



Council

Mon 26 September
2016
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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difference*

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Council

Monday, 26th September, 2016

7.00 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Joe Baker (Mayor)	Pattie Hill
	Jennifer Wheeler	Gay Hopkins
	(Deputy Mayor)	Wanda King
	Tom Baker-Price	Jane Potter
	Roger Bennett	Gareth Prosser
	Natalie Brookes	Antonia Pulsford
	Juliet Brunner	Mark Shurmer
	David Bush	Rachael Smith
	Michael Chalk	Yvonne Smith
	Greg Chance	Paul Swansborough
	Anita Clayton	Debbie Taylor
	Brandon Clayton	David Thain
	Matthew Dormer	Pat Witherspoon
	John Fisher	Nina Wood-Ford
	Andrew Fry	
	Bill Hartnett	

1. Welcome	The Mayor will open the meeting and welcome all present.
2. Apologies	To receive any apologies for absence on behalf of Council members.
3. Declarations of Interest	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.
4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 th July 2016.
5. Announcements	To consider Announcements under Procedure Rule 10: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mayor's Announcements b) Leader's Announcements c) Chief Executive's Announcements. (Oral report)

Council

Monday, 26th September, 2016

6. Questions on Notice	No questions have been submitted to date under Procedure Rule 9.2.
7. Motions on Notice	<p>To consider the following Motion under Procedure Rule 11:</p> <p>Social Media Training</p> <p>Proposed By Councillor Juliet Brunner, seconded by Councillor Anita Clayton</p> <p>“Social Media (SM) is now an integral part of the fabric of our society. It is overwhelmingly a force for good but can be, and has been, used inappropriately.</p> <p>Suitable training for Members was last provided two years ago. This is too infrequent. We call upon the Council to provide regular training in the use of Social Media.”</p>
8. Executive Committee (Pages 13 - 50)	<p>To receive the minutes and consider the recommendations and/or referrals from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 13th September 2016. There are recommendations to the Council on the following items:</p> <p>Minute no. 26: Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2017-18;</p> <p>Minute no. 28: ICT Infrastructure Resource;</p> <p>Minute no. 29: Efficiency Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20</p> <p>The recommendations and reports are enclosed with this agenda. The minutes are included in minute book 2.</p>
9. Regulatory Committees	<p>To formally receive the minutes of the following meetings of the Council’s Regulatory Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Planning committee 13th July 2016b) Licensing committee 18th Julyc) Planning committee 10th August <p>Copies of the minutes are available in Minute Book 2.</p>

<p>10. Urgent Business - Record of Decisions (Pages 51 - 56)</p>	<p>To note any decisions taken in accordance with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules (Part 6, Paragraph 5 and/or Part 7, Paragraph 15 of the Constitution), as specified.</p> <p>Application for Discretionary Rate Relief under the Localism Act 2011 – details attached.</p>
<p>11. Urgent Business - general (if any)</p>	<p>To consider any additional items exceptionally agreed by the Mayor as Urgent Business in accordance with the powers vested in him by virtue of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>(This power should be exercised only in cases where there are genuinely special circumstances which require consideration of an item which has not previously been published on the Order of Business for the meeting.)</p>



Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Mayor), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Roger Bennett, Natalie Brookes, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Jane Potter, Gareth Prosser, Mark Shurmer, Rachael Smith, Yvonne Smith, Paul Swansborough, Debbie Taylor, David Thain and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Sheena Jones and Sarah Sellers

Democratic Services Officer:

Amanda Scarce

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Antonia Pulsford and Pat Witherspoon.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Debbie Taylor declared an other disclosable interest in respect of agenda item 7(b) as an employee of University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23rd May 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) The Mayor

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Chair

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

The Mayor advised that he had had a busy first two months in office and thanked his deputy for attending a number of events on his behalf. He also took the opportunity to thank the Leader for his support at a number of events. Particular reference was made to the lowering of the flag in respect of the Orlando shootings and the atrocities which had taken place in Nice, France. He had also attended the Bandstand event, which had been well attended, the Astwood Bank Carnival and the 37th Signals Civic Reception and it had been a pleasure to support the Cycle Race.

b) The Leader

The Leader reiterated the Mayor's comments in respect of it being a busy two months and highlighted a number of events and meetings which he had attended during that period. The comments of the Mayor were echoed in respect of the tragic events which had taken place in recent weeks, including the Orlando shootings, the death of Jo Cox, MP and the horrific events in Nice. The Leader and Mayor had been joined by the MP, Mosque leaders and two French nationals on the roof of the Town Hall with the tricolour and Union flag flying at half-mast.

The Leader also made reference to the following events which had taken place:

- The parade for Armed Forces day had been followed by a Civic Reception at the Town Hall for the Armed Forces and their families, which had been a great success.
- The first Syrian refugees had arrived in Redditch and had been visited by the Leader welcoming them to the town. There had also been a funding raising dinner held in the Town Hall which had been a great success and which the families had attended.
- The Leader had collected the Inspiring Co-op of the Year Award on behalf of Redditch Co-op Homes/Riverside Co-op.
- Together with Councillor Hill the Leader had attended the re-opening of the Polish Club, which was also attended by a representative of the Polish Embassy from London.
- The first Bandstand event of the year had a theme of the Queen's Birthday and had been well attended.
- 40th Birthday celebrations of the Ecumenical Centre.
- Redditch Has Talent finals – thanks were given to all the staff and volunteers at the Palace Theatre.
- Along with other Members, the Leader had attended the Service of Remembrance for the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. It was acknowledged that over 50 soldiers from Redditch and surrounding areas had lost their lives in the battle.

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

- The Leader had also attended, along with other Members, a community fun day at the Ryce building, which had been a diverse multi-cultural event.
- A fund raising event hosted by the Mayor at the Shai Palace which had raised over £600 towards his chosen charities for the year.

The Leader had also attended a number of meetings/briefings which he made reference to during his announcements:

- The West Midlands Combined Authority had now been formed and more councils had joined, including Warwickshire County Council, Stratford Upon Avon, North Warwickshire and Rugby.
- The Leader had held a meeting with the Transport for West Midlands (formerly Centro), together with the Chief Executive and a representative from the MP's office. The aim was to get changes to timetables between Redditch and Birmingham New Street, to allow for an "express" or limited stop train twice a day. Fare equalisation on the network had also been discussed. There had been no guarantees but it had been a positive meeting and if successful the changes would be beneficial to commuters as well as attracting businesses to Redditch.
- A press release had been issued in respect of the Council supporting the Cycle Race as the County Council will no longer sponsor it in future years. The Leader wanted to encourage local businesses to sponsor the event and help raise the £80k for the event to take place in Redditch next year.
- A Member Development session had been attended in respect of safeguarding and prevent for children.
- Following another tragic death the Leader had written to the County Council Leader in respect of the Muskets Way footbridge requesting that it make it safe. A positive response had been received and a time limited, multi-agency group had been set up to make recommendations for a safe solution. Councillor Yvonne Smith would be the Council's representative on the group.
- A press release had also been issued in support of the Worcestershire multi faith group's statement about xenophobia and hate crime.

Councillor Brunner thanked the Mayor for writing letters of condolence to those countries affected by the recent tragic events.

20. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no questions on notice on this occasion.

