had been informed that the matter was in hand and the information was in the process of being compiled.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.17 pm

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Chair



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL**24<sup>th</sup> February 2014

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**130. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INITIAL ESTIMATES / RENT SETTING  
2014/15****RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the draft 2014/2015 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A, be approved;**
- 2) the actual average rent increase for 2014/2015 be 5.13% (3.2% RPI plus 1.93% due to rent restructuring); and**
- 3) that £3.5m be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme and repay borrowing.**





**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

11th February, 2014

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INITIAL ESTMATE 2014/15**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mark Shurmer, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Director Finance & Resources Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To present Members with the Initial Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account for 2014/2015 and the proposed dwelling rents for 2014/2015.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that**

- 1) the draft 2014/2015 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A, be approved;**
- 2) the actual average rent increase for 2014/2015 be 5.13% (3.2% RPI plus 1.93% due to rent restructuring); and**
- 3) that £3.5m be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme and repay borrowing.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 This report only considers those items included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). General Fund items will be considered separately when setting the Council Tax.
- 3.2 The system of housing revenue account subsidy ceased on the 31st March 2012 and was replaced with a devolved system of council housing finance called self-financing. The proposal in the form of a financial settlement meant a redistribution of the 'national' housing debt. This resulted in the Council borrowing £98,929 million from the PWLB.

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- 3.3 Self-financing has placed a limit (Debt Cap) on borrowing for housing purposes at the closing position for 2011/12. This is set at £122,158,000. The figures at Appendix A allow for the payment of interest on this sum. This means that all future capital programmes will have to be funded from revenue contribution, capital receipts or grants.
- 3.4 Rent restructuring was introduced in 2002/03. Members agreed to increase rents in line with this policy at the time and must now adhere to this for the final year. The objective of this is set out in a Government policy statement "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All – The Way Forward for Housing". It is proposed that rent setting in the social housing sector should be brought on to a common system based upon relative property values and local earning levels. The intention was for there to be rent convergence between sectors within 10 years. Briefly, the rent increase each year should be based on an increase for inflation plus an adjustment of 10% of the difference between the formula rent and the actual rent on an individual property basis. The 10% adjustment, which is aimed at achieving the formula rent for all properties within 10 years, may result in an increase or decrease in rent. The target date for rent convergence now is 2015/16. In valuing each local authority's housing business the Government has assumed continued adherence to this rent policy.
- 3.5 Failure to increase the rents by the recommended amount will affect the authorities ability to manage the debt in line with the 30 year Business case that was agreed as part of self-financing. The capital programme for maintaining our stock at decent homes standards also requires a high level of investment which can only be achieved by increasing our rents.

2014/15

- 3.6 This section of the report outlines the major issues which have an impact upon the Housing Revenue Account budget setting process for 2014/15.
- 3.7 Based on the RPI figure for September of 3.2% and using the rent restructuring formula for calculating dwelling rents, the actual average rent increase for 2014/15 will be 5.13%. The average rent on a 52 week basis will be £78.59 or £85.14 on a 48 week basis. This compares to the actual average for 2013/14 on a 52 week basis of £74.76 and £80.99 on a 48 week basis.

Capital Resources

- 3.8 From the 1st of April 2004 capital receipts from the sale of housing land and dwellings have been subject to pooling, (75% of Right to Buy

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(RTB) receipts have to be paid to the Government for redistribution). Officers have estimated that in the short term the number of RTB sales for this Council will be around 20 per annum, generating around £400k in usable capital receipts.

- 3.9 The introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance from April 2001 provided the Council with additional capital resources. With the introduction of self-financing and the end of the subsidy system that determined this arrangement, £3,843,949 was transferred from the Housing Revenue Account into a Major Repairs Reserve for 2011/12. In place of this transfer to a Major Repairs Reserve each authority will be required to transfer an amount to the Reserve in respect of depreciation. This Reserve will continue to be available to fund capital expenditure for Housing Revenue Account purposes and to repay borrowing. The self-financing determination provides for a 5 year transitional period before the full depreciation figure must be funded. It is permissible to use the uplifted Major Repairs Allowance, which for 2014/15 will be £5,986,920.
- 3.10 The Council has previously made transfers of monies from the HRA, when resources permit, to a reserve to fund future capital programmes. It is estimated that there will be sufficient resources in the HRA in 2014/15 to allow £3.5m to be transferred in this way. With the introduction of a Debt Cap from 1st April 2012 these monies will be required to support the Housing Capital Programme. The approved capital programme for 2014/15 totals £7.25 million.

Housing Repairs Account

- 3.11 The budgeted contribution to the Housing Repairs Account as shown at Appendix A is £4,665,630 for 2014/15, including inflationary increases where appropriate.

Right to Buy Scheme – Rent Income

- 3.12 The 2014/15 figures at Appendix A allow for the sale of 20 Council homes. The full effect is an anticipated £81,730 loss of rent income.

