



Executive Committee

Tue 11 Dec
2018
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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Executive

Committee

Tuesday, 11th December, 2018

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 - Town Hall
Redditch

Agenda

Membership:

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Cllrs: | Matthew Dormer (Chair) | Bill Hartnett |
| | David Bush (Vice- Chair) | Gareth Prosser |
| | Tom Baker-Price | Mike Rouse |
| | Greg Chance | Craig Warhurst |
| | Brandon Clayton | |

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and / or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

3. Leader's Announcements

4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

5. Redditch Business Improvement District (BID) (Pages 15 - 56)

In addition to the report for this item an extract from the notes from the meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 19th October 2018 have been attached for Members' consideration. The recommendation is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a meeting due to take place on 6th December and relates to the Redditch Business Improvement District. Should the Overview and Scrutiny Committee support this proposal the Executive Committee will then be invited to consider this recommendation alongside Item 5 on the agenda.

6. Review of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy (Pages 57 - 70)

Members are asked to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is pre-scrutinising this report at a meeting on 6th December 2018. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be recorded and included in an additional papers pack for Members' consideration alongside the attached report.

7. Redditch Borough Council's response to the Bromsgrove Plan Review - Issues and Options Consultation (Pages 71 - 76)

8. Finance Monitoring April - September 2016 (Quarter 2) (Pages 77 - 88)

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9. Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 to 2022/23 - Presentation

10. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 89 - 102)

11. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.

12. Advisory Panels - update reports

Members are invited to provide verbal updates, if any, in respect of the following bodies:

- a) Constitutional Review Working Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer;
- b) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Gareth Prosser;
- c) Grants Panel – Chair, Councillor Greg Chance;
- d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer; and
- e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer.



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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor David Bush (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Bill Hartnett, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Matthew Bough, Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Jayne Pickering and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

42. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair circulated a written update on the Leader's Announcements.

45. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11th September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

46. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY - UPDATE

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader presented the proposed updates to the Housing Allocations Policy. Officers had

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Chair

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been reviewing the policy and the flexibilities provided to Councils in the Localism Act 2011 and the report highlighted changes that officers were proposing to the policy to reflect this.

Following the publication of the agenda for the Executive Committee meeting Officers had suggested further changes to the policy which were circulated for Members' consideration in a written handout (Appendix 1). This suggested that applicants who were volunteers must be volunteering with a registered charity at the point of application for their status as a volunteer to be taken into account. The changes also removed reference to lone parents who were the primary carer of a child in receipt of child benefit for that child.

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader highlighted the following additional changes to the policy that were proposed in the report:

- Officers were proposing that an applicant should have a local connection to be eligible to apply for affordable housing, unless they could be categorised as having a “reasonable preference” in line with legislation. Under the existing policy anybody could apply for affordable housing from the Council.
- Officers were proposing to replace the current gold, silver and bronze banding system with bands 1 to 6. Those in band 1 would be those considered to be most in need. Those in Band 4 were in a reduced priority band but might have a “reasonable preference”. Band 5 related to applicants with few issues and band 6 would encompass applicants who had access to their own financial resources.
- It was proposed that the bedroom standard should change to mirror requirements in the Housing Benefits system. Under these arrangements children of the same sex could be expected to share a room up to the age of 16 whilst those of different sexes would be expected to share a room up to the age of 10.
- It was proposed that key workers, such as nurses should be provided with additional preference to help access housing. Officers had incorporated the HMRC's definition of a key worker into the policy
- The minimum age of applicants would rise from 16 to 18, should the proposed changes in the policy be agreed. The earliest that a young person could secure a tenancy was at the age of 18 so this change would reflect that. Care leavers would be excluded from this policy requirement.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed the proposed changes to the policy in some detail and highlighted a number of points:

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- The need for a Housing Allocations Policy that would be fair to applicants. Members expressed the hope that the changes to the policy would make it fairer for Redditch residents.
- The change to the policy that recognised the role of key workers. Members welcomed this proposed amendment and noted that key workers made a valuable contribution to the local community.
- The crisis in housing at a national level and the action that needed to be taken to ensure affordable housing was available to those who needed it.
- The work that had been undertaken over a series of months to update the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.
- The approach that the Council would adopt to distributing properties amongst applicants in the different bands. Officers advised that the properties would be allocated to those in most need through band first and the remaining properties would be allocated through the choice based lettings system. There was no proposal to allocate percentages to different bands
- The number of bids for properties that applicants could place, should the proposed changes to the policy be agreed. Officers advised that applicants would retain the right to make two bids for different properties per week.
- The consultation process in respect of the proposed changes to the policy, who would be engaged and how. Officers explained that a questionnaire would be accessible on the Council's website, through social media and in a paper form.

