



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 6th October,
2015
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

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Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: Jane Potter (Chair) Gareth Prosser
Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) Paul Swansborough
Joe Baker Jennifer Wheeler
David Bush Nina Wood-Ford
Andrew Fry

1. Apologies and named substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	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, and any Party Whip.
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)	To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record. (Minutes attached) (No Specific Ward Relevance)

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<p>4. Housing Provision - Presentation</p> <p>(Pages 11 - 46)</p> <p>Derek Allen, Housing Strategy Manager, Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing</p>	<p>To receive a presentation concerning the provision of both private sector housing and social housing within the Borough of Redditch.</p> <p>The attached documentation contains the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The key data sets currently available on the housing market in Redditch, and some key headlines coming out of this data.b) A set of power point slides which focuses in more detail on the private rented market in Redditch, the prevalence of benefit payments and rent shortfalls, and the demand that loss of private rented accommodation generates for the Council's homelessness service as a whole.c) A housing briefing paper for MPs from the House of Commons library on the latest developments around local connection rules, and within that, the potential to prioritise local people. <p>(Briefing notes attached, presentation to follow)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
<p>5. Voluntary Sector Grants Programme - Briefing Paper</p> <p>(Pages 47 - 52)</p> <p>Judith Willis, Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To receive a briefing paper concerning the Council's approach to co-ordinating the Voluntary Sector Grants Programme and implementation of the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group's recommendations.</p> <p>(Briefing paper attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>6. Gas Safety Testing - Update Report</p> <p>Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing</p>	<p>To consider an update report concerning gas safety inspections in Council properties.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>7. Overview of the Budget - Report</p> <p>(Pages 53 - 58)</p> <p>Jayne Pickering, Executive Director, Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider an overview of the Council's budget.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>8. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme (Pages 59 - 66)</p>	<p>To consider the minutes of the latest meeting(s) of the Executive Committee and also to consider whether any items on the Executive Committee's Work Programme are suitable for scrutiny. (Minutes attached, Executive Work Programme to follow).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 67 - 70)</p>	<p>To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Forward Plan / Committee agendas• External publications• Other sources. <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>10. Task Groups - Progress Reports Councillor Gareth Prosser, Councillor Jane Potter</p>	<p>To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group – Redditch Borough Council representative, Councillor Gareth Prosser; andb) Leisure Services Options Short, Sharp Review – Chair, Councillor Jane Potter. <p>Members are asked to confirm the membership of the Short, Sharp Review during consideration of this item.</p> <p>(Verbal reports)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>11. Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel - Update Report Councillor Gareth Prosser</p>	<p>To consider an update on the latest meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>(Verbal report)</p> <p>All Wards</p>

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<p>12. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Councillor Nina Wood-Ford</p>	<p>To receive a verbal update on the recent work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(Verbal report)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>13. Exclusion of the Press and Public</p>	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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”.</p> <p>These paragraphs are as follows:</p> <p>Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Para 1 – <u>any individual</u>;• Para 2 – the <u>identity of any individual</u>;• Para 3 – <u>financial or business affairs</u>;• Para 4 – <u>labour relations matters</u>;• Para 5 – <u>legal professional privilege</u>;• Para 6 – <u>a notice, order or direction</u>;• Para 7 – the <u>prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</u>; <p>and may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.</p>



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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Gareth Prosser and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

27. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Swansborough.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor party whip.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

30. BUDGET SCRUTINY 2015/16 - DISCUSSING APPROACH FOR THE YEAR

The Chair reminded Members of the role of the Committee and its duties, including being a critical friend and highlighting the need to be apolitical. She went on to explain the background to the report and that the information received by the Committee in the previous year had not been sufficient to enable them to make a constructive contribution to the budget setting process. She had therefore met

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Chair

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with the Executive Director, Finance and Resources to agree the format, which was being presented to Members for discussion.

Officers acknowledged that the information provided previously was not as comprehensive as Members would have liked and explained that the template attached to the report had a much wide range of information within it, including the previous two years figures and the projections for 2015/16. This was linked to the strategic purposes, which had been agreed by Members, and further detail given in respect of each team's expenditure within that specific purpose. Whilst the information provided allowed Member to concentrate on the proposed budget for 2016/17 the Council would be producing a three year budget.

The initial budget, together with the Fees and Charges report, would be discussed at the Committee's December meeting with the capital budget, planned savings and income and expenditure being presented at the January 2016 meeting. It was anticipated that the detail provided would allow the Committee to select any particular areas of concern and request, if necessary, further information in order to make any recommendations.

Members discussed the expenditure that the Council would incur due to the Gas Testing which was currently been carried out on Council house properties. Officers confirmed that this would be included within the Housing Revenue Account with a separate cost centre being used in order for these costs to be easily identified.

Officers finally assured Members that the information would be available within the appropriate timescale in order to allow time to consider the reports prior to each meeting.

31. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Chair explained that she had put together a scoping document for a short sharp review in respect of the options for the management of Leisure and Cultural Services in Redditch. She explained that she felt it was important that the Council did not lose sight of making savings, but also ensured that excellent services continued to be provided. Whilst the Committee had looked at the options appraisal at its previous meeting, the Committee had not received enough information in order for it to make an informed decision. A Short, Sharp Review of this subject would enable an in depth investigation to be carried out into the financial and service benefits of all models which were detailed under the Key Objectives section of the scoping document.

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The Chair appreciated that this was a large piece of work, but believed that a questionnaire could be created and sent out to other local authorities that delivered leisure and cultural services in order to establish which model might be the most suitable for Redditch.

Officers raised concerns in respect of the officer time needed to fulfil the piece of work and reminded Members of the decision by the Executive Committee, which was for officers to carry out transformational work within Leisure Services. It had been highlighted within the options appraisal report presented to the Executive Committee that if a detailed business case was required in respect of the options then this would need to be carried out by external experts.

Following presentation of the scoping document Members discussed a number of areas in detail, including:

- Whether this review represented a duplication of the work carried out by the previous Abbey Stadium Task Group.
- The timing of the review and whether it would be more appropriate to postpone this until the service transformation work was completed.
- The timeline for the service transformation work and the areas covered by it.
- Discussions held by the Chair with the Leader and Deputy Leader about carrying out further scrutiny of this subject.
- The number of reviews currently being undertaken by the Committee.

In order for the Task Group to hold its initial meeting as soon as possible, Members agreed to a deadline of Friday 11th September for notifications of interest from Members who wanted to join the group.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a short sharp review in respect of Leisure Services Options be launched; and**
- 2) Councillor Jayne Potter be appointed Chair of the Leisure Services Options Short Sharp Review.**

32. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Officers reminded Members of the purpose of the Quarterly Monitoring Recommendation Tracker and explained that the

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recommendations were in chronological order. Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Installation of a canopy over the ramp access to Shopmobility continued to be outstanding and no further updates had been provided.
- The introduction of exhibition space at the Palace Theatre and the Abbey Stadium. Space had been made available at the Abbey Stadium for some time and officers were pleased to report that it would also be available at the Palace Theatre from 8th September 2015.
- All recommendation from the LGBT Task Group had been endorsed by the Executive Committee who had complimented the group on its informative report.
- The Leader had already written to Worcestershire County Council in respect of recommendation 2 from the LGBT Task Group and a positive response had been received back from them.
- Councillor Joe Baker, Chair of the Task Group, had met with the LGBT Hate Crime Forum and received positive feedback on the content of the report. The Forum had been appreciative of the support and funding which would be available for future LGBT History Month events.

Members congratulated Councillor Baker and the Task Group on an excellent piece of work, which had already had a positive impact on the LGBT community in Redditch.

The Committee debated the recommendation in respect of the ramp access to Shopmobility. Concerns were raised as to whether this item would ever be completed, with Members noting that the recommendation had been made in August 2012. Consideration was therefore given as to whether it should be removed from the tracker. However, Members' were mindful that this had been agreed by the Executive Committee and that implementation of this proposal could lead to positive outcomes for residents and visitors with physical disabilities. Members therefore requested that officers speak to the Kingfisher Centre and an update on the current position be provided as soon as possible, detailing reasons why the delay had occurred.

Concerns were also raised in respect of the recommendations from the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group, with particular regard to the recommendation for an apprentice to support the Council's grants programme. Officers explained that due to staff sickness absence a decision had been taken to postpone recruiting to the apprenticeship post as there was no resource to support an

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apprentice available in the grants programme. Members accepted these difficulties but questioned whether the post could initially be created in the Policy Team, as there had originally been a proposal for the apprenticeship to be shared between the grants programme and the Policy Team, with the apprentice taking on duties in the grants programme at a later date once this was an option. Members stressed that the Council's Grants programme was important and needed to have sufficient support to operate effectively and to ensure that the grants were reach those that needed them the most within the voluntary and community sector.

Officers suggested that it might be helpful for the Committee to receive a report at its next meeting providing more detailed information in respect of administrative support for the Grants Panel and a time scale of how this could be resolved. It was highlighted that parts of this report might need to be considered in confidential session.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers contact the Kingfisher Centre and an update be provided in respect of Recommendation 2 of the Access for Disabled People Task Group – Installation of a canopy over the ramp access to Shopmobility;**
- 2) a report be provided to the next meeting of the Committee in respect of the Council's grants programme; and**
- 3) the latest edition of the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be noted.**

(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 would be revealed relating to identity of an individual. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

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

Members considered the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 14th July and Officers highlighted the following points:

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- The Committee's recommendation in respect of no longer requiring the landscaping data for each ward had been approved and actioned with immediate effect.
- The Committee's recommendation in respect of procurement and contracting processes to select and appoint a contractor to manage Redditch Outdoor market had been endorsed.
- Future arrangements for Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee and Worcestershire Regulatory Services: it was noted that the recommendations in respect of governance, which had been brought forward were similar to those which had previously been proposed by the Joint Scrutiny Task Group.
- The Committee's comments in respect of the review of the operation of Leisure Services had been noted by the Executive Committee.

Whilst the latest version of the Work Programme was not currently available, officers provided the following updates:

- Consideration of the item in respect of Reorganisation and Change Policy by the Executive Committee had been postponed until December 2015.
- The Housing Business case would now be considered at the October meeting of the Executive Committee.
- The Business Rate Relief – Poundstretcher Unit, Town Centre item had been removed from the Work Programme as it transpired that officers had delegated authority in this matter.
- The Tower at Site of former Methodist Church, Headless Cross item had also been removed from the Work Programme.
- An item in respect of Worcestershire Child Exploitation Strategy and Action plan, which had been referred by Worcestershire County Council, would be considered at the October meeting of the Executive Committee.
- Three Health and Safety Policies – Lone Working for Staff, Contractor Safety and Contractor Security would also be considered at the October meeting.

RESOLVED that

the Executive Committee Minutes of 14th July 2015 and the latest edition of the Executive Work Programme be noted.