Housing Revenue Account Balances

- 3.13 The Section 151 Officer has previously advised Members on the minimum level of revenue balances to be maintained in lieu of unforeseen events affecting the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's housing stock. Members have previously approved the retention of a minimum balance of £600,000.

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- 3.14 The figures shown in Appendix A indicate that the estimated balance carried forward at the 1st April 2014 will be £1,076,102 which will leave a working balance of £1,150,912 at the 31st March 2015.

### Legal Implications

- 3.15 Section 76 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that the Council sets its budget relating to the Housing Revenue Account such that the account does not plan to be in a deficit position.

### Service/Operational Implications

- 3.16 The Council needs to approve the rents in a timely manner in order to allow officer time to notify the tenants of the annual rent increase.

### Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.17 The rent restructuring model aims to equalise the rents for tenants of similar properties within the Council housing stock.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There is a risk to the HRA Capital Programme if sufficient resources do not exist within the Housing Revenue Account to provide funding now that the Council is unable to borrow to fund the housing capital programme.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Housing Revenue Account 2014/15.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

<u>2013/14 Initial</u> <u>2014/15 Initial</u>	2013/14 Initial Estimate £		2014/15 Initial Estimate £
<b>B/fwd Balance</b>	<b>816,602</b>		<b>1,076,102</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Dwelling Rents (Gross)	23,443,400		23,941,960
Non-Dwelling Rents (Gross)	459,200		460,000
Charges for Services and Facilities	272,180		298,750
Contribution towards Expenditure (Supporting People & Social Services)	959,810		808,440
Interest Receivable	89,500		79,750
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>25,224,090</b>		<b>25,588,900</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Supervision and Management (General)	4,220,740		4,314,890
Supervision and Management (Special)	2,318,140		2,256,060
Rent, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	166,680		171,390
Benefit Subsidy Limitation Transfer to General Fund	68,950		54,450
Revenue Contribution to Capital Programme/Set Aside to Repay Borrowing	3,500,000		3,500,000
Depreciation	5,966,080		5,986,920
Contributions to the Housing Repairs Account	4,323,350		4,665,630
Financing Charges	4,200,650		4,164,750
Provision for Bad / Doubtful Debts	200,000		400,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>24,964,590</b>		<b>25,514,090</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year</b>	<b>259,500</b>		<b>74,810</b>
<b>C/fwd Balance</b>	<b>1,076,102</b>		<b>1,150,912</b>



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**131. FEES AND CHARGES 2014/15****RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the fees and charges for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1- 9 to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-**
  - a) fees or charges are statutory,**
  - b) fees and charges are set externally, or**
  - c) other Council- approved circumstances apply.**
- 2) the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services has delegation to alter the Leisure fees and charges by a variation of up to 30%**





## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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### **FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2014/15**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	
Key Decision	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To present the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15 for the Council's chargeable services.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RECCOMEND**

**that the fees and charges for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1- 9 to the report be approved; other than in cases where:-**

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

**That the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services has delegation to alter the Leisure fees and charges by a variation of upto 30%**

#### **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Comments relating to the individual services are shown in the appendices where the fees and charges have reduced or remained the same.

##### **Financial Implications**

- 3.2 The Council's Financial Regulation D11 requires an annual review of fees and charges to be undertaken. Traditionally, this review is carried out as part of the budget preparation cycle.

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- 3.3 Officers have been asked to review all their Fees and Charges and it is recommended that they are increase by 3%. There is an increased income target of £91K for 2014/15 compared to 2013/14.

### **Building Control**

- 3.4 Due to private providers and the detrimental impact this is having on our income generation, officers have looked at the price levels and believe that reducing the fees charged this will encourage more use of the Councils service.

As the statutory building control service is in direct competition with the private sector, the hitherto publication of set fees has had a significant detrimental effect on winning projects. Embracing the ability to offer project specific quotations will assist in retaining and improving workloads by excluding our fee information from private sector as much as is practicably possible.

Many customers have already become of the aware of the ability of local building control authorities to provide project specific quotation on request and the number of such requests is rising rapidly. The proposed fee publication assists in formalising this process and removes the disadvantage some customers may face if they chose to rely on published fees rather than requesting site specific quotations.

### **Legal Implications**

- 3.5 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function. The details of the powers to levy particular charges may be obtained from the author of this report.

### **Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.6 The Committee is asked to recommend the new fees and charges to be implemented from 1st April 2014.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 No implications have been identified.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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If the Council's fees and charges are not increased at least in line with inflation each year then the level of subsidy will increase which has a direct impact on the level of Council Tax or the Housing Revenue Account.