During consideration of this item an amendment was proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett, which involved the introduction of an additional recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance.

The proposed additional recommendation stated the following:

"The results of the consultation on the Housing Allocations Policy 2019 are brought back to the Executive for consideration, then go forward to Council."

In proposing the new recommendation Councillor Hartnett explained that he felt it was important for the Executive Committee and Council to have a chance to see the final draft of the Housing Allocations Policy before it was enacted.

Members discussed the proposed amendment and in so doing noted that the Housing Allocations Policy would need to return to the Executive Committee and Council anyway for approval in line with the requirements of the decision making process. As this involved changes to the Council's policy framework a final decision

would always have to be taken by Council. Therefore a number of Members rejected the proposal as being unnecessary.

On being put to the vote the proposed amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the draft Housing Allocations Policy 2019 be consulted upon for a six week period and;**
- 2) **the consultation questions (detailed at Appendix 2 to the report) be approved.**

47. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Head of Community Services presented the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme Report 2019/20. Members were advised that the report proposed changes to the grants system, whereby each Councillor would be allocated a budget of £5,000 that they could use to provide financial support to initiatives within their ward or across the whole Borough. In the report Officers were suggesting that this approach to grant funding should be trialled for one year. Should Members agree to change the grants process the Council's Grants Policy would need to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and this, together with guidance in relation to the new framework, would be reported to the Executive Committee in due course.

Members discussed the proposals in some detail and raised the following points during this debate:

- The Grants Panel had been working for many years to review applications for grants.
- Concerns were raised that often the same organisations applied for grant funding from the Grants Panel and funding was often awarded to those organisations with experienced bid writers, even though groups that did not have this expertise might want to deliver a good project in the community.
- Members also raised concerns that the existing grants process was bureaucratic and resource intensive. However, concerns were also raised that there would still be some bureaucracy arising from the proposed new scheme as Officers would need to consider funding agreements for all 29 Members.
- The Grants Panel was a cross-party group and operated in an apolitical fashion. Decisions were made based on reaching a consensus.

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- Decisions made by the Grants Panel under the existing system enabled Members to award funding that matched the Council's strategic purposes. Concerns were raised that under the proposed new scheme this might not happen.
- However, the proposed new system would enable Members to provide financial support to groups that met the needs of residents living in their wards. Members could use their local knowledge to direct their funding choices.
- Members questioned how groups would be monitored to ensure that the grants they received were spent on the projects for which they had received the funding. The Committee was advised that the guidance would set out the criteria for groups to be eligible to receive a grant.
- The checks that would be undertaken in relation to organisations that were applying for funding were also questioned. Officers explained that the guidance would require Members to provide funding only to registered charities. However, the Council would not be checking the levels of reserves retained by those charities.
- Training would need to be provided to all Members to enable them to approve grants in line with the Council's guidance.
- The Council would be required to publish details in respect of the grants that were agreed by Members. Legally the Council was required to publish any spending over £500.
- Concerns were raised that some groups might apply for funding from every Councillor without Members being aware of the situation and this could lead to an unfair distribution of funding. Officers explained that all proposed funds would need to be processed by Officers and they would identify groups that were seeking support from every Member.
- Further concerns were raised that Members could use the funds for political purposes, for example close to a local election. However, it was also noted that under the rule Members would not be able to approve funding during the election period.
- There would be the potential for Members to pool resources within wards and this could involve working with Members of another political party.
- Members commented that some Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations had expressed concerns about the proposed changes to the process during the consultation period. However, it was also noted that change could be unnerving and some groups had welcomed the suggested changes.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the VCS Grants Programme change from a corporate competitive grant giving process to one where funding**

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proposals are made from Ward Councillors for qualifying organisations – a Councillor Community Grants Scheme;

- 2) £5,000 is made available to each Ward Councillor to support VCS organisations, and /or VCS led projects and initiatives in their ward or the wider Borough;
- 3) during 2019/20 a minimum of £350 be dedicated from each Councillor's allocation to project(s) which promote cultural awareness and cultural cohesion;
- 4) the new programme be piloted for a year;
- 5) the Head of Community Services be given delegated authority to sign off funding proposals;
- 6) a refreshed VCS Grants Policy and Guidance Notes for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme be drafted and considered at a future meeting of the Executive Committee; and
- 7) funding received from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Recycling of Metal Recovered from Cremation Scheme be allocated as part of an application process and decided by a panel of members.