34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers reminded Members that the Work Programme would be updated to take account of the Fees and Charges report being put back to December 2015.

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Members discussed the value of receiving an update in respect of Gas Testing in Council house properties which had recently emerged as a cause for concern, and noted that this was something the Committee could consider investigating further in order to ensure that problems did not arise again. Officers informed Members that Internal Audit had been asked to undertake a full audit which would look both back at how this had happened and forward at procedures that could be put in place to ensure that problems did not happen again. This report was expected to be available shortly. The Council had self-referred to the Homes and Communities Agency and the matter would be reviewed by their Consumer Regulations Panel. It was understood the local M.P. had also referred the matter to the Health and Safety Executive, but to date the Council had not been contacted by this agency.

Concerns were also raised regarding testing of the air conditioning units within Council properties as well as legionella testing. Officers advised that such testing would be carried out through the contract the Council had with the Worcestershire Joint Property Vehicle Place Partnership and they could be approached to provide full details.

RESOLVED that

- 1) an update report be received by the Committee in respect of the Gas Testing and this report to include any Internal Audit Report recommendations;**
- 2) Members to receive via email details of the testing carried out in respect of legionella testing within Council properties; and**
- 3) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

35. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group –
Redditch Borough Council Representative, Councillor Gareth
Prosser

Councillor Prosser provided Members with a brief summary of the background of this joint Task Group, including its aims and objectives. He explained he had arranged to meet with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to discuss specific issues within Redditch and in order to feedback to the joint Task Group. The next meeting of the Task Group had been arranged for 3rd

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September with a presentation from Steve Brunston, Sports Partnerships. A further meeting had been arranged for 18th September when the group would carry out a health walk; these walks were aimed at promoting and supporting well-being in Worcestershire. It was anticipated that the group's final report would be presented to the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board in November 2015 and considered by Cabinet at its December 2015 meeting.

36. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford, as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) confirmed that the last meeting of the HOSC had been held on 15th July and with two presentations being received.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

The Committee had received information about the Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust's response to the findings from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC's) unannounced inspection. This had covered details of staffing levels and procedures put in place to provide better patient care, together with concern about patient flow through the EDs where some improvements had been made. Funding had also been received to create further car parking spaces, which were due to be completed by the end of the year. Information had also been received in respect of the closure of Cookley Ward at Kidderminster Hospital. This had occurred following a fire safety assessment, when it had been determined that the ward was no longer safe in the event of evacuation.

Primary Care Commissioning and GP Access

A presentation had been given which outlined the background, changing commissioning arrangements, development of local plans and delivery of seven day access to services. New commissioning services would allow Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to commission additional services which reflected their agreed local priorities.

It was noted that recruitment and retention was an issue with an increase in GPs seeking part time employment. However, it was acknowledged that nationally there was skills gap and Members discussed whether consideration had been given to increasing the number of student doctor places, the decrease in nursing spaces and the requirement for some nursing staff to have a degree qualification.

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A seven day delivery of services had also been discussed and it was understood that this was already happening if the out of hours service was taken into consideration. Many GP practices had also extended their opening hours to include evenings and Saturdays.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

RBC housing market data collated from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other sources

This briefing paper contains the key data sets currently available on the housing market in Redditch, and outlines some key headlines coming out of this data. The second set of power point slides focuses in more detail on the private rented market in Redditch, the prevalence of benefit payments and rent shortfalls, and the demand that loss of private rented accommodation generates for the Council's homelessness service as a whole.

Headlines

- In terms of stock, RBC is the second-largest player in the local housing market. Home ownership accounts for around 23000 of the houses in the Borough. RBC owns 5900 properties and there are some 4000 private tenancies in the area. Other social housing providers offer 1600 properties in Redditch.
- Of the 6000 tenancies owned by RBC, just over 2200 receive assistance from Housing Benefit for rent payments.
- Of the 4000 private sector tenancies in Redditch, 1070 have housing benefit to assist in rent payments.
- In June 2015 of these 1070 live Housing Benefit claims, 477 were in receipt of full Housing Benefit and making up a rent shortfall themselves by some other means.
- Redditch council rents are the lowest in the borough and council tenancies currently offer the greatest security of tenure.
- Occupancy in the Private Rented Sector in Redditch rose from 4.3% in 2001 to 11.7% in 2011. Home ownership dropped by 5% in the same time period. The amount of social housing stock has remained relatively static - 22.7% to 21.2% in that time period.
- Private Rented Sector rent levels are high in comparison to the wider housing market.
- The two biggest causes of homelessness duties being accepted by RBC from 2011-2015 were loss of private rented sector tenancy, followed by parental exclusion.
- Analysis of a sample of homelessness acceptances by RBC from the private rented sector is contained in the power point slides that accompany this document.

- Of the 3146 claims for help from the essential living fund 2013-14, 57% were from council tenants, 21% were from PRS tenants and 9% were from housing association tenants.

1. Total housing stock in Redditch

District	Total Dwellings ¹	Vacancies ²	Vacancy Rate
Redditch	35,320	762	2.2%

Source: Council Tax Base (CTB), CLG Live Tables, 2013

¹ Number of dwellings as at 30 September 2012, figures rounded to the nearest 10

² Number of vacancies as at 31 October 2012

Tenure

Tenure	Census	Redditch
Owner Occupier	2001	70.6%
	2011	65.7%
Shared Ownership	2001	0.3%
	2011	0.4%
Social Rent	2001	22.7%
	2011	21.2%
Private Rent	2001	4.3%
	2011	11.7%

2. Property size and type

Property type

Tenure	Type of Dwelling	Redditch
Total	Detached	26.9%
	Semi-detached	30.1%
	Terraced	27.2%
	Flats / Other	15.7%
Private	Detached	33.4%
	Semi-detached	32.8%
	Terraced	24.6%
	Flats / Other	9.1%
Social	Detached	2.8%
	Semi-detached	19.8%
	Terraced	37.0%
	Flats / Other	40.4%

Percentage of bedrooms across all tenures

District	No bedrooms	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5+ bedrooms
Redditch	0.3%	12.4%	20.3%	46.7%	17.0%	3.3%

Number of bedrooms by tenure (social and private)

District	Tenure	Number of Bedrooms				
		1	2	3	4	5 or more
Redditch	Social	37.8%	28.4%	30.3%	2.8%	0.7%
	Private	6.0%	18.2%	51.1%	20.8%	4.0%

3. Occupancy

Average number of people, rooms and bedrooms across all tenures

District	Average number of people per household	Average number of rooms per household	Average number of bedrooms per household
Redditch	2.4	5.5	2.8

Overcrowding and under-occupancy by tenure

District	Private			Social		
	Total Households	Overcrowding	Under-Occupation	Total Households	Overcrowding	Under-Occupation
Redditch	27,371	4.7%	83.4%	7,351	17.2%	37.2%

Social rented households by occupancy rating bedrooms

District	Total Households	% with an Occupancy Rating (Bedrooms) of			
		+2 or more	+1	0	-1 or less
Redditch	7,351	11.0%	22.2%	56.8%	10.0%

Households on waiting list who are overcrowded October 2013

District	Overcrowded Households	Proportion of Total Waiting List	Proportion of All Households
Redditch	516	24.3%	1.5%

4. Stock ConditionProperty condition and quality

District	Average EPC/SAP Rating of Private Sector Dwellings (A-G)	Percentage of Private Sector Dwellings with an EPC Rating Below 'E'	Private sector dwellings with Category 1 Hazards (HHSRS)	Private Sector Dwellings made free of Category 1 Hazards	Dwellings Improved using Private Sector Housing Repairs Assistance
Redditch	62.9 (D)	4.6%	1,100	71	18

5. House BuildingHousing completions 2001 - 2013

District	Gross Completions	Average Annual Completions
Redditch	2,811	234

Affordable completions 2001 – 2103

District	Gross Affordable Completions	Average Annual Completions	Proportion of Total Completions
Redditch	707	59	25.2%

6. Demographic & Economic DriversPopulation change 2001-2012

District	2001	2011	Change in Population	% Change in Population	Annual Growth
Redditch	78,779	84,419	5,640	7.2%	513

Change in households 2001-2011

District	2001	2011	Change in no. of Households	Annual Growth 2001-11	% Change 2001-11
Redditch	31,648	34,722	3,074	307	9.7%

Change in average household size

District	2001	2011	Change 2001-11
Redditch	2.47	2.41	-0.06

Mean house prices – average price and number of sales

District	2011/12		2012/13		Annual Change
	Average Sale Price	Number of Sales	Average Sale Price	Number of Sales	
Redditch	£158,614	1,009	£168,068	898	6.0%

Lower quartile sale prices by property type

District	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flat / Maisonette	All Sales
Redditch	£185,000	£130,000	£105,000	£75,000	£115,000

RSL and local authority average weekly rents in Worcestershire

District	2001 /02	2002 /03	2003 /04	2004 /05	2005 /06	2006 /07	2007 /08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13
Local Authority	£45	£47	£49	£50	£52	£55	£58	£60	£62	£63	£67	£72
RSL	£49	£54	£53	£53	£57	£60	£63	£66	£70	£75	£74	£79

Private Rent Levels - Monthly

Property Size	Area	Average		Median	
		2013	2015	2013	2015
1 bedroom	Bromsgrove	£487	£499	£475	£495
	Redditch	£443	£478	£450	£477
	Worcester	£463	£526	£465	£486
	Kidderminster	£405	£397	£400	£395
2 bedrooms	Bromsgrove	£593	£615	£575	£595
	Redditch	£565	£638	£550	£625
	Worcester	£586	£661	£575	£625
	Kidderminster	£519	£512	£525	£498
3 bedrooms	Bromsgrove	£728	£763	£700	£738
	Redditch	£634	£736	£625	£712
	Worcester	£707	£855	£695	£793
	Kidderminster	£598	£603	£585	£594
4 or more bedrooms	Bromsgrove	£1,123	£1,035	£1,050	£973
	Redditch	£848	£790	£838	£725
	Worcester	£855	£1,290	£825	£1,441
	Kidderminster	£858	£796	£750	£796

Local Housing Allowance - Monthly

Shared Accommodation Rate:	£263.64
One Bedroom Rate:	£398.93
Two Bedrooms Rate:	£504.96
Three Bedrooms Rate:	£555.49
Four Bedrooms Rate:	£757.51

7. Housing demandHouseholds on the waiting list

District	Total Households (2011 Census)	Households on Waiting List (October 2013)	Proportion of Total Households
Redditch	34,722	2,127	6.1%

Waiting list by tenure

District	Owner Occupied	Private Rent	Social Rent	Living with parents/relatives	Sharing/Lodging	Other/Not Specified	Total
Redditch	102	476	736	412	52	349	2,127