### **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 -	Head of Leisure and Culture
Appendix 2 -	Head of Community Services
Appendix 3 -	Head of Environmental Services
Appendix 4 -	Head of Regulatory Services
Appendix 5 -	Corporate
Appendix 6 -	Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Appendix 7 -	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Appendix 8 -	Head of Housing Services
Appendix 9 -	Head of Planning and Regeneration

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There were no background papers identified.

### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL**24<sup>th</sup> February 2014**132. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS - ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014/15****RECOMMENDED that**

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

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

- 3) the Council accepts the Panel's recommendations for travel, subsistence and dependent carers allowances;
- 4) for 2014-15, the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances continue at the level set for 2013-14, as set out in detail in the final column in appendix 1 to the Panel's report;
- 5) the Panel's recommendation relating to the Parish Council be noted.



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**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL –  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2014-15 AND THE  
MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors B Hartnett, Leader and J Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

Each Council is required by law to have an Independent Remuneration Panel which recommends the level of allowances for Councillors. The Panel for Redditch also makes recommendations to the other District Councils in Worcestershire. The Panel’s report is enclosed for consideration by the Executive Committee and ultimately by the Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommendations and RECOMMEND to Council**

**2.1 whether or not to accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2014-15;**

**2.2 having considered the Panel’s report and recommendations, whether or not changes are required to the Council’s scheme of allowances for Members.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

3.1 If the Council was to accept the Panel’s recommendations in full, the budget for Members’ basic and special responsibility allowances for 2014-15 would be approx. £191,000. This would be an increase of £55,300 on the total for the same allowances in the current year.

**Legal Implications**

3.2 The Council is required to “have regard” to the recommendations of the Panel. However, it is not obliged to agree to them. It can choose to implement them in full or in part, or not to accept them.

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- 3.3 The Council is also required to review its scheme of allowances for Councillors on an annual basis.

**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.4 There are no direct service or operational implications arising from this report. Once the Council has agreed the allowances for 2014-15 Officers will update and publish the Members' Allowances Scheme as appropriate.

**Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.5 None arising from this report.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Payments to Councillors can be a high profile issue. The main risks are reputational. However, the Council is transparent about the decisions made on allowances. The Allowances scheme and sums paid to Councillors each year are published on the Council's website.

**5. APPENDICES**

Report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2014-15.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Members Allowances Scheme – in the Council Constitution at Part 15 and on the website at:

<http://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/members-allowances-redditch.aspx>.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire  
District Councils**

**Annual Report and Recommendations for 2014-15**

**Redditch Borough Council**

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**December 2013**

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**Recommendations**

**The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Redditch Borough Council the following:**

- (i) That the Basic Allowance for 2014-15 is £4,200**
- (ii) That the Special Responsibility Allowances are as set out in Appendix 1.**
- (iii) That travel allowances for 2014-15 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance.**
- (iv) That subsistence allowances for 2014-15 remain unchanged.**
- (v) That the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged.**
- (vi) That for the Parish Council in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by the Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**

## **Introduction**

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) has been appointed by the Council to carry out reviews of the allowances paid to Councillors, as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation. The Panel has carried out its work in accordance with the legislation and statutory guidance.

The law requires each Council to “have regard” to the recommendations of the Independent Panel and we noted that last year the Council did not accept our recommendations but decided instead to keep the level of allowances at the previous year’s level.

This year we have reviewed specifically the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair of the new Standards Committee as this role was introduced during 2012-13 and we have had the benefit of seeing how the new arrangements have worked. We also offered to meet with the Leader of the Council to discuss any other particular issues but he considered there were none to raise with us this year.

At this point we would like to stress that our recommendations are based on thorough research and benchmarking. We have presented the Council with what we consider to be an appropriate set of allowances to reflect the roles carried out by the Councillors. The purpose of allowances is to enable people from all walks of life to become involved in local politics if they choose.

The Panel also recognises that in the current challenging financial climate there are difficult choices for the Council to make. Ultimately it is for the Council to decide how or whether to adopt the recommendations that we make.

## **Background Evidence and Research Undertaken**

There is a rich and varied choice of market indicators on pay which can be used for comparison purposes. These include:

- National survey data on a national, regional or local level;
- Focussed surveys on a particular public sector;
- Regular or specific surveys
- Use of specific indices to indicate movement in rewards or cost of living.

As background for the decisions taken by the Panel this year we have:

- Analysed and considered the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for 2013;
- Benchmarked the Basic Allowance against Allowances for comparable roles paid by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “Nearest Neighbour” Councils for each authority;

- Reviewed research undertaken by the TaxPayers' Alliance into the level of Basic Allowances in 2011-12;
- Referred to the latest inflation rate (Consumer Price Index) of 2.2% (October 2013)

We give more details about these areas of research at the end of the report.

The ASHE survey results for 2012-13 (published in November 2013) show the average hourly rate for all employees resident in Worcestershire to be £14.07. This gives a Basic Allowance of £4,235 and further details of how this is arrived at are given in Appendix 2.