48. **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE - LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANY**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented a report that outlined proposals for the introduction of the Shareholders Committee for the Leisure company that was approved by Council in September 2018.

Since that Council meeting the company had been named Rubicon Leisure. The Shareholders Committee of Rubicon Leisure would have a number of powers and responsibilities. The Council was the single shareholder in the leisure company and was in a position to delegate all of the relevant powers, including reserved matters, to the Shareholders Committee. This governance structure was considered to be preferable to placing Members on the board of Rubicon Leisure. In other parts of the country where Members had been appointed to the board of a company this had created conflicts of interest and had caused problems for the Councils concerned.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **a Shareholder Committee is established of 5 members. The Committee to take the form of 3 members from the controlling group and 2 members from the opposition; and**
- 2) **the reserved matters as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report be delegated to the Shareholder Committee.**

49. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the performance report for the strategic purpose 'provide good things for me to do, see and visit'. This was the first performance report that had been presented in a revised format that was designed to tell a narrative about the strategic purpose. There had been a number of positive developments in relation to this strategic purpose, including a decrease in the numbers on the waiting list for swimming lessons and an increase in the provision of swimming lessons for beginners. The Council had invested in redevelopment of the studio space at the Abbey Stadium and this had had a positive impact on attendance rates at the venue. However, unfortunately the Council had not been successful with its Heritage Lottery park funding application for Forge Mill.

Information about the Council's performance in relation to sickness absence levels amongst staff had also been included in the report. There had been an increase in sickness levels, partly due to viruses within the workplace. However, it was also suggested that there may have been an improvement in terms of managers reporting their staff's sickness absence properly. Staff would be offered appropriate assistance to help manage any problems with sickness.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

50. BUDGET FRAMEWORK AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23 - PRESENTATION

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources delivered a presentation on the subject of the Council's budget framework and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix 2). During the delivery of the presentation she highlighted the following matters for Members' consideration:

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- There remained some gaps in the budget that would need to be addressed through making savings and increasing the income of the Council over the following four years.
- The Council would receive £35,000 in revenue support grant from the government in 2018/19.
- Officers were being prudent and were still taking into account the potential impact that the negative grant could have on the Council's finances in the future.
- However, the negative grant was subject to consultation, the terms of which indicated that the government was considering withdrawing this arrangement, though no decision had been taken yet on this matter.
- In the event that the negative grant was withdrawn this would have a beneficial impact on the Council's finances, though there would still be a need to achieve savings moving forward.
- Officers remained concerned that there could be further changes made to the New Homes Bonus scheme which would have a negative impact on the Council's finances.
- Income from business rates remained uncertain and again this could impact on the Council's financial position.
- The Council allocated just over £5 million of the general fund to capital spending. This was used for works on Council buildings, including to address issues with asbestos.
- Members were advised that when the Council did not receive planning fees for anticipated developments this could have financial implications for the Council, which lost the fee, the New Homes Bonus funding and any Council Tax that would have been due if the development had progressed.
- The roll out of universal credit was placing significant pressure on the Benefits Team. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources was working with the Chief Executive in an attempt to help relieve these pressures.
- There remained just over £700,000 in unidentified savings which Officers were aiming to find by the end of October 2018.
- The Council had £1 million more in balances than was required as a minimum level by the Section 151 Officer.
- The Government's requirement for Councils to reduce rents for Council housing by 1 per cent per year over a four year period had meant that the Council had lost £130 million from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) over a 30 year period.
- Fees and charges were being reviewed in a slightly different way than in previous years. Heads of Service were required to review the fees for their departments, taking into account whether they could achieve full cost recovery, why they were charging for services, and how the charges helped the Council to meet its strategic purposes.
- Officers continued to explore different ways of doing things in order to reduce costs. The Council needed to get better in

terms of offering digital solutions to those who wanted to access the authority's services online.