21. MOTIONS ON NOTICEa) Redditch against Hate Crimes

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Juliet Brunner in respect of Redditch against Hate Crimes. This was seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Brunner explained that the Motion had come about as Members had been approached by residents asking for this to be brought forward. Councillor Brunner reassured all the communities in Redditch that they were valued and supported and that any acts of Hate Crime would not be tolerated. The Redditch Anti Hate Partnership was one of the first to be set up in 1995, and pre dated the Crime and Disorder Act. There had not been an increase in such crimes, but the Council should not be complacent and anyone who had witnessed or experienced such a crime should report it as soon as possible, in order to work together to support officers in dealing with such matters.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Hartnett thanked all the residents who had sent emails to many Members, with a draft notice of motion which this had been based on. Council was reminded that Redditch had a long and proud history of diversity, tolerance and of communities working together. Whilst it was unfortunate that the public felt the need to move a notice, it was an opportunity to reaffirm the Council's rejection of racism, xenophobia and hate crime. Councillor Hartnett highlighted the work of the Council's Community Safety Partnership and in particular the anti-hate crime programme which was instigated by them and rolled out across the county, together with the good working relationships which had been built up with community leaders throughout the town. Redditch was made up of diverse communities with a great community spirit, coming together at many events held throughout the year. Councillor Hartnett reminded Members that Redditch had been the first town in the county to welcome refugees from Syria. In supporting the motion he concluded that xenophobia and hate had no place in our society and would not be tolerated in Redditch.

A number of Members spoke in support of the Motion with Councillor Paul Swansborough bringing forward an amendment to the original Motion, to insert the phrase "and working" into the final sentence of the Motion. This was agreed by the proposer and seconder and subsequently by the Council.

RESOLVED that

The Motion be agreed in the following terms:

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

"We in Redditch are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our town or country.

The Elected representatives on Redditch Borough Council, condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Councillors and officers of Redditch Borough Council will continue to work to support local bodies and programmes such as the North Worcestershire Hate incident partnership, to prevent and tackle racism and xenophobia.

We reassure all people living and working in Redditch that they are valued members of our community."

b) Announcement of emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Bill Hartnett in respect of the announcement of emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016. This was seconded by Councillor Juliet Brunner.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Hartnett thanked the other political groups for supporting it. He highlighted that the aim of the motion was three fold, to enable the people to have their say, to allow potential other providers to have a say if they chose to and to enable the public to understand what was going on and what the long term plan was for the hospital.

Councillor Hartnett advised that since the Motion had been brought forward both groups had met with senior officers of the Worcestershire Health Trust. The Council was in support of the staff at the hospital and had campaigned for its services for a long time. The following points had been reiterated at the meeting:

- 20% of Redditch families do not have access to a car
- Access was a major issue which needed to be resolved, not only for patients, but also for visitors and staff.
- The mortality rate for Redditch was the worst in the County by 5 years.
- Redditch was one of the fastest growing areas in the county – with an estimated 20,000 homes being built in Redditch and Bromsgrove over the next 20 years.
- Warwickshire was only a matter of yards away from the hospital, with residents in Alcester, Studley and Bidford relying on the hospital. However, Warwickshire had been excluded from the consultations.

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

- The Trust remained in “special measures” with a deficit now estimated at £67m.
- The high vacancy rate and the continued cost and need to use locum consultants.

Members were reminded of the work of the Save the Alex campaigners and reaffirmed the support from the Council. Councillor Hartnett highlighted the alliance, which had been forged over the last 5 years, with the 3 local councils and corresponding MPs. This alliance had lobbied government ministers and civil servants tirelessly.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Brunner unequivocally gave the support of her Group and endorsed the comments of the Leader. It was highlighted that there was not a single family in Redditch who would not have had contact with the hospital and took the opportunity to praise the staff that had to live with this ongoing uncertainty. She commented on what she considered to be a poor communications strategy of the Trust, together with the importance of the Council and its residents being given the opportunity to have a say in any future plans. Councillor Brunner also gave details of a meeting which had been chaired by Karen Lumley MP alongside the Trust where the option of a shuttle bus between sites had been discussed and further meetings which would take place. She concurred that all such areas should have been thought through at the outset. It was important that all concerned stood together to bring this matter to a satisfactory and speedy outcome.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the Motion and reiterated the points already made, but also highlighted a number of other areas. Councillors Pattie Hill and Nina Wood-Ford in their role on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee assured Members that they continued to raise the issue of the Hospital at the meetings of this Committee.

Whilst thanking those residents that had attended, Councillor Brunner shared her disappointment in there not being a large number present and stated that it was important that residents made their voices heard. This was supported by Councillor Hartnett in his summing up and he urged residents to take part in any consultation in order to put across the message of clear support and the need for sustainable and accessible services. Councillor Hartnett confirmed that the actions within the Motion would be put in place as soon as possible and the fight to retain the services would continue unabated in partnership with our adjoining authorities.

RESOLVED that

The Motion be agreed in the following terms:

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

“Council notes with dismay the recent announcement from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (WAHT) with regard to an emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016 which is the latest in a series of changes made to the detriment of our local hospital using the “cover / shield” of safety – all in advance of the much publicised public consultation. Whilst the council fully supports and endorses the need for services to be safe we need to be assured as to what has been done to mitigate this decision and that this does not represent the easy option and a further downgrade of services to the people of Redditch and surrounding areas.

As agreed before the Council’s policy is to look towards Birmingham. This is further proof that this is the correct position and that the Acute Services provision in Worcestershire is simply unsustainable in its current form and we believe will be proven when the Sustainability and Transformation Plan is published.

The Council need to be assured that this isn’t a permanent move in the same way the removal of maternity was. When the latest move was announced the Trust stated that the period between now and September will enable them to engage with the public on the reasons for the changes and how services will be affected:

Council

- call upon the Chair and Chief Executive of WAHT to host a series of public consultation events in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford to outline the reasons for the change, the actions already taken to address the situation and also what will be done to ensure this isn’t a permanent change;
- call upon the Chair and Chief Executive of WAHT and the Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG Chief Operating Officer to attend the previously agreed Redditch Borough Council’s Health Commission to address wider issues around the future of the Alex Hospital ;
- to write to UHB and the Women and Children's Trusts in Birmingham to ask for their views on this matter.”

22. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings of 8th March 2016, 7th June 2016 and 12th July 2016. The minutes from the March meeting were for information only as the recommendations had been dealt with at the last ordinary meeting

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

of the Council. There were no recommendations from the minutes of the meeting held in June. There were a number of recommendations to be debated from the minutes of the July meeting of the Executive and these were discussed as follows:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 – Proposed Main Modifications

Members were reminded that the proposed modifications were those which had been put forward by the Inspector and it was clarified that the consultation referred to was in respect of those modifications only and not the plan as a whole. The consultation period had been extended to take account of the holiday period.

Councillor Juliet Brunner proposed the following amendment:

“The consultation not to commence until the outcome of the ‘notice to hold’ has been formally decided by the DCLG and the Executive Committee and Council has considered a report on the outcome.”

Councillor Brunner explained that she had proposed the amendment due to Karen Lumley, MP having requested a “notice on hold” against the Local Plan No. 4. It would therefore be prudent for the Council to await the outcome of that request before making a decision and entering into a consultation period. A consultation could be a costly exercise and one which may have to be repeated should changes following the “notice of hold”.

Officers clarified the “Notice of Hold” process, which entailed the Plan being brought before the Secretary of State. This was a valid mechanism for the MP to use in order to put the Local Plan on hold. The following areas were debated by Members:

- The Plan was “out of date” already as no account had been taken in respect of the Council’s membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- Potential flaws within the plan in respect of the location of both housing and commercial sites and the impact on the infrastructure of borough.
- Whether the deferral of the Plan would impact on any of the Council’s neighbours, for example Bromsgrove District Council.
- It was reiterated that the amendments within the report were merely those of the Inspector and that the Plan as a whole was not being consulted upon, as this process had already taken place.
- Whether the Plan had taken into the account the true views of the residents.

Following debate the amendment was declared lost.