In addition, ASHE data indicates that average weekly earnings (all employees) have increased by 0.7% in the year to September 2013, but for public sector employees earnings have decreased by 0.4% in the same period. So the figure being recommended by the Panel of £4,200 does appear reasonable.

Although there appears to be no single country-wide source of data on members' allowances, research carried out by the TaxPayers' Alliance on the level of Councillors' allowances paid in 2011-12 shows the disparity between the highest and lowest Basic Allowances as follows:

<b>Basic Allowances paid by Non-Metropolitan District Councils in 2011-12</b>	
Highest £9,902 - Bolsover District Council	Lowest £1,500 - South Ribble Borough Council
Highest in West Midlands £6,227 – Rugby Borough Council	Lowest in West Midlands £2,902 – Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

According to the TaxPayers' Alliance research report, within the West Midlands, the average Basic Allowance of all 19 non-Metropolitan District Councils (including Worcestershire) in 2011-12 was £4,313.

Arising from our research we have included information showing the members' allowances budget for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for each Council. We also show the average payment per member of each authority of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, to give context to our recommendations.

**Table showing average allowance per member of each authority (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, 2012 – 13 figures)**

<b>Authority (number of Councillors)</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Bromsgrove District (39)	5,851
Malvern Hills District (38)	5,619
Redditch Borough (29)	4,614
Worcester City (35)	5,705
Wychavon District (45)	5,625
Wyre Forest District (42)	6,738

**Total spend on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances as a Percentage of Net Revenue expenditure 2012-13 figures**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Total spend Basic Allowances 2012-13 £:</b>	<b>Total spend on Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) £:</b>	<b>SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance %:</b>
Bromsgrove DC	163,276	64,927	39.8
Malvern Hills DC	159,021	54,494	34.3
Redditch Borough	93,054	40,761	43.8
Worcester City	141,395	58,268	41.2
Wychavon DC	187,013	66,089	35.3
Wyre Forest DC	205,798	77,183	37.5

### **Basic Allowance 2014 - 15**

#### **Calculation of Basic Allowance**

The Basic Allowance is based on:

- The roles and responsibilities of Members; and
- Their time commitments – including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business.

We then apply a public service discount of 40% to reflect that Councillors volunteer some of their time to the role.

Having reviewed the levels of wage rates and the benchmark information available to us from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

(CIPFA) “nearest neighbours” authorities, we do not recommend any increases in the Basic Allowance for 2014-15.

### **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2014-15**

#### **General Calculation of SRAs**

The basis for the calculation of SRAs is a multiplier of the Basic Allowance as advocated in the published Guidance.

The Panel has reviewed the responsibilities of each post, the multipliers and allowances paid by similar authorities. As in last year, the Panel has benchmarked the allowances against those paid by authorities listed as “nearest neighbours” by CIPFA.

Appendix 1 to this report sets out the allowances recommended for 2014-15.

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Guidance on Members Allowances for Local Authorities in England states that Special Responsibility Allowances may be paid to those members of the Council who have “significant additional responsibilities”, over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. It also suggests that if the majority of members of a Council receive a Special Responsibility Allowance, the justification for this may be questioned.

We consider the Basic Allowance to include Councillors’ roles in Overview and Scrutiny, as any non-Executive member of the Council is able to contribute to this aspect of the Council’s work. It is for this reason that we do not recommend any Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **Leaders of Political Groups**

In the legislation, a Political Group on a Local Authority consists of 2 or more Councillors. We reviewed the allowance for the Opposition Group Leader last year in response to a query from one Council and in doing so considered the role of the Political Group Leaders more generally.

In most cases the Leader of the Council also leads the main political group on the authority. In the past the IRP for South Worcestershire had recommended payments to political group leaders on a per head basis, based on the number of Councillors in each group. Whilst this reflected changes in group sizes and allowed for flexibility following changes in political balance, we were persuaded to change this approach for one Council and to recommend a lump sum allowance for the Leader of the Opposition Group. We received a similar request from another Council last year.

We noted that in some cases the Allowances Scheme for their authority did not enable a Leader to receive any support for the Group Leader role.

We considered carefully evidence from the data we collected and checked the Statutory Guidance about the potential to be paid more than one SRA. We are content that Councillors can be in receipt of more than one. Therefore, we have recommended that Leaders of all Political Groups are entitled to an allowance of 0.25 of the Basic Allowance, recognising that they all have an important role to play in the governance of the Council.

### **Standards Committee**

Changes to the arrangements for governing the behaviour of Councillors were set out in the Localism Act 2011 and were introduced in July 2012. Councils are no longer required to appoint an Independent Chair for the Standards Committee. Instead, Councils are required to appoint an Independent Person whose role is to deal with complaints against Councillors and act as a mediator to try and encourage early and local resolution of complaints. Remuneration for this role is outside the terms of reference for the Independent Panel although it is known that an honorarium is frequently paid. Where the Council decides to retain a Standards Committee, as in Redditch, the Chair is now appointed from among the Councillors.