Redditch – overview of housing market

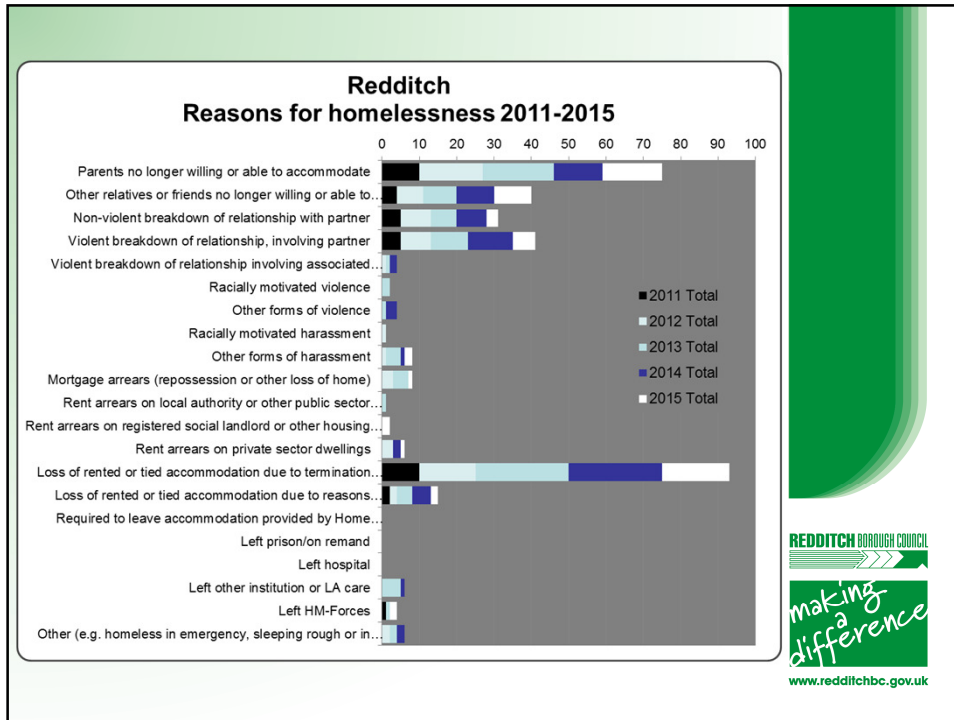
- Home owners 23000
- Council tenancies 5900
- Private rent 4000
- Other registered providers 1600
- In terms of stock, RBC is the second-largest player in the local housing market
- Of the 6000 tenancies owned by RBC, just over 2200 have assistance from Housing Benefit for rent payments
- Redditch council rents are the lowest in the borough and council tenancies offer the greatest security of tenure.



RBC housing market specifics

- After council housing, the PRS clearly plays a big part in the local housing market
- Renting has flourished as house buying has become more difficult for many households
- In Redditch, occupancy in the PRS rose from 4.3% in 2001 to 11.7% in 2011
- Home ownership dropped by 5% in the same time period
- Redditch experiences plenty of issues with the PRS locally





Quick recap

- There are some 4000 private rented properties occupied in Redditch
- The number of households living in the PRS has increased in the last ten years
- There are pros and cons to living in the PRS
- Loss of PRS accommodation is one of the biggest causes of homelessness in Redditch
- Roughly a quarter of all PRS tenants receive help with their rent via Local Housing Allowance

Redditch PRS – detailed analysis

- We have looked at housing benefit claims and a year's worth of homelessness applications to RBC from PRS tenants
- We have tried to see how the data confirms or challenges our 'traditional' way of thinking about the local housing market
- The data questions some poses some challenging questions and raises some interesting areas we might like to explore further



Redditch PRS – detailed analysis of benefits data

- 1070 applicants from the private rented sector (approximately 25% of sector) are in receipt of LHA
- There are concentrations of tenants claiming LHA in specific areas of Redditch – the spread is not even across the borough
- 477 applicants receive full LHA and have to top up their rent by other means
- There are areas in Redditch where topping up is concentrated
- Relatively few of these households are registered on CBL



Detail behind rent top ups

Full LHA cases Top Up £0 - £10	
145 cases pay between £0 - £10 Top Up	50 cases (34%) up to £5 av. £2.93
	95 cases (66%) £5 to £10 av. £8.19
40 cases at Shared Accom. LHA rate	7 cases up to £5 av. £2.37
	33 cases £5 to 10 av. £8.42
29 cases at One bedroom LHA rate	12 cases up to £5 av. £1.70
	17 cases £5 to 10 av. £7.79
54 cases at Two bedroom LHA rate	20 cases up to £5 av. £3.39
	34 cases £5 to £10 av. £8.92
20 cases at Three bedroom LHA rate	11 cases up to £5 av. £3.78
	9 cases £5 to £10 av. £5.38
2 cases at Four bedroom LHA rate	0 cases up to £5
	2 cases £5 to £10 av. £8.06



Detail behind rent top ups

Full LHA cases Top Up £10 - £20	
143 cases pay between £10 - £20 Top Up	71 cases (50%) £10 to £15 av. £12.90
	72 cases (50%) £15 to £20 av. £18.39
41 cases at Shared Accom. LHA rate	24 cases £10 to £15 av. £13.48
	17 cases £15 to £20 av. £18.63
37 cases at One bedroom LHA rate	18 cases £10 to £15 av. £12.06
	19 cases £15 to £20 av. £17.75
45 cases at Two bedroom LHA rate	18 cases £10 to £15 av. £13.84
	27 cases £15 to £20 av. £19.10
17 cases at Three bedroom LHA rate	10 cases £10 to £15 av. £11.32
	7 cases £15 to £20 av. £16.52
3 cases at Four bedroom LHA rate	1 cases £10 to £15 av. £13.82
	2 cases £15 to £20 av. £19.59



Detail behind rent top ups

Full LHA cases Top Up £20 - £30	
92 cases pay between £20 - £30 Top Up	55 cases (60%) £20 to £25 av. £21.96
	37 cases (40%) £25 to £30 av. £27.65
10 cases at Shared Accom. LHA rate	7 cases £20 to £25 av. £22.92
	3 cases £25 to £30 av. £29.24
31 cases at One bedroom LHA rate	16 cases £20 to £25 av. £22.70
	15 cases £25 to £30 av. £27.97
37 cases at Two bedroom LHA rate	27 cases £20 to £25 av. £21.09
	10 cases £25 to £30 av. £26.76
14 cases at Three bedroom LHA rate	5 cases £20 to £25 av. £22.91
	9 cases £25 to £30 av. £27.59

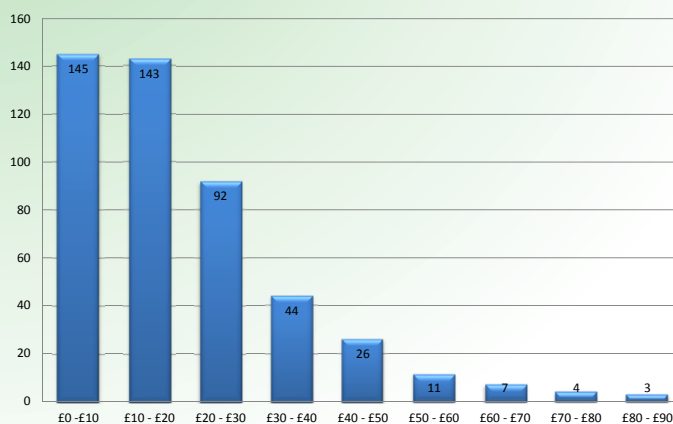
REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

making a difference

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Detail behind PRS rent top ups

Top up amounts

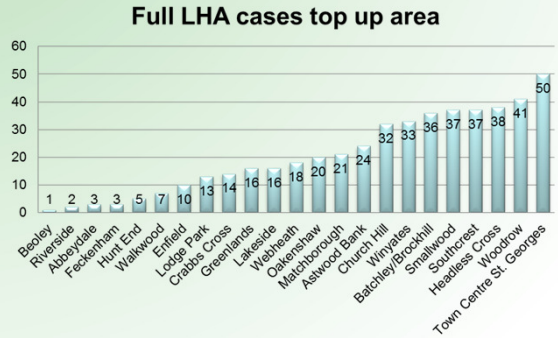


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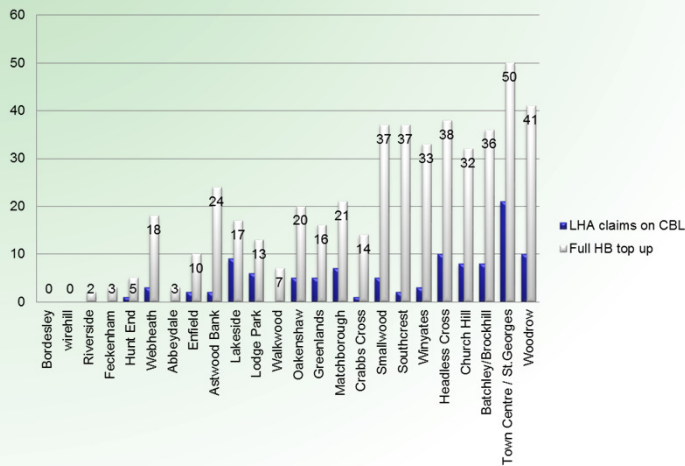
making a difference

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

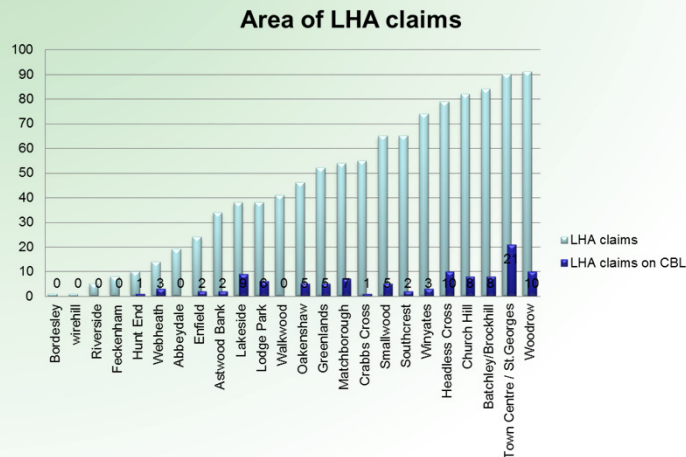
Full LHA and top up by area



Area of LHA top ups and CBL registration



All LHA claims and CBL registration



Redditch PRS – detailed analysis of homelessness data

- 58 cases between Jan 14 and Dec 14
- 40 cases in receipt of LHA
- 18 cases not in receipt of LHA
- 15 couples, 43 single (most with children)
- 53 individual landlords
- Only 3 landlords were linked to more than one case
- 12 lettings agents were linked to 14 cases
- 31 cases involved financial difficulties and 24 of these were in receipt of LHA