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

Members thanked Officers for their hard work and those residents who had taken the time to respond to previous consultations. The Council had been transparent during the process and the Inspector was merely asking for a consultation to take place in respect of those amendments. It was highlighted within the report that the consultation was not an opportunity to raise matters that either were, or could have been, part of the earlier representations or hearings on the submitted Plan and that comments should be confined to the Main Modifications and address the following points:

- Make clear in what way the published Main Modification is not sound or not legally compliant,
- Support representation by evidence showing why the Main Modifications should be changed,
- Say precisely how the Main Modifications should be changed.

Reference was made to particular areas (and the location of the high schools in relation to the proposed housing developments) within the Borough which had been highlighted in the Plan and its impact on transport infrastructure. However, the view was expressed that discussion of these was not appropriate at this time and that Members had previously had an opportunity, through the frequent Planning Advisory Panel meetings, to raise any particular concerns that they might have had in respect of all the points raised. Consultation had been carried out with neighbouring authorities when preparing the Plan and the Inspector had acknowledged this within his report.

Redditch Local Development Scheme July 2016 and Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2016

Councillor Brunner proposed the following amendment:

“The Council will defer the adoption of the Redditch Local Development Scheme and the 6 week consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement until the outcome of the ‘note to hold’ has been formally decided by the DCLG and the Executive Committee and Council have considered a report on the outcome.”

Councillor Brunner explained that again, she had proposed the amendment due to the MP’s request for a “notice on hold” against the Local Plan as it was felt it was not appropriate to make a decision until this process had been completed. In debating the amendment a number of areas were discussed including:

- The potential cost to the Council should further amendments be made following the “notice on hold” report being received.

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

- It was understood that the Birmingham Local Plan had also been subject to a “notice on hold” and it had been agreed that any further action would be deferred until the process had been completed.
- Concerns around the Local Plan No. 4 in its current format.
- The recommendation before Members was in respect of how the Council would deal with consultations in the future; it was suggested that the documents should be agreed in their current formats to enable work to proceed.
- The reasons why the MP had found it necessary to instigate the “notice on hold” process and when this had happened.

Following debate the amendment was declared lost.

Consolidated Revenue and Capital Outturn and Financial Reserves Statement 2015/16

Concerns were raised in respect of vacant posts which had not been filled and that savings had been made due to funds being earmarked for specific areas and the work which these related to had not been carried out.

Councillor John Fisher gave his thanks to the Section 151 Officer and her staff for completing the accounts for 2015/16 and to officers for making savings in excess of those which were expected. This had led to a £40k improvement in the Council’s general fund balances.

RESOLVED that in relation to the meeting of the Executive Committee of 12th July

- a) the recommended Main Modifications of the Inspector, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted, and that Officers be authorised to proceed with an 8-week consultation on the Main Modifications, to run from 27th July 2016 to 21st September 2016. Details of the method of consultation are set out in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.22 of the report;**
- b) the revised Redditch Local Development Scheme (LDS), as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted as the Council’s current LDS;**
- c) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to review and publish amended LDS timetables for the publication of the Development Plan Documents;**

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

- d) the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for publication as part of a 6-week period of public consultation in September – October 2016; and
- e) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to consider the response to the public consultation and, subject to no significant issues arising, to amend and adopt the SCI.
- f) the transfer to balances of £40k be approved;
- g) the movement in reserves, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and
- h) the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 8th March 2016, 7th June 2016 and 12th July 2016 be received and adopted.

23. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes from meetings of the Planning and Audit, Governance and Standards Committees:

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 13th April 2016 and 8th June 2016 be received and adopted; and
- 2) the minutes of the meetings of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 21st April 2016 and 7th July 2016 be received and adopted.

24. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2016

Council reviewed its constitution on an annual basis. Members were asked to consider a report outlining updates that had been proposed to the Council's constitution.

RESOLVED that

the Council's constitution as presented be approved.

25. APPOINTMENT TO REDDITCH CO-OP HOMES

As Councillor Hartnett had stood down from the Redditch Co-operative Homes Members were asked to appoint to the vacancy for the municipal year 2016/17.

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

RESOLVED that

Councillor Andy Fry be appointed to Redditch Co-operative Homes for the municipal year 2016/17.

26. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

The Council was informed that there had been a slight change to the Council's membership of Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board (formerly Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee) in that Councillor Yvonne Smith had replaced Councillor Pat Witherspoon as substitute member.

RESOLVED that

the appointment of Councillor Yvonne Smith as substitute Member for the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board be endorsed.

27. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to note.

28. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

The Mayor informed Members, as notified on Friday 22nd July 2016 he had accepted an item of urgent business, which was to appoint a Vice-Chair to the Planning Committee as Councillor Yvonne Smith had stepped down from that role. The item was urgent as a Vice Chair needed to be in place for the next meeting of the Planning Committee, which was due to take place in August.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford be appointed Vice Chair of the Planning Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.50 pm

COUNCIL26th September 2016

26. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANT FUNDING 2017-18**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2017/18 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- 2) the £75,000 Investing Grant be allocated for financial/debt support and problem solving advice and be awarded via a 3 year contract; and**
- 3) any underspend in the grants at the end of any year be put back into balances.**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

13th September 2016

VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2017/18

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Community Leadership & Partnership inc. Voluntary Sector
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report contains recommendations as to the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2017/18. See Appendix 1. The theme titles are aligned with the Council's strategic purposes. In respect of the £75,000 Investing Grant, the Committee is asked to consider a 3 year procurement process for this theme.
- 1.2 The Executive Committee is also asked to consider how it will deal with any underspend in the grant pot at the end of financial years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee are requested to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) **the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2017/18 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2) **the £75,000 Investing Grant be allocated for financial/debt support and problem solving advice and be awarded via a 3 year contract; and**
- 3) **underspend in the grants at the end of any year be put back into balances.**

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**13th September 2016

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The current voluntary and community sector grants budget is £241,000. This report recommends the continuation of this budget allocation in 2017/18 but with the £75,000 Investing Grant awarded on a 3 year contract. This contract would be subject to the annual funding approval of the Executive Committee.
- 3.2 There have always been small amounts of underspend every financial year. This is because the grants requested do not exactly match the amount available or because during the financial year the projects have not achieved all aspects of their initial proposals and the funding has been altered to reflect this. For the last two years any underspends at the end of the financial year have been put back into balances. The Committee is asked to approve the process for all future years.

Background

- 3.3 Each year the grants team look at how the Grant Programme can best serve the local VCS while aligning the programme to the Council's Strategic Purposes. For an overview on how the 2016/17 grants programme aligned to the strategic purposes see Appendix 2.
- 3.4 The Grant Programme includes the Stronger Communities grants which enables small groups to deliver a wide variety of projects. Examples of projects funded to date for 2016/17 include:
- Funk up your Junk project;
 - Celebration of the Queen's Birthday;
 - Two week activity programme for children aged 8 to 13 during the six week summer holiday;
 - Men in Sheds project;
 - Older Peoples' Choir.

A full list of all funded organisations is published on the Council's website.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme, ensuring that we comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

13th September 2016

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

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 The themes and proposed split of funding for the 2017/18 Grants programme were updated in 2016/17 to reflect the Council's Strategic Purposes and customer demand as follows. Officers propose that this funding split as detailed below remains unchanged for 2017/18:

Strategic Purpose	Funding allocation 2016/17	Funding allocation 2017/18
Help me to be financially independent	£85,000	£85,000
Help me to live my life independently	£65,000	£65,000
Provide good things for me to do, see and visit	£6,000	£6,000
Keep my place safe and looking good	£15,000	£15,000
Help me run a successful business	£50,000	£50,000
Stronger Communities Grant Programme - 3 rounds per year	£16,000	£16,000

From the £241,000 budget, £4,000 is retained for the delivery of training to the VCS and to facilitate external funding workshops/events.