- The Council was aiming to increase capital revenue through work in line with the Council's Investments and Acquisition Strategy. Any proposals would be reported to the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

51. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - ACTION PLAN

The Chief Executive presented a report on the subject of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge that had been undertaken at the start of the calendar year and the action plan that had been developed to address the issues raised during the challenge. The challenge had been undertaken by colleagues from other local authorities and it had been conducted as a critical friend exercise. Members were asked to note that the Corporate Peer Challenge had been a joint exercise reviewing services delivered by Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils.

The feedback report, which had been produced at the end of the Corporate Peer Challenge, had been sent to the Council in the previous municipal year. However, a decision had been taken to postpone consideration of the report until the local elections had taken place and then there had been a further delay to enable the new political administration to settle in before discussing the matter further.

The feedback report contained a range of recommendations to enhance services across the two Councils. One of the key proposals had been for the Council to introduce a single workforce for the two authorities. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had reviewed this proposal and, having undertaken a lot of work on staff harmonisation and being in the process of a review of the two Councils' job evaluation schemes, senior officers had concluded that a single workforce was not viable at this stage. However, it was possible that this proposal would be revisited in the future.

Members were asked to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the report at their meeting on 18th October. During their discussions the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had concluded that actions 10 and 11 in the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan should only apply to Bromsgrove District Council and that this should be clarified within the plan. The Chief Executive explained that recommendation 8 related specifically to Bromsgrove District Council, with regards to the

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conduct of the political debate at that authority. Recommendations 9, 10 and 11 all related to updating the Councils' constitutions, which was already happening in Redditch.

Members discussed the report and commented on the following matters during this debate:

- The "Lead Officer" column and the references to the "Leader" within this column. Officers confirmed that this was referring to the Leaders of the Councils in Redditch and Bromsgrove rather than to political party group leaders.
- The references in the same column to "Cabinet" and whether this applied just to Bromsgrove District Council. Officers advised that in the majority of cases this should have involved referring to both the Executive Committee and Cabinet.
- The reference in the action plan to regular meetings between the Executive Committee and Bromsgrove District Council's Cabinet starting in November. Members questioned when these meetings would start to take place and whether those who were not Portfolio Holders would be attending.
- The value of retaining workforces for both Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council.
- The current decision making process in Redditch whereby many decisions were taken by Council rather than the Executive Committee. Members commented that this ensured that the decision making process was inclusive.

During consideration of this matter Councillor Hartnett proposed an amendment. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance.

The amendment stated the following:

"Agree to note the action plan with the following amendments. Not to support recommendations 9, 10 and 11."

In proposing the amendment Councillor Hartnett commented that he did not feel a fundamental review of Redditch Borough Council's constitution was required. He explained that he agreed with the conclusions that had been reached by the Overview and Committee that recommendations 10 and 11 should not apply to Redditch but were more relevant to Bromsgrove District Council. Councillor Hartnett informed Members that he did not support the assumption in recommendation 10 that boundaries between officers and Members needed clarifying in Redditch nor did he feel that the Council's procedures needed to be reviewed to support constructive debate at Council meetings as he felt that this was already working well.

In responding to the proposed amendment Members considered the work that had been undertaken during the Corporate Peer Challenge. Members commented that in order to make the most of the Corporate Peer Challenge the Council needed to take into account any advice that had been given and to learn lessons. It was also noted that a review of the constitution could be useful as it helped to make the decision making process more efficient.

The Chief Executive advised that recommendations 10 and 11 related to the review of the constitution and it was recognised by Officers that these were more relevant to Bromsgrove District Council than to Redditch Borough Council. Members were asked to note that the action plan had been drafted some months ago. Since the document was produced a significant number of changes had been agreed to the Council's constitution at the September meeting of Council. The Council had been advised to review the constitution as those undertaking the Corporate Peer Challenge had suggested that by taking everything to Council this could stymie the speed of the decision making process.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that

the letter and action plan arising from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, which took place in January and February 2018, be noted.

52. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair noted that there were no outstanding recommendations for Members' consideration as these had been addressed during the previous meeting of the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th September 2018 be noted.