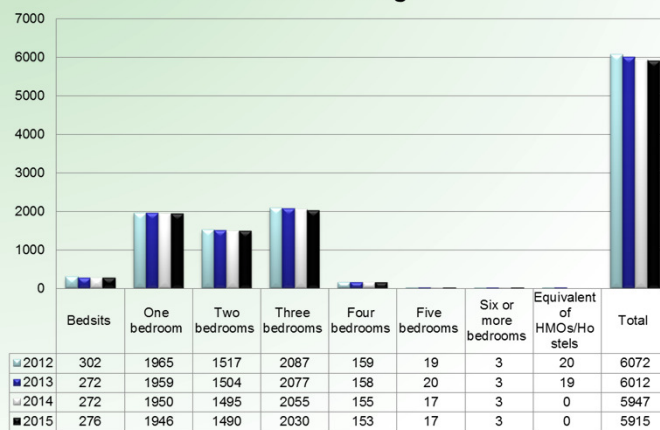
Tenancy duration and property type

Length of tenancy	Total	Ex-council	Other
Less than 6 months	9	4	5
1 year	13	5	8
2 years	10	3	7
3 years	8	6	2
4 years	4	2	2
More than 4 years	11	3	8
Totals (3 not known)	58	25	33



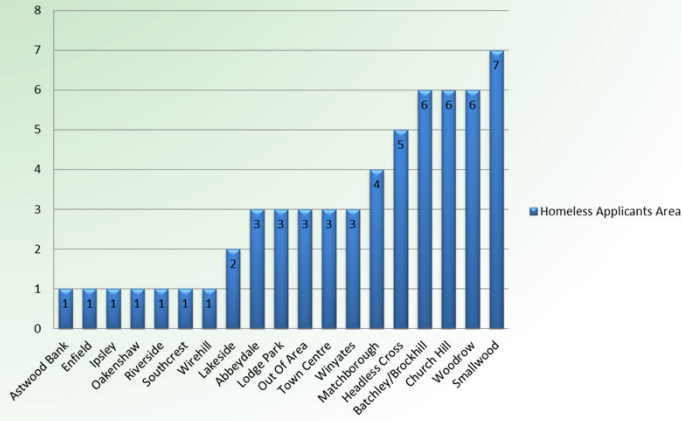
Council property sales 2012-15

RBC Dwellings

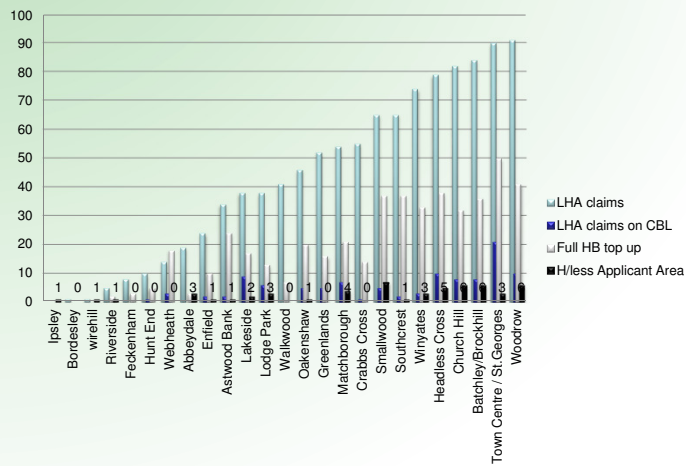


Overlapping these data sets

Homeless Applicants by Area



Overlapping these data sets



Emerging themes?

- The data overlap shows 8 areas out of 24 account for 37 of 58 PRS homeless approaches
- These areas are Woodrow, Town Centre/St Georges, Batchley/Brockhill, Churchill, Headless Cross, Winyates, Smallwood and Southcrest
- The 8 areas have several factors in common – over 50 current LHA claims, and over 30 households paying a top up on their rent



Emerging themes?

- The other 16 areas generated 21 cases
- Matchborough, Lodge Park and Abbeydale generated 10 cases between them – they have fewer LHA claims and top ups than the top 8 areas
- In the homelessness caseload, financial pressures figure highly amongst PRS applicants
- Two thirds of applicants are in receipt of LHA – one third is not



Emerging themes?

- The number of individual landlords ending tenancies is higher than the number of agencies doing so
- Tenancy duration varies considerably across the homelessness caseload 22 of 58 cases were issued notice within 2 years of moving in
- 33 cases had been living in the PRS for at least 2 years
- The number of notices received by tenants renting ex-council properties is high – 25 of 58 cases





Allocating social housing (England)

Standard Note: SN/SP/6397
Last updated: 11 March 2015
Author: Wendy Wilson
Section: Social Policy Section

This note outlines the legal framework contained in Part 6 of the *1996 Housing Act* (as amended) within which local authorities allocate their housing stock. Nominations by local authorities to stock owned by housing associations (also known as private registered providers of social housing) are allocated within the same legal framework.

Local authorities have always had a good deal of discretion in relation to their housing allocation policies; this discretion has been extended by measures included in the *Localism Act 2011*. Following a consultation exercise, the Government issued new statutory guidance, [Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England](#) in June 2012. Authorities are obliged to have regard to this guidance when devising and implementing their schemes.

The Government launched a consultation exercise on proposals to issue new statutory guidance “to help local authorities make full use of their new allocation freedoms by tailoring their allocation priorities to meet the needs of their local residents and their local communities.” One of the proposals involved amending existing guidance to “strongly encourage all local authorities to adopt a two year residency test as part of their qualification criteria.” Consultation closed on 22 November 2013 and new supplementary statutory guidance was published in December 2013: [Providing social housing for local people](#).

On 9 March 2015 the Government announced an intention to ‘ensure local connection requirements do not prevent social tenants from moving into the area to take up work or apprenticeship opportunities.’

Background to the changes introduced by the *Localism Act* can be found in [Library Research Paper 11/03](#). Information on the eligibility of EU nationals and non-EU nationals to apply for social housing can be found in [EU migrants: eligibility to apply for social housing \(England\)](#) (SN04737) and [Eligibility to apply for social housing: persons from abroad \(non-EEA\)](#) (SN05433).

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1 The legal framework for allocating social housing

1.1 An overview

Part 6 of the *1996 Housing Act* (as amended) governs the allocation of local authority housing stock; it was substantially amended, with effect from 31st January 2003, by the *2002 Homelessness Act* and, more recently, by the *Localism Act 2011*.¹

Local authorities are not under a duty to maintain a housing register (often referred to as a housing waiting list) but must have an allocation scheme for determining priorities between applicants for housing and which sets out the procedure to be followed when allocating housing accommodation.²

Authorities must ensure that when allocating their stock they only allocate to “eligible persons” as defined in section 160ZA of the 1996 Act.³ They must also only allocate to “qualifying persons”⁴ but, subject to the centrally determined eligibility criteria and any

¹ Sections 145-147 of the *Localism Act 2011* were brought into force on 18 June 2012 by the *Localism Act 2011 (Commencement No.6 and Transitional, Savings and Transitory Provisions) Order 2012* S.I. 2012/1463

² Section 166A of the *Housing Act 1996*

³ This section (and regulations made under it) provides for certain persons from abroad not to be eligible for an allocation of social housing.

⁴ Section 160ZA(6) *Housing Act 1996*

regulations made by the Secretary of State,⁵ authorities are free to decide what classes of person are and are not “qualifying persons” for the purposes of their allocation schemes.⁶

Information on defining eligibility in terms of access to social housing for EEA nationals and Persons Subject to Immigration Control can be found in Library notes SN/SP/4737, [EU migrants: entitlement to housing assistance \(England\)](#) and SN/SP/5433 [Entitlement to social housing: persons from abroad \(non-EEA\)](#), respectively. The then Housing Minister, Mark Prisk, provided an overview of the entitlement of EEA nationals to apply for social housing in response to a PQ:

Mr Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for what reasons an EEA national exercising their right to freedom of movement as a self-sufficient person may (a) need and (b) be entitled to social housing.

Mr Prisk: There is no entitlement to social housing.

European economic area nationals who have a right to reside in the UK on the basis that they are self-sufficient are eligible for social housing, if they are habitually resident in the common travel area (the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland). To be considered self-sufficient, a person must have (i) sufficient resources not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the UK and (ii) comprehensive sickness insurance cover in the UK.

To be allocated social housing an eligible applicant must also meet the local authority's own qualification criteria and have sufficient priority under the local authority's allocation scheme.

An allocation scheme must be framed to ensure that certain categories of people are given 'reasonable preference' for social housing, because they have an identified housing need, including people who are homeless, overcrowded households, and people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.⁷

As noted in the PQ reproduced above, every local authority allocation scheme in England must ensure that “reasonable preference” is given to certain categories of applicant as set out in sub-section 166A(3) of the 1996 Act:

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7);
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

⁵ This regulation making power has not, as yet, been used.

⁶ Section 160ZA(7) *Housing Act 1996*

⁷ HC Deb 22 April 2013 cc585-6W

The scheme may also be framed so as to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people within this subsection (being descriptions of people with urgent housing needs).⁸

[See section 2.5 of this note for amendments to section 166A(3) in respect of armed (or reserve) forces personnel with urgent housing needs]

On 9 March 2015 the Government announced that it would introduce ‘Right to Move’ regulations to ‘ensure local connection requirements do not prevent social tenants from moving into the area to take up work or apprenticeship opportunities.’⁹ It appears that the ‘reasonable preference’ categories will be amended so that the ‘hardship’ criteria in section 166A(3)(e) will cover those moving for work (see **section 2.4** below). It is expected that the new regulations will be laid before the end of March 2015.

Annex 1 to the June 2012 [statutory guidance](#) provides an illustrative list of the sort of criteria that might be used to determine whether households should be afforded reasonable preference under categories (c) and (d).

Allocation schemes may also be framed so as to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people within these categories (being descriptions of people with urgent housing needs).

Section 168 of the 1996 Act requires authorities to publish a summary of their allocation scheme and to provide a copy of the summary (free of charge) to any member of the public who requests one.

Allocation schemes can allow for authorities to take account of additional factors when determining priority for housing between applicants in the reasonable (or additional) preference categories.¹⁰ The legislation provides examples such as financial resources, behaviour and local connection.

Local authorities in England must have regard to their homelessness strategies, tenancy strategies and the London housing strategy (where appropriate), when preparing or modifying their housing allocation schemes.¹¹

1.2 Transfer applications

Existing local authority tenants may apply to transfer to alternative accommodation within the landlord’s stock. The *2002 Homelessness Act* brought transfer applications within the ambit of Part 6 of the 1996 Act to ensure that the housing needs of existing tenants and new applicants were assessed on the same basis.

The *2011 Localism Act* amended section 159 of the 1996 Act so that transfer applications from existing tenants in social housing no longer have to be assessed on the same basis as households applying on the housing register, unless the authority is satisfied that the household applying for a transfer should be given reasonable preference in accordance with section 166A(3).