This year we reviewed the work of the Standards Committee since the changes. We checked the number and length of meetings of the Committee and the role and responsibilities of the Chair.

Having completed this review we consider our previous recommendation of a multiplier of 0.25 for the Chair's Special Responsibility Allowance is appropriate and we continue this recommendation.

### **Mileage and Expenses 2014-15**

The Panel notes that the Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for Councillors and recommends that this continues.

The Panel is satisfied that the current levels of subsistence allowances are set at an appropriate level and recommends that these continue.

The Panel notes that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances provides that Dependant Carer Allowances are payable to cover reasonable and legitimate costs incurred in attending approved duties and recommends that this provision continues.

### **Allowances to Parish Councils**

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils acts as the Remuneration Panel for the Parish Councils in each District.



This year the Panel has not been asked to make recommendations on any matters by any Parish. In the past the Panel which covered the three South Worcestershire Districts has considered travel and subsistence, and we consider it appropriate to apply this consideration to each of the Districts. We have reviewed the Parish Council travel and subsistence allowances and recommend for 2013 - 14 that no changes are made.

### **The Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Members' Allowances Regulations require Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members and Local Authorities must have regard to this advice. This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with the other 5 District Councils in Worcestershire, the decision having been taken during 2010 to follow the principle previously established by having a joint Panel in the South of the County. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council.

The members of the Panel are:

- Rob Key, the Chair of the Panel – Rob has 42 years' experience of working in District Councils in a variety of operational and management roles, including senior positions at Worcester City, Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District. He was an Independent Chair for the Strategic Health Authority for Continuing Care and sits on County Council Appeals Panels for School Preference Appeals and Service Complaints.
- Elaine Bell, JP, DipCrim – Elaine is Deputy Chair of the South Worcestershire Magistrates Bench – she has been a Magistrate for 16 years, Day Chair of Adult and Family Courts; Past Chair of the Bench Training and Development Committee; past member of the Magistrates Advisory Panel (interviewing and selecting for appointment to the Bench). She is also Vice - Chair of the Lloyds Educational Foundation; Past Member of the Sytchampton School Appeals Panel; Hon Treasurer of Ombersley and Doverdale Tennis Club and a Past Governor of Ombersley Primary School.
- Bill Simpson MBE JP – Bill spent 30 years in Further Education culminating in 11 years as Principal of Pershore College. He then entered the private sector as Director of two national Horticultural Societies, one being the Royal Horticultural Society. He served as a magistrate for 9 years until retirement. He is a Trustee of several charities including chairing Thrive between 1993 and 2008. Currently he is Vice Chair of Governors of Red Hill CE Primary School Worcester and a Chair/Member of the County Council and Diocesan Panel for School Preference Appeals.
- Terry Cotton - Terry spent 34 years working in central and local Government, mostly managing regeneration programmes across the West Midlands. Until May 2011 he worked at The Government Office for The

West Midlands where he was a Relationship Manager between central and local Government and a lead negotiator for local performance targets. Following voluntary early retirement in May 2011, he worked part-time in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, setting up a new business led community development trust and currently works part-time for Worcestershire County Council on sustainable transport initiatives. He is also a trustee of a small charitable trust providing grants to grass roots community initiatives in deprived communities.

- Don Barber – After several Human Resources and Productivity Improvement Management roles in Industry, Don became Chief Executive of a change management facilitating consultancy. Over the last 20 years he has been an independent consultant and advisor on a number of United Nations, European Commission, and World Bank transition projects, in particular in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia. He also operates in an advisory role to other consultancy groups seeking EU contracts. This experience has included the development of national civil service/public sector reform programmes including aspects of the effect of legislative change for central and local government and, in the U.K., working for the Office of Manpower Economics (advisors to the Prime Minister) on Public Sector Pay, in particular relating to: Civil Service Pay Reform, UK Armed Forces and the Medical Professions.

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

- Claire Chaplin from Worcester City Council;
- Sheena Jones from Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils;
- Mel Harris from Wychavon District Council;
- Lisa Perks from Malvern Hills District Council;
- Rhiannon Foxall from Wyre Forest District Council;

The Panel wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to these officers who have provided advice and guidance in a professional and dedicated manner.