- 3.9 Deadline dates for both the main grants programme and the Stronger Communities grants programme have been set in order to ensure the smooth delivery of the programme. The timetable also takes account of the Overview and Scrutiny recommendation that sufficient time is given to enable Voluntary & Community Sector organisations to plan constructively for the year ahead. See Appendix 3 for timescales.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

13th September 2016

- 3.10 To enable the Council to deliver its grants programme, Officers will need to continue to work closely with the Communications Team to ensure that a full and informative guide to the new procedure is implemented and that Officers are engaging with the full range of VCS organisations and groups within the local area.
- 3.11 By working closely with BARN & local VCS organisations on delivering our long term training & support, we can ensure that the sector will receive an agreed standard of training with the Council ensuring that we receive value for money. Outcomes initially identified are:
- **Increase volunteers skills in bid writing**
 - **Facilitate events that invite external funders to Redditch**
 - **Encourage partnership working within the Boroughs VCS**
 - **Event to raise awareness of local VCS organisations**
- 3.12 An approach has been made by the current provider of the £75K Investing Grant for consideration to be given to awarding this grant on a longer term contract. This is in order for the project to develop and expand within the Borough. Such a proposal would be in accordance with the Council's policy for funding VCS organisations using the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.13 National experience has shown that the benefits of funding being awarded for a longer term are:
- A clear service specification enables services to be developed and shaped over time and in response to identified community needs.
 - A provider can build up a longer term relationship with the local community and other local VCS organisations and have a better understanding and ability to react to changing local needs.
 - Enhances the long term financial stability of the service provider. It is common for VCS organisations to be only financial stable on a year by year basis as one year grants are received.
 - Strengthens the organisations ability to attract funding from other sources, particularly larger national funding streams. Frequently to access these funds an organisation has to evidence a 3 year Sustainability Plan. In addition being able to identify matchfunding strengthens a bid application. Attracting additional funding will add value and increase service provision and accessibility for Redditch residents.
 - If an organisation has a desire to have premises in the Borough, funding that is only guaranteed for one year restricts lease options and the availability of external funding for this purpose.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****13th September 2016**

- Crucially it assists the bedding in of effective partnerships with other local agencies from all sectors and including ourselves. In particular a longer term partnership arrangement would support the financial inclusion work that the Council is undertaking within locality teams.
- Experience from other areas has shown that stable/secure funding for the generalist advice service enhances opportunities for successful funding applications involving 'add on' services such as paid debt caseworkers, welfare benefits caseworkers and projects designed to reach people in most need in the community. The ability to secure an office base would enable volunteer recruitment and retention from the local community to be increased, and to grow advice provision with the knock on effect of enhanced job opportunities.

3.14 If a 3 year grant was approved, this would be procured in accordance with our Financial Regulations and against a detailed contract specification. The specification would require the provision of free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to enable Redditch residents to deal with a wide range of issues including benefits, housing, money advice, employment, consumer, relationships and taxation. The nature of the assistance provided would depend on the clients needs. Service Standards would be set out and there would a requirement to work in partnership with the Council. In addition any contract would set out how it supports the Council's Strategic Purposes. In particular a 3 year contract would enable the Council to better meet the delivery of its strategic purpose of "Help me to be financially independent".

3.15 The Council currently provides high level financial advice and support through a Financial Support Framework. This enables Officers to pull support from a number of providers, using the one most suitable for the individual customer needs. This is currently funded through the Essential Living Fund (ELF), however grant funding for ELF has ceased and the current RBC budget will not be sufficient to fund this in future.

Having analysed the type of support provided through this framework, much of it could be provided through the VCS via a service level agreement as suggested in 3.14. This would significantly reduce the budget needed for the very high level intensive support that will still be needed for a small number of customers.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

13th September 2016

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.16 The 2016/17 grants programme has supported 22 projects under the main grant fund with 21 projects/events being funded in the first two rounds via the Stronger Communities fund.
- 3.17 The 2016/17 Grants Programme received 44 applications from organisations, with the programme seeing several new organisations applying to the programme who had not applied to this fund previously.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Where needed the Grants Officer identifies external funding streams and invites external organisations to host events to raise awareness of the funding streams they have available to the local VCS. Officers have also made themselves available for one to one sessions to support funding applications for both internal and external opportunities. Redditch Borough Council's grant programme is widely advertised both locally and county wide.
- 4.2 The Council has an approved Grants Policy which clearly sets out how grants are awarded. It alleviates the risk to the Council from any organisations receiving funding and which then subsequently closes. It also encourages organisations to be not solely reliable on this grant funding.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Themes and funding split
Appendix 2 - Overview of aligning to strategic purposes
Appendix 3 - Timetable - Main Grants Programme and Stronger Communities Grants
Appendix 4 – Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Voluntary Sector Task Group Report 2014
- Reference Executive Committee report 2010

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix 1

Help me to be financially independent

**Recommended funding = £85K for the Delivery of Projects under the
“Financially Independent” banner**

**75K - Investing Grant -
Key Project Support Area - Financial/debt support and problem solving
advice with outcomes that:**

- Promote and raise awareness of services; providing better access through, for example, outreach in local communities, faster appointments; and other measures targeting low-income and disadvantaged groups of people;
- Ensure clients are fully informed of their options so that they are best placed to make decisions about how to proceed in their situation;
- Provide advice that is ‘consistent with a rights-based approach’, i.e. by providing full information of all the options available;
- Provide Face to Face appointments
- Pulling in support from other agencies where necessary;
- Work closely with departments within the local Council;
- Empower and up-skill residents to learn and access support via the Internet.

**10K - Investing Grant
Key Project Support Area - Maximum grant of £5K for delivery of a financial
independence prevention project aimed at children and young people with
outcomes that:**

- Deliver innovative workshops to deliver to children and young people within schools around managing finances;
- Provide budgeting lifeskills for young people;
- Highlight the long term impact of career choices/poor budgeting/debt;
- Encourages a long term ethos of saving.

Help me to live my life independently

Recommended funding = £65K for the delivery of projects under the “independent living” banner

35K Investing Grants - Maximum grant of 35K. For delivery of projects that support:

- Discounted childcare for local children with specific criteria for discounted places to be allocated to ensure the full benefit is gained from those families who have the highest need;
- Discounted Holiday play schemes for local children that have outcomes linked into education and health and well-being priorities.

30K Investing Grants - Maximum grant of 6K for each project submitted. For delivery of projects that support:

- Residents with low/medium level mental health/wellbeing issues;
- Learning & Personal Development projects for those on low incomes;
- Intergenerational/Cross cultural projects;
- Local Community Clubs - e.g. Older People, Cultural, disabilities etc.;
- Supporting local residents back into work;
- Employment support;
- Digital inclusion;
- Projects that support Health & Fitness;
- Dementia/Alzheimer's support projects;
- Training opportunities for Volunteers;
- Prevention and/or tackling alcohol & drug issues;

Provide me with good things to do, see and visit

Recommended funding = £6K for the delivery of projects under things to do, see and visit in the Borough

6K Investing Grants - Maximum bids for each project submitted of 3K. For delivery of projects that support:

- Support for Community improvement projects;
- Support for Families with additional needs to participate in local activities;
- Projects to encourage Enterprise in young people;
- Projects that increase youth participation;
- Project that supports older peoples participation.

Keep my place safe and looking good

Recommended funding = £15K for the delivery of projects under keeping safe and looking good banner

**15K Investing Grants - Maximum bids for each project submitted of 5K.
For delivery of projects that support:**

- Domestic abuse projects;
- Projects that support offenders;
- Projects that support environmental issues;
- Projects that support Community engagement;
- Projects that support Anti-social behaviour reduction;
- Projects that support reduction in Crime.