⁸ Inserted by section 147 of the *Localism Act 2011*

⁹ [DCLG, Press Release](#), 9 March 2015

¹⁰ Section 166A(5) of the *Housing Act 1996*

¹¹ Section 166A(12)

The decision to exclude most transfer applications from housing allocation schemes was taken in order to stimulate mobility by enabling existing tenants to move more easily within the sector. A perception had developed that it was difficult for transfer applicants to secure a move because allocation schemes tended to prioritise applicants with the highest level of housing need.

The statutory guidance does not cover how authorities should set up and administer applications for transfers from households that do not fall into a reasonable preference category.

A poll of 111 social landlords conducted by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and reported in *Inside Housing* (February 2015), found that only 30% of respondents had used flexibilities introduced by the *Localism Act* to assess transfer applications separately.¹² The CIH has published a best practice guide: [How to promote mobility amongst existing tenants](#) (February 2015).

2 Defining “qualifying persons”

The *Localism Act 2011* has restored the power that local authorities enjoyed between 1997 and 2003 to exclude, by class, certain applicants that they designate as “non-qualifying persons.” They now have a power to prescribe, by class, the only applicants entitled to be allocated social housing under their allocation schemes.

The only statutory limit on the exercise of these powers is that they cannot be used to treat applicants who are ineligible by virtue of their immigration status, as qualifying persons. There is also a need for authorities to take account of their equality duties under the *Equality Act 2010*. They should seek to avoid provisions that may be directly or indirectly discriminatory. When developing their schemes authorities must also take account of:

- their homelessness strategies;
- their tenancy strategies;¹³ and
- In the case of authorities in London, the London Housing Strategy.

Authorities now have scope to adopt some potentially restrictive policies around the definition of qualifying persons. The following sections (2.1 – 2.8) consider some of the factors that authorities might consider when seeking to define who may or may not qualify to apply for social housing. The [statutory guidance](#) contains advice for authorities on the defining “qualifying persons.”

In recognition of the fact that giving local authorities the power to exclude certain categories of people from their housing waiting lists could result in some groups being unable to access social housing, the Secretary of State has retained regulation making powers to prescribe classes of people who are or are not qualifying persons, or criteria which authorities cannot use to determine who is or is not a qualifying person.¹⁴ This power has not yet been used.

¹² *Inside Housing*, “Few social landlords make use of tenant transfer freedom,” 6 February 2015

¹³ Section 150 of the *Localism Act 2011*

¹⁴ Section 160ZA *Housing Act 1996* (inserted by the *Localism Act 2011*)

Research conducted by *Inside Housing* (reported in April 2014) found that 126 English local authorities had used powers to limit access to social housing by amending their allocation policies:

Seventy-seven councils that provided detailed figures informed 113,049 people that they no longer qualify for social housing for reasons including a lack of connection to the local area and anti-social behaviour.¹⁵

There have been challenges to local authority allocation schemes. In November 2014 the [Court of Appeal ruled](#) that Hammersmith and Fulham Council's disqualification of a homeless mother living in temporary accommodation with her daughter from its housing register was unlawful. The council's allocation scheme had failed to meet the requirement to afford certain homeless applicants 'reasonable preference'.¹⁶

2.1 Unacceptable behaviour

Prior to the *Localism Act* authorities were able to treat someone as ineligible for housing because of previous unacceptable behaviour¹⁷ or reduce the priority of these applicants under section 167 of the 1996 Act. Sub-sections 160A(8) – (11) defined the type of behaviour that an authority could take into account when deeming an applicant to be ineligible for an allocation of housing and provided for the applicants to be notified (in writing) of such a decision and to make a fresh application in certain circumstances.

The *Localism Act* removed these provisions. Authorities are still able to refuse to consider applications on the basis of past behaviour but it is now left up to authorities how to define this behaviour.

2.2 Local connection

Under the previous rules authorities were unable to refuse to consider applications for housing from people without a local connection. However, in determining relative priorities for an allocation, authorities *were* able to have regard to whether or not applicants had a local connection with the district.

The *Localism Act* has given authorities power to define qualifying persons as those with a local connection. For example, the London Borough of Ealing's [Housing allocations policy \(revised October 2013\)](#) provides that, except in certain limited circumstances, applicants who have not resided in the borough for the last five years may not apply for social housing. Basildon's [Housing Allocations Policy](#) (October 2014) specifies a continuous residency requirement in the borough of seven years (with certain exceptions).

On 14 October 2013 the Government launched a consultation exercise on proposals to amend the statutory guidance on housing allocations.¹⁸ The consultation paper contained a proposal to encourage authorities to operate a two year residency test with certain exceptions. New supplementary guidance was published in December 2013: [Providing social housing for local people](#). As with the main guidance, local authorities are obliged to have regard to it in exercising their functions under Part 6 of the 1996 Act. The supplementary guidance states:

¹⁵ Inside Housing, "Councils bar 113,000 from waiting lists," 25 April 2014

¹⁶ [2014] EWCA Civ 1438

¹⁷ Section 160A(7) of the *Housing Act 1996*

¹⁸ DCLG, [Providing social housing for local people](#), 14 October 2013

The Secretary of State believes that including a residency requirement is appropriate and strongly encourages all housing authorities to adopt such an approach. The Secretary of State believes that a reasonable period of residency would be at least two years.¹⁹

Housing authorities may wish to consider whether there is a need to adopt other qualification criteria alongside a residency requirement to enable and ensure that applicants who are not currently resident in the district who can still demonstrate a strong association to the local area are able to qualify. Examples of such criteria might include:

- family association – for example, where the applicant has close family who live in the district and who have done so for a minimum period of time
- employment in the district – for example, where the applicant or member of their household is currently employed in the district and has worked there for a certain number of years²⁰

The guidance emphasises the need for any residency requirements to include exceptions for members of the regular and reserved Armed Forces and to be flexible enough to allow for special circumstances; for example where people need to move to another area to escape violence or harm. It is for local authorities to develop their own exceptions to a residency requirement in the light of local circumstances.

The [summary of responses to the consultation](#) was published in April 2014 (i.e. after the publication of the guidance). On local connection, the summary states that ‘the majority of those who expressed a view – and in particular local authority respondents – were in favour of a residency test.’²¹

The Housing Law Practitioners Association expressed concerns over how the introduction of residency requirements might interact with local authorities’ duties to assist, in certain circumstances, out-of-area homeless applicants, EU citizens and travellers:

The HLPAs response said: ‘We fear that it will prove impossible to craft a lawful policy, having regard to the various groups of people for whom it would plainly be unlawful to require them to demonstrate two years residency in the area.’²²

The lawyers acting for Ms Jakimaviciute in her 2014 case against Hammersmith and Fulham Council²³ argued that the ruling could have wider implications for councils that have introduced residency requirements under the *2011 Localism Act*.

Ben Chataway, the barrister who represented Ms Jakimaviciute and who is challenging Ealing’s scheme, said councils’ residency requirements could conflict with last week’s ruling.

This is because councils have a duty to give four groups of people - including homeless and overcrowded households - a priority or ‘reasonable preference’ over other applicants on their allocation schemes.

¹⁹ DCLG, *Providing social housing for local people*, December 2013, para 13

²⁰ *Ibid*, para 15

²¹ DCLG, *Providing social housing for local people – summary of responses to consultation*, April 2014

²² *Inside Housing*, “Residency test for allocations would be illegal, lawyers warn,” 30 October 2013

²³ [\[2014\] EWCA Civ 1438](#) (see section 2 of this note)

A blanket bar on those failing to meet residency criteria could potentially exclude homeless people who should be given reasonable preference, Mr Chataway said.²⁴

2.3 Local connection and armed forces personnel

More detailed information on the ability of armed forces personnel to access social housing can be found in Library Note SN04244 [Housing options for ex-service personnel](#).

[The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces Personnel\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) (SI 2012/1869), which came into force on 24 August 2012, provides that authorities must not disqualify certain serving or former members of the armed forces from applying for social housing on residency grounds. The [statutory guidance](#) advises:

Members of the Armed Forces and the Reserve Forces

3.27 Subject to Parliamentary scrutiny, we will regulate to provide that authorities must not disqualify the following applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection²⁵ with the authority's district:

- (a) members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years²⁶ of discharge
- (b) bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner
- (c) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

3.28 These provisions recognise the special position of members of the Armed Forces (and their families) whose employment requires them to be mobile and who are likely therefore to be particularly disadvantaged by local connection requirements; as well as those injured reservists who may need to move to another local authority district to access treatment, care or support.²⁷

As noted in section 2.3 (above) the supplementary statutory guidance issued in December 2013, which encourages authorities to implement a two year residency test for social housing applications, states that authorities "must make an exception for certain members of the regular and reserve Armed Forces."²⁸

2.4 Local connection and moving for work

As noted in section 1.1 above, on 9 March 2015 the Government announced that it would introduce 'Right to Move' regulations to 'ensure local connection requirements do not prevent social tenants from moving into the area to take up work or apprenticeship opportunities.'²⁹ It appears that, as with armed forces personnel, the 'reasonable preference' categories will be amended to so that the 'hardship' criteria in section 166A(3)(e) will cover those moving for work. The Government consulted on a [Right to Move](#) over six weeks from 10 September 2014. The [Right to Move: response to consultation](#) was published in March 2015.

²⁴ *Inside Housing*, "Homeless mother wins legal challenge against London council," 7 November 2014

²⁵ As defined by s.199 of the 1996 Act.

²⁶ 5 years reflects guidelines issued by the local authorities associations which propose a working definition of normal residence for the purposes of establishing a local connection.