**Rob Key**

**Chairman of Independent Remuneration Panel**

## Appendix 1

**Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire  
Recommendations for 2014-15**

**Redditch Borough Council**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Recommended Multiplier</b>	<b>Current Multiplier</b>	<b>Recommended Allowance £</b>	<b>Current Allowance (paid) £</b>
<b>Basic Allowance – all Councillors</b>	1	1	4,200 <sup>1</sup>	3,350
<b>Special Responsibility Allowances:</b>				
<b>Leader</b>	3	2	12,600	6,697 Plus 1,560 as Portfolio Holder
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	1.75	1.4	7,350	4,687 Plus 1,560 as Portfolio Holder
<b>Portfolio Holders</b>	1.5	0.46	6,300	1,560
<b>Executive Members without Portfolio</b>	0.25	0.32	1,050	1,072
<b>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	1.5	0.6	6,300	2,009
<b>Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	0	0.32	0	1,072

<sup>1</sup> This figure takes into account a public service discount of 40%

<b>Role</b>	<b>Recommended Multiplier</b>	<b>Current Multiplier</b>	<b>Recommended Allowance £</b>	<b>Current Allowance (paid) £</b>
<b>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups</b>	0.25	0	1,050 paid pro-rata for the length of the Task Group	0
<b>Chair of Audit and Governance Committee</b>	0.25	0	1,050	0
<b>Chair of Planning Committee</b>	1	0.47	4,200	1,560
<b>Chair of Licensing Committee</b>	0.75	0.4	3,150	1,340
<b>Chair of Standards Committee, if paid</b>	0.25	0	1,050	0
<b>Political Group Leaders</b>	0.25	0.31	1,050 X 2	1,040 X 1
<b>Borough Council representatives on the following bodies:</b>				
<b>Local Government Association (LGA) and General Assembly</b>	0		0	269
<b>LGA Rural Commission</b>	0		0	269
<b>LGA Urban Commission</b>	0		0	269
<b>West Midlands Employers</b>	0		0	269

## Appendix 2

**Summary of Research**Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “Nearest Neighbour” authorities tool.

No two Councils or sets of Councillors are the same. Developed to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises, the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities. Using the data, Redditch’s “nearest neighbours” are:

- Tamworth
- Cannock Chase
- Worcester City
- Wellingborough
- Mansfield

Information on the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances was obtained to benchmark the levels of allowances recommended to the District Council.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Data on Pay

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/november-2013/sty-average-weekly-earnings.html>

Published by the Office for National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows detailed information at District level about rates of pay. For benchmarking purposes the Panel uses the levels for hourly rates of pay excluding overtime. This is multiplied by 11 to give a weekly rate. This was the number of hours spent on Council business by frontline Councillors which had been reported in previous surveys. The rate is then discounted by 40% to reflect the element of volunteering that each Councillor undertakes in the role.

The TaxPayers’ Alliance Research Note on Councillors’ Allowances

In August 2012 the TaxPayers’ Alliance researched the level of Basic Allowances for each Council in the UK.

<http://www.taxpayersalliance.com/allowances.pdf>

The amount of Basic Allowance for each Council is presented for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12. There is no research available for more recent financial years.

Whilst the information is slightly historic, it did enable the Panel to check its own research.

South East Employers Survey of Councillors' Allowances

The Panel has been allowed access to the database of allowances for all Councils in the South East Region of England. The information is collated annually by South East Employers and is available to those authorities who subscribe to its services. The Panel is therefore not able to publish data from the survey but we would like to express our thanks to the organisation for enabling us to use the data to further check our own research.

The data has shown that Basic Allowances in the authorities included in the South East region range between £2,736 and £12,806, although these figures include County Councils and Unitary authorities. Comparable authorities have not seen any increase in allowances since 2008.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COUNCIL**

24<sup>th</sup> February 2014

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**133. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO BIRMINGHAM  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION**

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the Redditch Borough Council response (attached at Appendix  
1 to the report) to the BDP Pre-Submission Draft be approved  
to be sent to Birmingham City Council.**





**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

Date 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION**

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	YES
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report requests approval of a response from Redditch Borough Council (RBC) (attached at Appendix 1) to the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) Pre-submission Draft. A response needs to be submitted to Birmingham City Council no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 (in line with consultation period dates).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive is asked to RECOMMEND to the Council that the RBC response (attached at Appendix 1) to the BDP Pre-Submission Draft be approved to be sent to Birmingham City Council.

**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 In accordance with the above legal requirements Birmingham City Council (BCC) are required to prepare a plan. Under previous regulations they are progressing with a Development Plan. Birmingham has a significant unmet housing need that it cannot accommodate within its own boundaries. As such the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) of which Redditch are a member are seeking a solution to identifying locations for meeting this need. With regard to this issue and the Duty to Cooperate, Officers consider a response to the Pre-Submission Draft version of the BDP to be necessary.