Help me run a successful voluntary sector business

50K - Investing Grant - Maximum grant of 10K for each project submitted
Key Project Support Area - For delivery of on-going support (core funding) for local services to include outcomes that:

- Provide services that support the Council's Strategic Purposes;
- Provide services that support local disadvantaged residents;
- Offer local volunteering opportunities;
- Work closely with partner/counterpart organisations;
- Deliver services that reflect the needs of residents;
- Provide training/up skilling opportunities for Staff & Volunteers.

Stronger Communities**Community Grant Fund - Total £16K****For the delivery of local grassroots community projects/events**

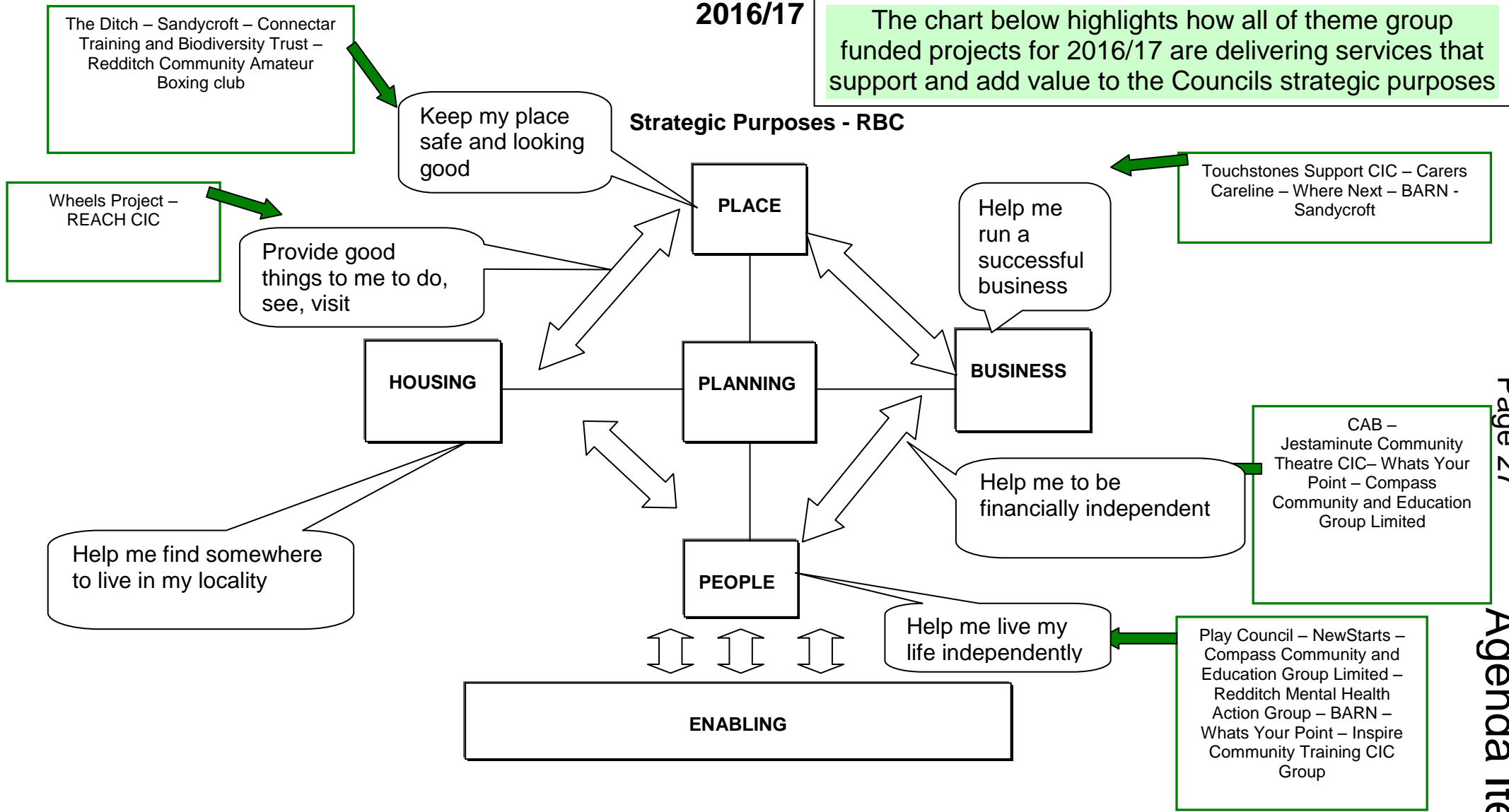
£16K Giving Grants Maximum bid of £500.00 per project submitted in each round

For delivery of projects: Hosted by local community groups - these groups will not need to be formally constituted but will be required to have a recognised role within the community they represent.

- Community support and participation projects.
- Three Rounds at £5,000 per round for community grants in 2016/17.
- Community groups invited to bid for up to £500 for delivery of local projects/events.

Appendix 2 - Redditch Borough Councils Voluntary & Community Grants Programme – 2016/17

The chart below highlights how all of these group funded projects for 2016/17 are delivering services that support and add value to the Councils strategic purposes



**Appendix 3 – Timetable – Major Grants Programme and
Stronger Communities Grant Programme**

Diary Dates for Redditch Borough Councils Major Grants Programme	Timescale
Launch	Monday 26 th September 2016
Application deadline	4 p.m. Friday 11th November 2016
Application Summaries to be produced for the Grant Panel's consideration	November and December 2016
Initial screening	As applications are submitted
Grants Panel Scoring	December 2016
Executive Committee Final Approval	17th January 2017
Approved grants awarded	April 2017
Assessment of applications	21 working days of deadline
Initial Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	28 working days of deadline

Diary Dates for Stronger Community Grant programme	Timescale
Launch - 1st Round	Monday 16th January 2017
1st Round Application deadline for receipt of applications	4pm Friday 11th February 2017
Launch - 2nd Round	Monday 15th May 2017
2nd Round Application deadline for receipt of applications	4pm Friday 9th June 2017
Launch - 3rd Round	Monday 14th August 2017
3rd Round Application deadline for receipt of applications	4pm Friday 15th September 2017
Assessment of applications	21 working days of deadline
Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	28 working days of deadline

Appendix 4

POLICY FOR FUNDING VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS USING THE SHOPPING, INVESTING AND GIVING FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community. The Council is committed to supporting organisations that deliver projects and activities which have a beneficial impact on the local community.
- 1.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 1.3 There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all arrangements where Redditch Borough Council provides assistance to voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 2.2 This policy applies primarily to direct financial payments from Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations such as grants and contracts, but also applies to support in kind such as discretionary rate relief or concessionary use of Redditch Borough Council facilities.

3. Funding Framework

- 3.1 The Council uses the ***Shopping, Investing and Giving*** funding framework

- 3.2 **Shopping** refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide or priority areas the Council wishes to invest in. The Council is committed to extending the opportunities available to voluntary and community sector organisations to be involved in the delivery of services.
- 3.3 **Investing** refers to the Council providing funding to develop the capacity of the voluntary and community sector. This may include making funding and resource contributions to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services, or making funding or other resources available for training or business development activities within organisations.
- 3.4 **Giving** refers to the Council providing funding or other resources to voluntary and community sector organisations to support work that contributes to the Council's aims, but which the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide.
- 3.5 The Executive Committee will consider and make a decision on which services and funding mechanisms the Council will seek to provide under the Shopping element of this framework subject to agreement by full Council e.g. Advice Services, Waste Management/recycling services.