²⁷ DCLG, [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), June 2012

²⁸ DCLG, [Providing social housing for local people](#), December 2013, para 18

²⁹ [DCLG, Press Release](#), 9 March 2015

The response state that “respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of the objective of the Right to Move proposals, to help social tenants move to secure or retain employment, recognising the benefits for individuals, families and communities.” There was less support for the removal of residency requirements for this group and “very little support for setting aside a quota of lets.”³⁰ The Government intends to strengthen the existing statutory guidance:

We have decided to issue strengthened statutory guidance in relation to the existing ‘hardship’ reasonable preference category to ensure that social tenants who need to move for work related reasons are given appropriate priority. This will ensure that we can deliver the ‘Right to Move’ as quickly as possible. We are minded to introduce a new reasonable preference category for the Right to Move when time allows, and will consult further on the detail of this as soon as practicable.³¹

The expectation is that the new regulations will be laid before the end of March 2015. On the issue of quotas, the new statutory guidance will “include an expectation for local authorities to set aside a proportion of their lets for social tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for work related reasons. The guidance will set a minimum expectation of 1% of lets, although it will be for local authorities to decide on the appropriate proportion in the light of local circumstances.”³²

2.5 Working/community contribution

The additional discretion that local authorities have acquired to determine who qualifies for an allocation of social housing is being used by some to prioritise low income households with a family member in work and those deemed to be making a “community contribution.” In fact local authorities already had the power to prioritise these applicants prior to the *Localism Act* coming into force. Statutory guidance published by the Labour Government in December 2009 said:

Local authorities should consider how they can use their allocation policies to support those who are in work or who are seeking work. This could involve using local lettings policies to ensure that particular properties are allocated to essential workers or to those who have skills which are in short supply, regardless of whether they are currently resident in the authority’s district. Alternatively, authorities may choose to give some preference within their scheme to existing tenants who are willing to move to take up employment or training opportunities – where, for example, the authority has identified a need to address skills shortages and worklessness, perhaps as part of their skills strategy.³³

The current [statutory guidance](#) states:

4.27 Local authorities are urged to consider how they can use their allocation policies to support those households who want to work, as well as those who – while unable to engage in paid employment - are contributing to their community in other ways, for example, through voluntary work. The flexibilities which authorities are encouraged to make use of to meet the needs of Service personnel would apply equally here. This might involve, for example, framing an allocation scheme to give some preference to households who are in low paid work or employment-related training, even where they

³⁰ DCLG, [Right to Move: response to consultation](#), March 2015, para 6

³¹ *Ibid*, para 21

³² *ibid*

³³ DCLG, [Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England](#), December 2009, para 33

are not in the reasonable preference categories; or to give greater priority to those households in the reasonable preference categories who are also in work or who can demonstrate that they are actively seeking work. Alternatively, it might involve using local lettings policies to ensure that specific properties, or a specified proportion of properties, are allocated to households in particular types of employment where, for example, skills are in short supply.

4.28 Authorities should also consider how best they can make use of the new power to offer flexible tenancies to support households who are in low paid work, and incentivise others to take up employment opportunities.³⁴

Manchester City Council published a revised allocation policy in February 2011 (before the relevant sections of the *Localism Act* came into force) which awarded additional priority to households where at least one adult is in work or to those making a “community contribution” through; for example, voluntary work. Priority can be reduced for:

- failing the residency criteria;
- any unacceptable behaviour;
- owing more than £100 in rent arrears;
- having too high an income; and
- being found intentionally homeless.³⁵

The London Borough of Barnet published a revised [Housing Allocations Scheme](#) policy in February 2015. Under this policy applicants falling in a reasonable preference category are awarded additional priority where they make a “community contribution”:

People who play a part in making their neighbourhood strong, stable and healthy – those who help make it a good place to live, work and play – are valuable people. They are the backbone of their community, and the Council believes such people should be allocated social housing to continue contributing to sustaining local communities in the area where they contribute.³⁶

Annex 3 to the policy explains how a community contribution is defined. Briefly, it covers people who are in employment, training, performing voluntary work for at least six months, are ex-service personnel or registered foster carers as long as they have a “current positive residence history.”

In 2012 the London Borough of Newham consulted on a revised allocations policy the aims of which are summarised below:

Brief Summary

- The Council have a large number of residents registered on our housing waiting list and we need to make sure we’re allocating social housing in a way that is fair.
- Lots of residents are working in low-paid employment and would benefit greatly from the subsidised rent in a social home.

³⁴ DCLG, *Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England*, June 2012

³⁵ Manchester City Council’s full allocations policy can be downloaded [here](#).

³⁶ LBB’s [Housing Allocations Scheme](#), February 2015

- **Our proposed allocations policy will recognise and reward those residents who are working hard – through paid employment or, for example, acting as full time carers.**
- We aim to change the culture of the housing waiting list to show residents that making a positive step in their lives will be supported, rather than leading them further away from social housing.
- By changing the allocations policy we hope to create mixed and stable communities, avoiding estates becoming ghettos of worklessness.³⁷

The London Borough of Westminster announced in September 2011 that it would be revising its housing allocation policy to benefit those seeking work.³⁸ The council's allocation policy can be accessed online [here](#).

2.6 Armed forces personnel and “reasonable preference”

More detailed information on the ability of armed forces personnel to access social housing can be found in Library Note SN/SP/4244 [Housing options for ex-service personnel](#).

When the Government consulted (between January and March 2012) on proposed changes to the statutory guidance for local authorities in England on their housing allocation schemes, it also published draft regulations: the *Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Former Armed Forces Personnel) (England) Regulations 2012*.

The [Housing Act 1996 \(Additional Preference for Former Armed Forces Personnel\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) came into force on 30 November 2012 and provide that “additional preference” must be given to applications from certain serving and ex-members of the armed forces (and reserve forces) who come within the reasonable preference categories defined in sub-section 166A(3) of the 1996 Housing Act (listed in section 1.1 of this note) and who have urgent housing needs. The explanatory notes to the Regulations advise:

Regulation 2 amends section 166A(3) so that local housing authorities in England must frame their allocation scheme to give additional preference to persons who fall within the reasonable preference categories, have urgent housing needs and who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- the person is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service;
- the person formerly served in the regular forces;
- the person has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- the person is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

The Regulations were considered by the Fourth Delegated Legislation Committee on 21 November 2012 and by Grand Committee in the House of Lords on 20 November 2012.

³⁷ LBN's Draft Housing Allocations Scheme – Equality Impact Analysis, February 2012

³⁸ Westminster City Council [Press Release](#), 23 September 2011

The then Minister, Don Foster, said they “would make a significant difference for service personnel and their families who are in urgent need of social housing.”³⁹ However, he also emphasised that there was no fundamental change to the way in which access to social housing is prioritised:

For other people in urgent housing need, such as families living in seriously cramped conditions and people fleeing the fear of violence, local authorities will continue to have discretion to give them greater priority. However they will not be required to do so.⁴⁰

The June 2012 [statutory guidance](#) also encourages local authorities to take account of the needs of all serving or former service personnel.

4.24 Authorities are also strongly encouraged to take into account the needs of all serving or former Service personnel when framing their allocation schemes, and to give sympathetic consideration to the housing needs of family members of serving or former Service personnel who may themselves have been disadvantaged by the requirements of military service and, in particular, the need to move from base to base. This would be in line with terms of the Government’s Armed Forces Covenant published in May 2011.

4.25 Examples of ways in which authorities can ensure that Service personnel and their families are given appropriate priority, include:

- using the flexibility within the allocation legislation to set local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories so as to give preference, for example, to those who have recently left, or are close to leaving, the Armed Forces;
- using the power to determine priorities between applicants in the reasonable preference categories, so that applicants in housing need who have served in the Armed Forces are given greater priority for social housing over those who have not; and
- if taking into account an applicant’s financial resources in determining priorities between households with a similar level of need, disregarding any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service;
- setting aside a proportion of properties for former members of the Armed Forces under a local lettings policy.⁴¹

2.7 Foster carers and adopters

The [statutory guidance](#) makes it clear that foster carers may be afforded “reasonable preference” for a housing allocation on welfare grounds:

This would include foster carers, those approved to adopt, or those being assessed for approval to foster or adopt, who need to move to a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child or a child who was previously looked after by a local authority.⁴²

³⁹ Fourth Delegated Legislation Committee, 21 November 2012 c4

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ DCLG, [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), June 2012

⁴² *Ibid* para 4.10

Authorities may choose to prioritise applications from prospective foster carers or adopters:

4.30 When considering housing applications from prospective foster carers or adopters who would require an extra bedroom to accommodate a foster or adoptive child, authorities will wish to weigh up the risk that the application to foster or adopt may be unsuccessful (leading to the property being under-occupied), against the wider benefits which would be realised if the placement was successful.

4.31 Children's services have a duty under s.22G of the Children Act 1989 to ensure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the looked after children in their area. Authorities should work together with children's services to best meet the needs of prospective and approved foster carers and adopters, so that children's services can meet their s.22G duty. One way to strike an appropriate balance would be to set aside a quota of properties each year for people who need to move to larger accommodation in order to foster or adopt a child on the recommendation of children's services.⁴³

2.8 Under-occupiers

The [statutory guidance](#) makes specific reference to authorities framing their allocation schemes to assist households affected by Housing Benefit changes⁴⁴ which came into force on 1 April 2013:

4.22 When framing the rules which determine the size of property to allocate to different households and in different circumstances, housing authorities are free to set their own criteria, provided they do not result in a household being statutorily overcrowded. However, in setting these criteria, authorities will want to take account of the provision in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which will reduce Housing Benefit to under-occupiers.

4.23 Social tenants affected by the under-occupation measure may choose to move to more suitably sized accommodation in the private rented sector. One way to encourage tenants to consider this option might be to ensure they are given some degree of preference for an allocation if they apply for a new social tenancy at a later date.⁴⁵

In the supplementary guidance published in December 2013: [Providing social housing for local people](#). The Government states "there may also be sound policy reasons not to apply a residency test to existing social tenants seeking to move between local authorities. Housing authorities should assist in tackling under-occupation, for example allowing tenants to move if they wish to downsize to a smaller social home."⁴⁶

3 Challenging decisions

Applicants must be notified in writing if an authority decides that they are not a qualifying person – they must be advised of the grounds on which the decision has been reached.⁴⁷

Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision. Again, they must be informed of the outcome of the review and the reasons for it.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Ibid* paras 4.30-31

⁴⁴ See Library note SN/SP/6272 for more information on the under-occupation restrictions to Housing Benefit.

⁴⁵ DCLG, [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), June 2012

⁴⁶ DCLG, [Providing social housing for local people](#), December 2013, para 20

⁴⁷ Section 160ZA99) and (10) of the *Housing Act 1996*

There is no right of appeal to an independent court or tribunal. Any legal challenge to a review decision has to be by way of judicial review. The applicant may also use the landlord's internal complaints procedure and complaints concerning maladministration may, ultimately, be referred to the Ombudsman.

4 Allocating housing association homes

Nominations by local authorities to stock owned by housing associations (also known as private registered providers of social housing) are allocated within the same legal framework as described in section 1.1 of this note.

Where an association has retained arrangements to allocate some or all of its properties directly, they are not governed by Part 6 of the *1996 Housing Act* (as amended). [The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012](#) sets out the following requirements to which housing associations must adhere:

Allocations and mutual exchange

1.1 Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how their lettings:

- make the best use of available housing
- are compatible with the purpose of the housing
- contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities

There should be clear application, decision-making and appeals processes.

1.2 Registered providers shall enable their tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy with that of another tenant, by way of internet-based mutual exchange services.

Specific expectations

Allocations and mutual exchange

1.1 Registered providers shall co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function, and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

1.2 Registered providers shall develop and deliver services to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes, within the resources available to them. These services should be focused on the needs of their tenants, and will offer choices to them.

1.3 Registered providers' published policies shall include how they have made use of common housing registers, common allocations policies and local letting policies. Registered providers shall clearly set out, and be able to give reasons for, the criteria they use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for allocations, mobility or mutual exchange schemes.