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Officers recommend that the following key points are included in any submission to Birmingham in response to the draft version of their Local Plan (the full response can be seen at Appendix 1):

- 3.2 RBC recognises that Policy PG1: Overall levels of growth and Policy TP28: The housing trajectory do not make adequate provision for the unmet housing needs. RBC are mindful that there is a lack of detail in terms of how Birmingham will deal with the remaining level and distribution of growth owing to a lack of evidence. There is also considered to a lack of clarity as to when the expected rates of housing will be delivered across the plan period for those homes outside of the City's boundary.
- 3.3 RBC supports the proposed sustainable urban extension (SUE) to provide for an additional 6,000 homes. However, RBC want to be confident that the sustainable capacities of the land for development are fully considered.
- 3.4 RBC supports *Policy TP16: Portfolio of employment land and premises*, however it would like to ensure that any employment which is required to accompany the unmet housing needs outside of Birmingham is fairly distributed.
- 3.5 RBC support the inclusion of Policy T25: Local Employment which encourages new employment opportunities that are accessible to the local population.
- 3.6 RBC support the references to Redditch Borough Council in Birmingham's Duty to Cooperate Statement (October 2013).

**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 draft Birmingham Development Plan is not approved then this would affect the influence RBC can have on the content of the Birmingham Development Plan. In 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**

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Appendix 1 - Redditch Borough Council response to the Birmingham Development Plan Pre-submission Draft

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Birmingham City Council – Birmingham Development Plan – Pre-Submission Draft

Birmingham City Council – Issues and Options - autumn of 2008

Birmingham City Council - Core Strategy 2010/11 - Consultation Draft

Birmingham City Council - Planning for Birmingham's Growing Population - Options Consultation Stage 2012/13

**7. KEY**

RBC - Redditch Borough Council

BCC – Birmingham City Council

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Director of Planning and Regeneration  
Development and Culture Directorate  
Birmingham City Council  
PO Box 28  
Birmingham  
B1 1TU

13<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **Birmingham Development Plan Pre-submission consultation**

Thank you for consulting Redditch Borough Council on the above mentioned consultation.

We would like to submit the following representations and in due course be informed of the submission of the Plan for examination, the publication of the inspector's recommendations and the adoption of the Plan.

#### ***Policies PG1: Overall levels of growth and TP28: The housing trajectory***

Redditch Borough Council note that 51,100 homes are planned to be delivered within Birmingham's administrative boundary over the plan period 2011 - 2031. Birmingham's SHMA concluded that there was a minimum objectively assessed need for 84,000 net new homes. Para. 8.11 acknowledges that this planned provision would not meet objectively assessed need and that additional provision will be required beyond the City boundary. Para. 3.27 states that 'alongside the BDP a wider growth strategy for the LEP area and other adjoining authorities will set out how and where the remaining housing could be delivered.'

The remainder of the BDP is, perhaps intentionally, silent about the shortfall of homes required outside of Birmingham's administrative area to meet the objectively assessed need identified in the SHMA. The Borough Council are mindful that there is a lack of detail in terms of how Birmingham will deal with the remaining level and distribution of growth owing to a lack of evidence. There is also considered to a lack of clarity as to when the expected rates of housing will be delivered across the plan period for those homes outside of the City's boundary. As such, the Council recognises that the BDP does not make adequate provision for the unmet housing needs

Paragraph 3.25 of the BDP explains that land from the Green Belt will be removed to provide for an additional 6,000 homes as a sustainable urban extension (SUE) which is supported. Both Birmingham and the neighbouring Local Authorities would need to be confident that the sustainable capacities of the Green Belt areas for development have been fully considered. Therefore any evidence that exists to contradict the 6,000 homes capacity needs to be explored.

***Policy TP16: Portfolio of employment land and premises***

The Borough Council notes that the policy sets out the provision of employment land required to meet the needs of businesses or employment development over the plan period. Paragraph 7.3 explains that an adequate supply of employment land throughout the plan period is considered essential in enabling long-term balanced growth to be sustained. It should be clear in the BDP that a balance of housing and employment needs is to be ensured within Birmingham and that any employment which is required to accompany the unmet housing needs is fairly distributed.

***Policy T25: Local Employment***

Redditch Borough Council are looking to implement a similar policy in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan 4 which supports new employment opportunities that are accessible to the local population.

***Duty to Cooperate Statement***

Birmingham's Duty to Cooperate Statement (October 2013) references Redditch Borough Council. These references to Redditch are supported by the Borough Council.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Bill Hartnett  
Leader of the Council

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COUNCIL**

24<sup>th</sup> February 2014

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**134. POLICY FOR SECURING REPAYMENT OF DISABLED FACILITIES  
GRANTS AND LIFETIME LOANS**

**RECOMMENDED that**

**repayment of Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair Assistance  
Lifetime Loans should be secured by means of registration on the  
Local Land Charges Register.**





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**POLICY FOR SECURING REPAYMENT OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND LIFETIME LOANS**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors B Hartnett, Leader and M. Shurmer, Portfolio Holder.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To review the current processes for securing Disabled Facilities Grants ["DFGs"] and Home Repair Assistance Lifetime Loans ("Lifetime Loans") paid to residents for works or adaptations to their homes.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommendations and RECOMMEND to Council that**