4. Purposes of the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework

- 4.1 The following outcomes are intended to be the result of this framework:
- a) A corporate overview of the total support provided for the voluntary and community sector;
 - b) Consistency, clarity and equality in the processes to determine what support is given to which organisations;
 - c) A voluntary and community sector that understands how to engage with the Council, and is confident of fair and open treatment;
 - d) Council resources targeted to support those groups providing services which support current Council priorities.
- 4.2 This framework is to be integrated into all policies and procedures that are relevant to Council relationships with the voluntary and community sector.

5. Which Organisations are covered by the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework?

- 5.1 The voluntary and community sector is diverse, with organisations ranging from small community associations to large national or international organisations.

This framework applies to all organisations that exist principally to further social, cultural or environmental objectives and do not generate money that is distributed for the private benefit of the people who run the organisation or their associates.

- 5.3 To qualify for any support under the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework, an organisation must:
- a) not be run for personal gain, and must use all profits or income of the organisation for the public good;
 - b) work for the benefit of a community of interest or a geographical community;
 - c) have no undue restrictions on membership;
 - d) promote equality of opportunity;
 - e) operate independently, defining its own aims and objectives;
 - f) be formally constituted and have a management committee who do not receive payment for managing the organisation;
 - g) not be a political party, have the nature of a political party, or be engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.
- 5.4 The Council will not provide funds for the furtherance or propagation of a faith promoted by any organisation which is, or is deemed by the Council to be, of a religious nature. This will not preclude religious organisations applying for assistance to provide social or welfare work connected with their organisation and which do not directly promote a religious aspect.
- 5.5 Individual support opportunities may include additional restrictions on the nature of the organisations that can benefit. These will be clearly and openly stated, with appropriate justification.

6. Worcestershire Compact

- 6.1 Redditch Borough Council is a signatory of the Worcestershire Compact, and is committed to embedding the terms of the Compact and its Codes of Practice within the Council's policies and procedures.
- 6.2 Review and development of this policy will be undertaken to ensure compliance with Worcestershire Compact and to support development of the Compact.

COUNCIL26th September 2016

28. ICT INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCE**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the proposal for the functions provided by the ICT infrastructure roles to be outsourced to an external provider be approved;**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation and Organisational Development to undertake a tendering process to identify a suitable supplier to take on the ICT infrastructure functions; and**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to finalise and enter into a suitable legal agreement with the supplier identified under recommendation 2) above.**

Executive Committee13th September 2016**ICT Infrastructure Resource**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr J Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole, Head of Transformation & OD
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non - Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

- 1.1 For several years ICT has had an ongoing problem retaining and recruiting staff with certain specialised technical skills. Following the recent resignation of a member of staff, this problem has been highlighted again. The recruitment campaign to fill this vacant post has attracted few applicants with the required skills and experience. This report proposes a different approach to solving the problem by outsourcing a small part of the ICT team rather than just repeatedly going through a recruitment process.
- 1.2 If agreed, this approach will require the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment) of two posts to an outsource company. Currently, one of the posts is filled whilst the other is vacant.
- 1.3 This proposal presents a solution to correct a particular ongoing issue in the service due to the problem of recruiting staff with these types of skills. Overall the organisational approach remains that of sharing internal resource where ever possible.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Committee is requested to **RECOMMEND**:

- 2.1 That Members approve the proposal for the functions provided by the ICT infrastructure roles be outsourced to an external provider.
- 2.2 That Members delegate authority to the Head of Transformation and Organisational Development to undertake a tendering process to identify a suitable supplier to take on the ICT infrastructure functions.
- 2.3. That Members delegate to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services the responsibility for finalising and entering into a suitable legal agreement with the supplier identified under recommendation 2

Executive Committee13th September 2016**3. KEY ISSUES****Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The current cost to Redditch Borough Council (RBC) for providing the service is £34,093. This includes the salary and on-costs for the two posts effected.
- 3.2 Whilst final costs for delivering this part of the service externally will not be known until a competitive exercise is completed, it is estimated that the costs will be approximately £30,000 to RBC in the first year, with larger savings estimated for any additional years.
- 3.3 Other public sector organisations will be permitted to bid for the contract alongside any private companies.
- 3.4 Redditch Borough Council will charge £225 per month, per person, to any supplier delivering the outsource contract who wishes to retain members of staff on our premises. This is to cover the costs of providing office space, desks, electricity, phones etc.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 If the outsourcing to an external provider proceeds, this will constitute a relevant transfer for the purposes of the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment) Regulations. The rules provide that where in house services are transferred to external providers existing members of staff TUPE across to the new contractor. As referred to above, this will affect one member of staff. Any issues in this regard will be managed as part of the process in accordance with usual HR procedures going forward.
- 3.6 An appropriate competitive tendering exercise based on the value of the contract will be undertaken to identify a suitable supplier to take on the ICT infrastructure functions. It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the new supplier. The contract will include a clearly defined schedule of the works to be undertaken and clauses to cover any issues with under performance.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 During the past five years the ICT Infrastructure role has been advertised five times. During these recruitment campaigns, the council has had to advertise and re-advertise numerous times to find a suitable candidate. In 2015 a new infrastructure post was created that required additional skills and consequently offered a higher grade. After running two advertising and interviewing campaigns the post was finally

Executive Committee13th September 2016

recruited to in mid-2015. However, by June 2016 this post was vacant again when the incumbent officer resigned. Following adverts on a number of recruitment websites including the WM Jobs site, only eleven applications were received. Shortlisting resulted in five applicants being invited for interview. Of the five only one applicant attended for interview. This candidate scored just over 50% on the interview questions and was not considered suitable for this role.

- 3.8 The ICT Infrastructure Officer and ICT Infrastructure & Network Officer posts play a key role in maintaining day to day delivery of the ICT service to the Authority. Their main function is to ensure that the servers and storage which enable the business applications to work, are operating successfully. This includes the servers for Emails, Finance, Payroll, Revs & Bens, Elections etc.
- 3.9 In addition the team have been involved in several 'power off' situations at both Parkside and Redditch Town Hall and are key to closing down services correctly and returning them to a working state. Further power off situations may occur at both sites and currently only 1 person is available with the correct skillset to cover this task.
- 3.10 Senior managers are aware that the current lack of resource is having a detrimental effect on the remaining personnel and that this issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible to maintain staff morale and avoid absence.
- 3.11 Any potential supplier will need to deliver the service in line with PSN (Public Services Network) requirements. This will include having staff that help deliver the contract, pass a BPSS (Baseline Personal Security Standard) check.
- 3.12 The new contract will include an SLA (Service Level Agreement) that will prioritise critical support both in normal business hours, and at evenings and weekends. Ideally this will also include named individuals that will, over time, build a close understanding of our business.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 There are no customer / equalities and diversity implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that the external provider will not deliver the service to the level provided by the current internal team. This risk will be addressed through using a robust selection process, and ensuring as far as possible that there are appropriate contractual obligations imposed on the external provider to pick up under performance and

Executive Committee13th September 2016

provide for a change of supplier in the event that this should ever become necessary

- 4.2 The impact of outsourcing could inadvertently increase pressure in the short term, on existing members of ICT whilst the new service is procured and then implemented. The result of increased pressure could lead to additional sick leave but this has been mitigated by securing additional temporary resource from external companies.
- 4.3 To be balanced against the risks outlined above, is the risk that if no action to pursue outsourcing is taken then the Council is likely to continue to encounter recruitment problems which over a period of time may undermine the ability for the service to be provided.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHORS OF REPORT