⁴⁸ Section 166A(9)(c) of the *Housing Act 1996*

1.4 Registered providers shall develop and deliver allocations processes in a way which supports their effective use by the full range of actual and potential tenants, including those with support needs, those who do not speak English as a first language and others who have difficulties with written English.⁴⁹

5 Information on who gets social housing

The Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) by social landlords captures information on the characteristics of the household and property each time a social or affordable property is let. This information is submitted to DCLG. Advice to local authorities on the type of information that should be captured when letting social housing was published on 14 October 2013: [Provisions of Social Lettings Data: Advice to Local Authorities](#). The consultation paper issued on the same day set out the rationale for issuing new advice:

It is important that people understand how social housing is allocated in their area, and that they know who is getting that social housing, so that they can see that the allocation system is fair and the local authority is complying with its allocation scheme. To make sure this is the case, local authorities need to ensure they collect and publish accurate, up-to-date and anonymised information on waiting list applicants and lettings outcomes. The published data should include information about household characteristics, including the age, sex, ethnicity and nationality of applicants and new tenants. **Accordingly, the new guidance will include an expectation on local authorities to have a clear policy about the collection and publication of waiting list and lettings information and to ensure the policy is published on their website.**⁵⁰

5.1 Impact of new allocation policies

Section 2 of this note contains reference to a reduction in numbers registered on local authority housing waiting lists following the introduction of revised housing allocation schemes.

In 2014 *Inside Housing* analysed data on lettings collected by the DCLG and also carried out a survey of 25 of the largest housing associations. According to the analysis, both sets of data showed a reduction in the number of lettings going to BME households, from 17.3 per cent of total lets in June 2012 to 13.2 per cent in December 2013. Lettings to white households rose from 75.2 to 82.3 per cent over the same period. Commentators suggested that the changes could be due to the impact of amended policies on diversity and called for more research into the issue.⁵¹ DCLG was reported as saying that the analysis was based on 'flawed methodology.' More detail on the analysis can be found online: [Ethnicity and new social housing lets](#).⁵²

Indicative research by the East 7 group of eight housing associations (published in November 2014) focused on seven local authorities who had changed their allocations policy and in which East 7 members had significant stock. The authors found:

- Local authorities have used their new powers to considerably reduce their waiting lists. On average, housing registers contracted by 51.8% with the largest declines in Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (-76.57%) and Bedford Borough Council (-68.64%).

⁴⁹ Homes and Communities Agency, [The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012](#)

⁵⁰ DCLG, [Providing social housing for local people](#), 14 October 2013

⁵¹ *Inside Housing*, "Drop in allocations to BME households," 20 June 2014

- Where government guidance has been implemented sparingly, the reduction is much less significant. Peterborough City Council (-42.75%) implemented a loose local connection criteria policy while Hertsmere Borough Council (-48.77%) only removed the lowest of their housing need categories.
- Fewer older people and households with multiple adults are being referred, a likely result of the removal of low priority and more financially secure applicants.
- Prospective tenant interviews suggest changing allocations policies may be reinforcing the perception that social housing is only allocated to those in receipt of benefits, despite no statistical evidence emerging to support the view that allocations policy changes are impacting the benefit profile of tenants.⁵³

⁵² *Inside Housing*, 20 June 2014

⁵³ East 7, *Changes to allocation policies – the future for housing associations in the East*, 2014

Briefing paper for meeting of Redditch Borough Council District Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th October 2015

Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group Update

Background

At its last Committee meeting, held on 1st September 2015, Members considered the content of the scrutiny tracking report following the recommendations made by the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group in July 2014.

In particular the Committee expressed concerns about the lack of progress of recommendation 4 which proposed the introduction of an Apprentice post. A briefing paper was requested outlining plans for the future co-ordination of the grants process and for the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations.

Update

The tracker has been further reviewed and an update provided under each of the outstanding recommendations dated October 2015 as per the attached table:

JUDITH WILLIS
Head of Community Services

October 2015

Voluntary and Community Sector (July 2014)		
Recommendation 6a	Dedicated space to be introduced on the intranet to share information about the work services are doing with VCS groups.	<p><u>June and September 2015 update:</u> Officers have started work with IT and the local Voluntary and Community Sector groups to ensure this space shares important and valuable information. There is currently a delay in populating this space due to a long term staff absence. This will be re-visited once the service is fully staffed.</p> <p><u>October 2015 update:</u> Due to the staffing matters outlined under recommendation 4 below, this will be actioned once a Co-Ordinator is in post.</p>
Recommendation 7a	The staff volunteering policy to be refreshed and promoted.	<p><u>September 2015 update:</u> The Staff Volunteering Policy has now been updated. Officers are in the process of considering the best way to promote this updated policy to staff.</p> <p><u>October 2015 update:</u> The policy is to be promoted and relaunched as part of a 'Time to Change' staff event during 21st - 23rd October. A part of the Time to Change initiatives, the five ways to well being are being promoted to staff, once of which is the theme of volunteering. It is recommended that once this action is completed at the end of October, it is removed from the Tracker.</p>
Recommendation 8	A new staff award to be introduced recognising the voluntary work carried out by staff.	<p><u>Previous update:</u> At the last meeting of the Committee when the tracker was considered Members agreed that this matter should be discussed further with the Chair of the Task Group to as a number of problems were identified by officers regarding the feasibility of implementing the recommendation.</p> <p>The Chair of the Task Group has been approached about this issue. She is suggesting that staff should be urged in Oracle</p>

		<p>newsletters to come forward to report the volunteering that they are involved in as part of an internal communications campaign. This could be used as the basis for nominations to the staff awards in 2015/16.</p> <p><u>June 2015 update:</u> An article appeared in the May 2015 staff newsletter encouraging staff to inform the Communications team about their volunteering experiences. Examples reported to the team may be promoted in future editions of staff newsletters.</p> <p><u>September 2015:</u> No further updates had been provided by the date of publication.</p> <p><u>October 2015 update:</u> In consultation with the Chair of the Task Group, due to the practicalities around the staff awards, it is recommended that the voluntary work carried out by staff is recognised via internal publications produced by the Communications Team. To date two articles have been published in the Oracle. It is recommended that this action is completed and can now be removed from the Tracker.</p>
Recommendation 10	A Voluntary Sector event to be held and to include a prize giving ceremony.	<p><u>June and September 2015 update:</u> Officers are planning to engage with local groups to get feedback on this type of event. Due to a long term staff absence, this work and feedback from the consultation will be provided once the service is fully staffed.</p> <p><u>October 2015 update:</u> Due to the staffing matters outlined under recommendation 4 below, this will be actioned once a Co Ordinator is in post. In the interim, conversations have taken place with the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network to potentially link this action to National Volunteering Week.</p>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**6th October 2015**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – BUDGET SCRUTINY 2016/17**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Director	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides members with an initial update on the Council's budgetary position and provides Members with an opportunity to identify specific areas where additional information would be suitable for detailed scrutiny.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report and request officers undertake further review on any specific areas for Members future consideration.

3. KEY ISSUES**Background**

- 3.1 As Members are aware a number of concerns were raised when budget scrutiny was undertaken for 2015/16. This was mainly due to the limited amount of financial information that Members had available to make an informed assessment of the budget proposals.
- 3.2 At the last Overview and Scrutiny meeting Members approved the format that would be used for the review and scrutiny of the 2016/17 budget proposals. In addition to the financial statement there will be future reports on any additional cost pressures or identified savings for discussion.
- 3.3 The attached statements show the budget allocations against the strategic purposes and include:
- Actual position 2013/14
 - Actual position 2014/15
 - Current budget 2015/16
 - Draft budget 2016/17
- 3.5 It was hoped that the outturn projection for 2015/16 would be included but there has not been the opportunity to deliver this detail for this meeting. This will be included in the updated report at the next meeting.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**6th October 2015

- 3.6 Members are asked to consider the attached financial information and to request further information from officers for further scrutiny.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in the Council's budget setting process. Scrutiny Members can make informed recommendations to the Executive Committee about the Council's budget based on evidence gathered during discussions. The Committee can also hold the Executive Committee to account for expenditure during the year and review any savings which have been achieved.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no specific legal implications to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 It is possible that when reviewing budget scrutiny reports during the year Members may have concerns about particular service areas. It would be appropriate in these circumstances for the Committee to ask to consider more detailed budgetary information in relation to these services as part of the budget scrutiny process.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 The Committee may wish to consider the impact of any proposed budgetary changes on customers and any equalities and diversity implications as part of the budget scrutiny process.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider whether the new style of presentation enhances Members' ability to identify any potential risks arising from the proposed budget.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Financial Information Schedule 2013/14-2016/17.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Jayne Pickering Exec Director Finance and Resources
Email: j.pickering@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.: (01527) 881400

Keep my place safe and looking good.

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Bereavement Services	-435	-455	-338	-335
Building Control	61	48	-33	-33
Community Services - Community Safety	303	210	546	369
CCTV	390	385	353	352
Development Management	223	159	211	217
Environmental Health	596	561	571	521
Highways & Drainage	367	431	396	395
Landscape and Ground Maintenance	125	124	92	92
Manager Lands. & Cleansing	1,162	1,118	1,262	1,283
Planning Policy	226	224	246	251
Waste Management - Refuse & Recycling	1,031	978	995	1,057
Totals:	4,049	3,784	4,302	4,168

Help me run a successful business
--

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Asset & Property Management	-254	-307	-329	-329
Economic Development	157	114	177	158
Manager Taxi Licensing	-196	-196	-172	-172
Community Services - Grants to Vol bodies	301	293	299	299
Totals:	9	-96	-25	-45

Help me to be financially independent (including education and skills)

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Benefits	45	58	257	109
Council Tax	197	45	154	163
Property Management - Rents grants	15	15	15	15
Totals:	257	117	426	286

Help me to live my life independently (including health and activity)
--

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Community Services (incl dial a ride & Shopmobility)	494	463	411	416
Lifeline	-49	-28	-34	-37
Manager Care & Repair	44	50	50	50
Totals:	489	485	427	430

Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Housing General Fund	941	930	872	900
Community Services - Housing Policy	175	174	172	172
Democratic Services - Land charges	-45	-35	-23	-23
Totals:	1,070	1,069	1,021	1,049

Provide things for me to do, see and visit

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Cultural Services	667	628	658	713
Leisure & Cultural Man	24	25	38	38
Parks & Green Spaces	821	817	769	741
Sports Services	569	764	646	566
Business Development - Cultural	-4	13	0	0
Totals:	2,077	2,247	2,110	2,057

Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet purpose)

Department	Actual 2013/14 £'000	Actual 2014/15 £'000	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Draft Budget 2016/17 £'000
Asset Maint	322	322	344	344
Business Development	172	168	78	-113
Business Transformation	828	909	1,124	1,126
Climate Change	9	11	14	14
Corporate Strategy	74	69	86	86
Corporate Admin, Central post and printing	368	431	436	433
Corporate Services	419	376	352	359
Customer Support Services	508	541	527	567
Democratic Services	324	308	341	346
Elections	95	101	230	230
Financial Services & Procurement	699	632	557	555
Human Resources	407	482	451	514
It Licences Direct Services	166	164	154	154
Legal Services	309	241	253	252
Manager Supplies And Transport	0	-10	-0	4
Property Management	29	17	21	21
Asset & Property Management - Town Hall	761	925	981	982
Sports Services - Management	66	70	73	73
Cultural Services - Management	60	105	125	98
CMT	48	49	-113	-139
Totals:	5,665	5,911	6,033	5,905



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EXECUTIVE

Committee

8th September 2015

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon (during Minute No.'s 25 to 33)

Officers:

Emma Baker, Rebecca Dunne, Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley, Mark Hanwell, Sam Morgan, Jayne Pickering, Dean Piper and Judith Willis

Committee Officers:

Debbie Parker-Jones

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Greg Chance and Debbie Taylor.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Additional Papers

One set of Additional Papers had been circulated; Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Council Core Strategy Proposed Modifications. Consideration of this was required in order to meet the 25th September 2015 deadline for submission of representations on the proposed modifications.