**repayment of Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair Assistance Lifetime Loans should be secured by means of registration on the Local Land Charges Register**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The cost of registering a Charge against properties at the Land Registry, currently £40 per registration would be saved for the customer. The administration costs associated with Land Registry processes would be removed from Officers, releasing resources through transformation of the current process, achieving a better balance between the benefit and the means of achieving it.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.2 The Housing Grants, Construction and regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of grant) General Consent 2008 gave local housing authorities a general consent to recover payment of DFGs through a local land charge. Lifetime Loans can be secured by being registered as a Charge at the Land Registry.
- 3.3 In January 2009 The Council adopted a policy of securing all grants, whether DGF or Lifetime Loan, by registering them as a Charge against the property at

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the Land Registry, over and above the statutory ability to secure DFGs as a Local Land Charge.

- 3.4 In December 2013, Internal Audit produced a report recommending a review of the process for securing DFGs. The Report acknowledged that a more generally accepted practice was to use the Land Charges system

**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.5 To secure “maximum” protection for the Council a policy was adopted in January 2009 that a Charge would be registered in the Land Registry. However different processes were required depending on whether a property was registered or unregistered. Where unregistered, an attempt to register a Charge would trigger first registration, which is a costly exercise for the owner and would also lead to delay. The object was not to impose such an onerous requirement onto owners so a separate process was developed to secure the funds without triggering first registration.
- 3.6 DFGs and Lifetime Loans are made to disabled and/or vulnerable people to help them to stay in their homes, either adaptations or for example the cost of a new boiler where the resident does not have the cash to pay for one and the house would be uninhabitable without heating.
- 3.7 Payments are generally in two categories, Disabled Facilities Grants, where payments can be up to £30,000 and are only recoverable within 10 years of payment and “Lifetime” Loans. Lifetime Loans are generally for smaller amounts (routinely up to £5,000) and are recoverable whenever the property is subsequently sold.
- 3.8 There is no cost to registration on the Local Land Charges register other than the short time it takes to complete the details and pass them to the local land Charges officer.
- 3.9 The cost of registering a Charge at the Land Registry is currently £40, which is taken out of the sum loaned. However the legal process is onerous, particularly for the applicant, as follows:
- a) the Land Registry anti-money laundering requirements mean that officers have to carry out identity checks on applicants. This can sometimes only be achieved by an officer making a home visit where the applicant is unable to come to the Council.
  - b) If there are any existing Charges registered at the Land Registry, for example a Mortgage, permission must be sought from the Mortgagee in respect of the Council’s Charge and some lenders are now charging £100 for this consent.
  - c) We are obliged to advise applicants that they should take independent legal advice on the transaction, which adds to their anxiety about the process.

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- d) Completing the documentation has proved challenging in some cases, after the works have been completed, getting the applicant to go through all of the steps above proving difficult to achieve and considerable officer time has been invested in a number of these situations. When this has happened the Council places an entry on the Local Land Charges Register to secure the repayment.
- 3.10 DFGs are specifically registerable as a charge on the Local Land Charges register. It seems disproportionate to impose the more protracted and onerous land registry Charge requirement on the smaller Lifetime Loan payments whereas the larger DFG payments can be simply registered on the Local land Charges Register.
- 3.11 The existence of a Charge on the Local Land Charges Register usually arises in a property sale/purchase transaction, when the pressing objective is to complete the transaction. Sums are regularly received by the Council as a result of these searches and payment made to clear the register.
- 3.12 The Land Registry process provides a further record of the payment, which would also need to be cleared from the Title if the property were to be sold (or within 10 years for DFGs).
- 3.13 Transformation within Legal Services has raised the issue as to whether double protection is required particularly where the second process is time and resource intensive and can be difficult for our customers to understand and engage with. Considerable resources would be saved by registering these payments on the Local land Charges Register only.

**Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.14 Not pursuing a Charge at the Land Registry would simplify the whole grant/Loan transaction for our customers, who are generally vulnerable members of society.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

DFGs are specifically registerable as a Local Land Charge. Lifetime Loans can be secured by a Charge at the Land registry but it is possible to register them as a Local Land Charge although the payment is not specifically registerable as such. The technical difference is unlikely to ever become an issue as the existence of a Charge on the Local Land Charges Register usually arises in a property sale/purchase transaction, when the pressing objective is to complete the transaction. It is unlikely that security for a sum of less than £5,000 would be allowed to jeopardise the transaction.

- 4.1 Internal Audit have reviewed this report and are satisfied that securing these smaller payments of Lifetime Loans by way of registration on the Local Land Charges register will adequately secure repayment to the Council.

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5. **APPENDICES**

None

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Internal Audit Report on DFGs December 2013.

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