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COUNCIL

26th September 2016

29. EFFICIENCY PLAN 2016/17 – 2019/20

RECOMMENDED that

the Efficiency Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for submission to Central Government to enable a 4 year financial settlement to be secured.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****13TH SEPTEMBER 2016****EFFICIENCY PLAN**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering (Exec Director)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present the Councils Efficiency Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 for Executive consideration and to enable Members to decide on the recommendation to Council to request a 4 year financial settlement from Central Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Executive recommend to Council that the Efficiency Plan 2016/17-2019/20 as detailed at Appendix 1 is approved for submission to Central Government to enable a 4 year financial settlement to be secured.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 This document responds to the invitation/offer from the Secretary of State of 10 March 2016 to secure a minimum level of funding for the 4 years commencing April 2016. The aim of the Government is for the deal to increase local authority certainty and be a step towards strengthening financial management and work collaboratively with partners and reform the way local services are provided. The settlement would cover the 4 years from 2016/17-2019/20 and would provide certainty in relation to the Revenue Support Grant . The response from the Government following the New Homes Bonus consultation has not been received and therefore certainty of the NHB funding will not form part of the 4 year settlement.
- 3.2 There is no guarantee that the settlement offered will not change over the next 4 years. The inclusion of a “negative grant” system to repay Government was a fundamental change to funding that was not envisaged in the last 6 months and has resulted in additional financial pressures to the Council. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, officers are recommending the request for a 4 year funding arrangement to enable some levels of stability in the financial projections and it is anticipated that cuts to funding may be more severe should the Council not support this Government offer..

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**13TH SEPTEMBER 2016**

- 3.3 There has been no specific guidance from Government in relation to the format or detail that needs to be included in the Efficiency Plan however it is anticipated that the basis of the statements will be the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan together and the Council Plan which together will inform the Government how the Council aims to deliver on its strategic purposes to the community within the reducing financial funding it will receive.
- 3.4 It is therefore important that the Efficiency Plan is not purely about the funding and that there are key actions included in the Plan / Council Plan that will be delivered by the available funding. The expectation is that a high level plan is presented that will be informed by further detailed savings plans as they are developed.
- 3.5 Officers have considered the funding that is to be received over the next 2 years and the 'Negative Grant' of £330k that will be payable back to Government in 2019/20. The narrative of the plan states that the Council does not accept this methodology for repayment to Government and there is an expectation that this will be offset by the financial benefits associated with the localisation of Business Rates. The following key themes have been identified to enable officers to manage the shortfalls in funding:
- Identifying opportunities to increase income and growth
 - Identify further efficiency by continuing to drive waste out of services and reduce cost
 - Continue to redesign services to provide quality support and service to the customer whilst releasing savings
 - Assessing the value for money of service provided and demonstrating where resources can be realigned note 1
 - Designing services across public and voluntary sector organisations to secure better outcomes and reduce overall spend
 - Identify alternative models of delivery in the provision of services and to consider the most appropriate provider
 - Resetting future budget to meet prior years expenditure and income
- 3.6 The Efficiency Plan as presented at Appendix 1 is based on assessments made by Heads of Services as to the levels of additional income and reductions in costs that can be made over the next 3 years to meet the shortfalls in funding. More detailed delivery plans are currently being prepared as part of the review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and these will be brought to members later in the year.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**13TH SEPTEMBER 2016**

Legal Implications

- 3.7 Whilst there is no legislative framework that requires Councils to prepare an Efficiency Plan it is clear that for Councils to secure the most effective financial position over the next 4 years that the production of a plan for this purpose is advisable.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 Officers will develop detailed plans to enable the delivery of the Council Plan within the funding levels available.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risks associated with the delivery of the Efficiency Plan will be addressed by officers and mitigation plans put in place to assure confidence in managing the financial pressures.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Efficiency Plan

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL EFFICIENCY PLAN

2016/17-2019/20

This plan is based on the current Medium Term Financial Plan which was approved in February 2016. This Plan aims to provide relevant information to secure a 4 year deal on Government funding to ensure that the Council has some certainty of the pressures that it faces over the next 4 years.

The Council faces a significant challenge in addressing its forecasted budget deficit over the next 4 years in an environment where there is significant uncertainty and increasing levels of risk. Over the last 5 years the Council has embarked on an innovative approach to service redesign and releasing savings based on systems thinking methodology. In adopting the principles of this approach the Council will consider the following themes when addressing how to manage the shortfalls in funding :

- Identifying opportunities to increase income and growth
- Identify further efficiency by continuing to drive waste out of services and reduce cost
- Continue to redesign services to provide quality support and service to the customer whilst releasing savings
- Assessing the value for money of service provided and demonstrating where resources can be realigned ^{note 1}
- Identify alternative models of delivery in the provision of services and to consider the most appropriate provider
- Designing services across public and voluntary sector organisations to secure better outcomes and reduce overall spend

In delivering the savings to ensure Redditch can meet its financial pressures over the next 4/5 years the Council will focus on its Strategic Purposes to maximise the value of the funding it retains to support its customers and communities. These are :

- Help me live my life independently
- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
- Provide good things to see, do and visit
- Help me be financially independent
- Keep my place safe and looking good
- Help me run a successful business

Note 1 – Value for money is an assessment of the customer value of the service not purely the cost v demand

Background

For Redditch the financial settlement gives a much lower than anticipated level of revenue support grant from the Government with a potential unexpected repayment to Government in 2019/20 of £330k. Consultation has also started on planned changes to New Homes Bonus, which will see a reduction in the amount we receive towards the end of the five year period. The Council currently receives £1.1m of this grant however, depending on the proposed revised scheme may see a reduction in over £500k of funding by 2019/20.

Government grant funding will be some £6m per year less in real terms by the end of this plan than it was in 2010/11. This equates to losing funding for just over half of the Council's net budget.

The Council does not accept a methodology of 'negative grant' which would be payable by 2019/20. Whilst the payment is included in the projected financial gap faced by the Council there is an expectation that this will be offset by changes to Business Rate Legislation that will be released later this year.

The Council has a proven track record in delivering cost and efficiency savings. Since 2010/11 the Council has made savings from sharing services with other Councils of £5.6m and generated other savings of approximately £4m from additional income and increasing efficiencies. With the continued cuts to our funding we will have to find more innovative ways to meet the on-going financial pressures that the Council faces and we are working with partners to achieve savings across the public purse that will ensure that valuable front line services continue to be delivered to our communities. The financial funding available will be aligned to our purposes as detailed in this document to ensure we meet customer and community need.

The Efficiency Statement should be considered alongside the Council Plan 2016-2020 as this demonstrates how the Council will utilise its resources to deliver the strategic purposes and outcomes to the community.

The monitoring of the plan will be undertaken through the Councils Management Team, Executive and Audit & Governance Committee. Associated risks of delivery of savings and outcomes will be reported through the performance and financial reporting mechanisms to ensure early action can be undertaken to address any concerns.

EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Area	Cost reduction / Additional income growth/ Alternative Service Delivery	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £,000	2019/20 £'000
EFFICIENCIES TO BE ACHIEVED		1,398	2,284	3,202	3,532
ALREADY APPROVED					
Across all services	Efficiencies realised from : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removing waste processes from service following redesign - Deleting vacant posts - Reset budget to previous year - Service review to realign management and staffing structures 	396	396	396	396
Environment Services	Remodelling provision to enable services to be delivered across a locality / place	139	139	139	139
Environment Services	Additional growth and Income from the service	177	177	177	177
Balances	Use of balances following review of requirement	479	0	0	0
Reserves	Use of reserves following review of requirement	207	0	0	0
TOTAL EFFICIENCIES ALREADY APPROVED 2016/17-2019/20		1,398	712	712	712
PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES 2017/18 -2019/20					
Cross Organisational	Increases in income and growth (including additional income realised from an improvement in compliance		300	450	650

	for Council Tax/ Business Rates)				
Customer Access & Financial Support	Improved efficiencies by moving to a new system for Revenues and Benefits		80	90	90
Cross Organisational	Organisational Management Review		135	300	400
Cross Organisational	Alternative Models of Service Delivery - Reviewing the provision of services with the aim to redesign and work with other partners to deliver savings		250	735	880
Cross Organisational	Reduce waste in system / improve efficiencies		225	250	300
Cross Organisational	Reset budget from baseline of 2015/16		200	250	250
Additional Business Rate Growth			50	100	250
Other Funding	Balances/ Unidentified efficiencies/Further reviews of reserves		332	315	
TOTAL EFFICIENCIES PROPOSED 2017/18-2019/20			1,572	2,490	2,820
TOTAL EFFICIENCIES		1,398	2,284	3,202	3,532

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Application for Discretionary Rate Relief under the Localism Act 2011

BRIEF STATEMENT OF SUBJECT MATTER: To consider an application from the Redditch Town Centre Partnership (RTCP) for Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) under the Localism Act 2011 in respect of the former Pound stretcher premises located at Unit 1a, The Quadrant, Redditch, B98 8AE. Further details are provided in the enclosed appendix.

DECISION:

RESOLVED that

1. **100% Discretionary Rate Relief be awarded to the Redditch Town Centre Partnership for the period of their lease (up to June 2019) or sooner if the lease is terminated before then.**
2. **That the award of discretionary rate relief will be subject to:**
 - a **The Redditch Town Centre Partnership being the ratepayer;**
 - b **The premises being used wholly for the purposes of Redditch Town Centre Partnership, which would be in control of the premises, managing ingress, egress, opening hours, and Redditch Town Centre Partnership operating from the site.**
3. **That the premises will be used to provide flexible start up facilities for new businesses, which will be licenced to have use of the premises only but that the premises not be divided or sub-let.**

(Executive decision)

GROUND FOR URGENCY: The decision needs to be made urgently to enable the lease agreement to be entered into. Delaying the decision until the next scheduled Executive meeting could result in the loss of the property as pressure is being put on the RTCP to sign the lease as a matter of urgency.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

(Deputy) **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINANCE & RESOURCES
(if financial implications)

.....
(Signature) (Sue Hanley / Kevin Dicks - (D)CX)

.....
(Signature) (Jayne Pickering)

Date: 22nd August 2016

PROPOSED ACTION SUPPORTED *(amend as appropriate)*

..... (Signature) (Signature) (Signature) (Signature) (Signature)
<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>
Cllr Joe Baker MAYOR *	Councillor John Fisher PF HOLDER	Councillor Bill Hartnett LEADER / LDR LABOUR Group	Councillor Juliet Brunner LEADER CONSERVATIVE Group	Councillor Jane Potter CHAIR O&S Committee
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:

Notes:

* In addition to the Executive decision above regarding the matter under consideration, the Mayor is signing to agree both that the Executive decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. This is to ensure that the call-in procedures as set out in Part 8 of the Constitution shall not apply where an Executive decision being taken is urgent.

Application for Discretionary Rate Relief under the Localism Act 2011

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To ask members to consider an application from the Redditch Town Centre Partnership (RTCP) for Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) under the Localism Act 2011

2. Recommendation

The Executive is asked to urgently consider an application for DDR in respect of the former Poundstretcher premises located at Unit 1a, The Quadrant, Redditch, B98 8AE and

RESOLVE

- 2.1 to award 100% Discretionary Rate Relief to the Redditch Town Centre Partnership (RTCP) for the period of their lease (up to June 2019) or sooner if the lease is terminated before then.
- 2.2 That the award of discretionary rate relief will be subject to:
 - a The RTCP being the ratepayer
 - b The premises being used wholly for the purposes of RTCP, which would be in control of the premises, managing ingress, egress, opening hours, and RTCP operating from the site.
- 2.3 That the premises will be used to provide flexible start up facilities for new businesses, which will be licenced to have use of the premises only but that the premises not be divided or sub-let.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs of discretionary relief are borne jointly by central government and local authorities as per their proportional share of the NNDR income.
- 3.2 The cost to Redditch Borough Council of granting this relief, assuming a 2.5% increase in rates, an occupancy date of 1 October 2016 until 1 June 2019, would be £34,500.
- 3.3 This figure is based on the current rateable value. The rateable value may change in the 2017 revaluation and it is not possible to know what the level of increase might be at that time.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 We cannot by law award discretionary relief for a property which we as the billing authority occupy in whole or in part.

- 4.2 Section 47 (5B) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (LGFA) allows the Council to award up to 100% discretionary relief to any organisation which is not established nor conducted for profit and whose objectives are philanthropic, religious, concerned with education, social welfare, science literature or the fine arts.
- 4.3 The Localism Act 2011 extended the scope of Section 47 and there is now a general power to award discretionary relief to any ratepayer providing that it would be reasonable to do so having regard to the interests of local Council Tax payers.

5. Background

- 5.1 The Localism Act removed the restrictions on awards of discretionary rate relief and allowed local authorities to determine that awards of relief may be made where it is reasonable to do so having regard to the interests of the Local Council Tax Payers.
- 5.2 In the main, decisions to award relief under the extended powers of the Localism Act are made by the Council's Executive and would be exercised in respect of all hereditaments within a defined area or of a defined type. There may be occasions where decisions are made on a case by case basis.
- 5.3 Decisions on a case by case basis would be made where there is the possibility of the loss of an amenity which is of importance to local Taxpayers or where a failure to award relief could lead to the loss of major employer within the Council area.
- 5.4 Any award of discretionary rate relief (DRR) under the Localism Act powers would be the exception rather than the rule.
- 5.5 The RTCP aims to enter into a lease for this building to provide an open and flexible work space for small start-up businesses. The aim is that these businesses then go on to take empty units in the town centre over time thus benefiting the local community as well as bringing empty units back into use. The scheme is only viable if DRR is granted.
- 5.6 The criteria for awarding relief and the factors that must be taken into account are detailed below:

Criteria		Evidence
1	<p>Local Value:</p> <p>The business is, or will be of importance and value to the local community.</p>	<p>This business will provide start up facilities in a multi-use flexible space, with reduced financial risk. It is supported by the Council Economic Development Officer as an enterprise which would increase opportunities for business start up in Redditch Borough.</p>

2	<p>Local Jobs:</p> <p>The number of people who are/will be employed by the business and who reside in the Redditch Borough Council area.</p>	<p>The business will not employ directly but provide opportunities for businesses which may go on to provide local jobs and opportunities.</p>
3	<p>Reason for the discount</p> <p>Details to include: the reason for the discount; the period for which relief is sought; measures already taken to obtain support from other sources; amount of additional support already received; and (if applicable) reasons why support was not forthcoming.</p>	<p>RTCP are a voluntary group with an aim to increase opportunity within the town centre. Other avenues of support in respect of business rates would not be appropriate in this case, and all other rate relief options have been considered but would not apply.</p>
4	<p>The business is of a sui-generis nature.</p> <p>Details of the unique nature of the business/amenity demonstrating why the failure to grant relief could lead to the loss of a unique amenity for the residents of the Redditch Borough Council area.</p>	<p>This will provide a unique space within the Town Centre to offer such facilities.</p>
5	<p>State Aid Declaration</p> <p>Awards of Localism Act relief would potentially be classed as State Aid - a declaration will be required to show that the level of all relief over the previous three financial years is below 200,000 euros.</p>	<p>State Aid Declaration to be completed.</p>

- 5.7 The decision needs to be made urgently to enable the lease agreement to be entered into. Delaying the decision until the next scheduled Executive meeting could result in the loss of the property as pressure is being put on the RTCP to sign the lease as a matter of urgency.