Work Programme

It was noted that the following reports which were due to be considered at the meeting had been deferred to a later date:

- Reorganisation and Change Policy; and
- Housing Business Case.

.....
Chair

EXECUTIVE

Committee

8th September 2015

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 14th July 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th July 2015.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendations at Minute No.'s 19, 20 and 21, relating to the LGBT Task Group, Redditch Outdoor Market and Review of Leisure Services respectively, had been dealt with by the Executive at its last meeting.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th July 2015 be received and noted.

30. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, a draft Equal Opportunity Policy. This report had previously been delayed at full Council in order for some minor alterations to be made.

It was noted that the Policy applied to all staff who worked for the Council, including those employed on a temporary or part-time basis, or on work experience. Appendix 2 had been added to the Policy which clarified the position in relation to Local Authority Members. Specific exemptions applied for agency and contract workers and Appendix 4 detailed some of the legislation which worked in conjunction with the Policy, including the Agency Worker Regulations 2010. Section 4 of the Policy had also been expanded to set out the position for workers under 18 years of age.

The policy would be reviewed at least every two years or sooner to comply with changes to the law or policy and practice. Union representatives had been consulted on the Policy and amendments had been made as a result.

EXECUTIVE

Committee

8th September 2015

RECOMMENDED that

the Equal Opportunity Policy, as appended to the report, be approved and adopted.

31. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - CHARGES

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, a report which sought to introduce charges for the discretionary elements of the street naming and numbering service. The report also detailed the relevant legislation to be adopted by full Council as part of the process for introducing charges.

It was noted that the charges would not apply to individual residents but to developers and house builders. A number of other local authorities had recently introduced such charges and if approved by Council the income generated would cover the cost of providing the street naming and numbering post within ICT Services.

Officers were currently in discussion over which department would be best placed to notify developers of the proposed charges, ICT or Planning, and Members requested that they be informed once a decision had been made on this.

In response to Member questions, Officers clarified the need to adopt the relevant legislation detailed in the report, together with the position in relation to previous charges which had been made.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Public Health Act 1925 be adopted by the Council;
- 2) charging for the discretionary element of Street Naming and Numbering be introduced from April 2016 and the fees set out at Appendix 1 to the report be adopted; and
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation and Organisational Development to make the necessary amendments to the Street Naming and Numbering Policy resulting from the decisions at 1) and 2) above.

32. ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR REDDITCH

The Committee received a report which detailed a new set of economic themes, priorities, Action Plan and associated deliverables for Redditch.

EXECUTIVE

Committee

8th September 2015

Members heard that the economic priorities had been developed in close consultation with the Redditch Economic Development Theme Group, which included a number of business representatives and partner organisations. It was proposed that the Theme Group would continue to act in an advisory capacity to the Council in the delivery of the Action Plan, which would provide some external support and insight. Monthly briefings and updates would be provided to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for economic development, to ensure that effective progress was being made in delivering the plan.

A request was made by one Member to amend recommendations 2 and 3 of the report to extend the remit for the management and monitoring of the Action Plan to specifically include the Portfolio Holder, and for a 6-monthly progress report to be taken to the Executive Committee. The amendments were not seconded and were therefore not considered or voted on.

A discussion took place on the 'Skilled Redditch' economic theme and the Heart of Worcestershire College's role in this regard. Officers advised that the College was a member of the Theme Group and had therefore assisted in the development of the Action Plan and would continue to be involved with this. There were additional providers of education who Officers and the Council needed to work with. These included the Employment and Skills Board and Local Enterprise Partnerships, with business pool funding being available for the districts to assist with skills growth. North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration was looking to be proactive in terms of apprenticeships with local employers in order to support the town's young people into sustainable employment by equipping them with the relevant skills and expertise required by employers.

Members queried the current position in relation to The Anchorage property in Redditch, which had been considered by the Executive some years previously and on which confirmation was awaited from the College. Officers agreed to check the position with this and to report back to Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the economic themes, priorities and Action Plan for Redditch and the associated deliverables set out at Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed;**

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- 2) the management and monitoring of the Action Plan be delegated to the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration; and
- 3) a report setting out progress against delivery of the priorities and Action Plan be brought to the Executive Committee on an annual basis.

33. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report, for recommendation to full Council, on the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process 2016/17. The report also recommended changes to update and improve the scoring matrix and Grants Policy.

Whilst the overall budget of £241k for the grants process remained the same as for 2015/16 (£4k of which would facilitate the delivery of training to the Voluntary and Community Sector on external funding workshops/events), the themes and proposed funding for 2016/17 had been updated to reflect the Council's Strategic Purposes and customer demand.

Officers advised that it had been recommended that the scoring matrix at Appendix 2 to the report be trialled at the next Grants Panel meeting, and that this continue to be used moving forward if this were found to be successful. Members supported this proposal.

Officers responded to Member questions on current staffing issues and confirmed that whilst a member of staff had been on long-term sick leave this had not affected the grants progress to date, nor would it affect it moving forward.

Whilst the majority of Members felt that any underspend in the grants at the end of the year should be put back into balances some did not support this approach.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2016/17 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2) the scoring matrix and Grants Policy be updated as set out in Appendices 2 (subject to a satisfactory trial of the

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scoring matrix at the next Grants Panel meeting) and 3 to the report; and

- 3) any underspend in the grants at the end of the year be put back into balances.

34. STRATFORD ON AVON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS - RESPONSE

Members received, for recommendation to full Council, the Council's draft response to Stratford-on-Avon's 'Core Strategy Proposed Modifications in response to the Inspector's Interim Conclusions'. This report had been issued under cover of Additional Papers in order to meet the 25th September deadline for the submission of representations.

Officers advised that the response, which raised a possible concern in relation to the supply of labour force, reflected the debate which had taken place at the Planning Advisory Panel meeting.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council's response to Stratford-on-Avon's Core Strategy Proposed Modifications, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed.

35. CONSOLIDATED REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN AND FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT

The Committee received a report which detailed the Council's final financial position for 2014/15 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. It was noted that this report was originally scheduled for consideration at the July meeting but had been delayed owing to the late submission of the accounts to the external auditors.

Officers highlighted the key elements of the report. The final position showed that in addition to the unidentified savings of £635k being delivered, a further £103k of savings had been achieved on general services, together with an additional £716k of savings on other funding and financial budgets, therefore generating an overall underspend of £819k. The £819k of savings had been transferred to balances to increase the balances level to £1.985m. This was significantly in excess of the £750k reserves level agreed by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Following the savings a full review was underway to ensure the reduced cost base was captured for future years' budget reductions.

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Members were pleased to note the current financial position and expressed their thanks to staff for their work on the savings. Balances had not been at the £2m mark since 2009 and cuts in government grants in recent years had totalled 49%, with a total of £2.2m savings having been delivered by the Council. The Council was continually reviewing its services and making improvements and front line services had not been cut.

Officers provided clarification on a number of questions raised by Members. A Member questioned how much money had been saved by not having filled vacant posts. Officers advised that they did not have this information to hand and agreed to check the position with this and report back to Members outside of the meeting. Officers added that some posts were retained to allow for re-deployment opportunities.

RESOLVED that

the financial position on Revenue and Capital for the financial year 2014/15, as detailed in the report, and the transfer to balances of £819k to increase the balances level to £1.985m 31st March 2015 be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that

the movement in reserves as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

36. FINANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 1, APRIL - JUNE 2015

Members considered a report which detailed the Council's financial position across the Strategic Purposes for the period April to June 2015 (Quarter 1 2015/16), which enabled Members to be aware of the level of funding attributed to these areas.

The report focussed on the position with the Revenue Budget and Officers advised that they would be looking to enhance the report over the following quarters, with capital details to be included in the next report.

In line with a commitment previously given by Members, Officers were in the process of reviewing the costs associated with enabling services. Officers were also due to meet with Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council to discuss financial issues related to civil parking enforcement.

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A Member queried the variation for Lifeline and whether there was any trend in the reduction of Lifeline users. Officers agreed to look into this and to report back to Members on the position.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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

There were no additional referrals for the Committee to consider.

38. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

39. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the update provided in the report in relation to the LGBT Community Task Group's findings.

Councillor Hartnett advised that the response which he had received from Adrian Hardman, Leader of Worcestershire County Council, had been positive, details of which Councillor Hartnett had fed back to the Task Group Chair and Officers.

RESOLVED that

the update be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.25 pm

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Chair

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WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	Minutes of previous meeting Consideration of the Executive Committee Work Programme Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. Quarterly Tracker Report	Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

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	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Bi-Annual Monitoring Report – Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy</p>	<p>Redditch Borough Council representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED		
6th October 2015	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny – Chair's Update	Councillor Prosser
6th October 2015	Gas Safety Inspections – Update Report	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
6th October 2015	Overview of the budget report	Relevant lead Director
6th October 2015	Housing Provision - Presentation	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
6th October 2015	Voluntary Sector Grants – Briefing Paper	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
8th December 2015	Fees and Charges – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant lead Director
8th December 2015	Housing Benefits - Presentation	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

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8th December 2015	Housing Revenue Account Rent and Capital Report – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
8th December 2015	Leisure Services Options Short, Sharp review – final report	Councillor Potter
8th December 2015	Overview of the budget report	Relevant lead Director
5th January 2016	Update on the Medium Term Financial Plan	Relevant lead Director
5th January 2016	Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
16th February 2016	Medium Term Financial Plan – Consideration of Executive Committee’s budget recommendations	Relevant lead Director
1st March 2016	Local Strategic Partnership – Monitoring Update Report	Relevant lead Director
1st March 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Councillor Potter
12th April 2016	Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		

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	Tackling Obesity Task Group - Feedback	Councillor Potter
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