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

The Chair confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made recommendations in respect of the Corporate Peer Challenge and Housing Growth Programme at their latest meeting on 18th October 2018. These proposals would be considered by the Executive Committee during the debates in respect of the relevant items.

54. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORTS

Members provided the following updates on the work of particular Advisory Panels and groups.

a) Constitutional Review Working Party – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the latest meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party, that had been due to take place on 24th November, had been postponed. This would provide Officers with time to work on a project to reduce the amount of paperwork that was produced for Committee meetings.

b) Corporate Parenting Board – Redditch Borough Council representative, Councillor Gareth Prosser

Councillor Prosser advised that the latest meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board had taken place on 11th October 2018. During this meeting attendees had received information about the Kinship Service in Worcestershire as well as the Virtual School Governing Board (VSGB). The VSGB was designed to improve support available to looked after children at school. A website was in the process of being developed for the VSGB which would provide further information about its purpose.

Members were advised that Councillor Prosser would be meeting with a representative of Worcestershire County Council to discuss the role of the Corporate Parenting Board later in the month.

Councillor Baker-Price informed Members that he would be hosting a Corporate Parenting event on 31st October 2018. Members would be welcome to attend to learn more about their roles as Corporate Parents.

c) Grants Panel – Chair, Councillor Greg Chance

Councillor Chance advised Members that the next meeting of the Grants Panel would take place the following day. During this meeting Members would consider bids for grants.

d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the latest meeting of the Member Support Steering Group took place on 16th October. During this meeting Members had received an update on IT

support and had considered information about training that had recently been delivered to Members. The group had also discussed a project that had been launched by Officers to review how to reduce the amount of paperwork generated for Committee meetings. Councillor Dormer concluded by urging Members to attend the training that was due to be delivered on 10th December in respect of the measures dashboard.

e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised Members that a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) would take place in November, though the exact date remained to be confirmed.

Members noted that no meeting of PAP had taken place since March 2018. Questions were also raised about meetings of the Economic Development Theme Group. The Chief Executive explained that this theme group was not included in the updates as it was not an advisory panel. However, he confirmed that the group continued to meet.

55. COUNCIL HOUSING GROWTH PROGRAMME - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader presented a report in respect of proposed development sites for the Housing Growth Project. The Executive Committee had agreed the Housing Growth Programme some months ago and this report called for Members to endorse proposals for the development of Council houses in particular locations within the Borough. The majority of the sites that had been identified were HRA assets. The exception to this was the Hawthorn Road Community Centre (former Redditch Play Council site), which was a General Fund asset. Officers were proposing that to ensure consistency the Hawthorn Road site should be transferred to the HRA.

In many cases Officers were aiming to develop two bedroom bungalows as demand for this type of property was high. Members were advised that Officers would report back to the Executive Committee about the proposals for each site for approval.

Redditch Borough Council had not worked on developing new Council house properties since the 1990s and there was no longer the expertise in-house to work on this. Therefore Officers were proposing to go out to tender to work with an external specialist on this project.

During consideration of this item Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the Housing Growth

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Programme – Proposed Development sites report at their meeting on 18th October 2018. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had concluded their discussions of the item by endorsing the proposals detailed in the report.

Members discussed the report in detail and noted that funding for the Housing Growth Programme had been provided from the HRA. To date the Council had already purchased some properties under the Housing Growth Programme and some one-bedroom flats were due to be purchased shortly. For the new sites it was confirmed that all of the properties that would be developed would be Council houses. Officers had not yet looked at the detail in terms of the type of properties that would be built, beyond considering whether these should be bungalows, houses and so on. This information would be reported to the Executive Committee when the plans for each site were considered, though the timeframes for this could not yet be confirmed.

The Committee recognised that the Housing Growth Programme would also enable the Council to meet its obligations in respect of the Housing Allocations Policy. There had been a reduction in the number of Council houses owned by the Council over the last few decades, primarily due to Right to Buy, and therefore it was important for the Council to replace these properties in order to meet demand. The new properties would also have a positive impact on the Council's income as each tenant would be required to pay rent.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the sites in Appendix 1 be included in Phase 1 of the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) new build programme and proposals to progress the development of HRA new build council housing on them be approved;**
- 2) properties delivered through the Council Housing Growth Programme be let at Affordable Rent, where permitted; and**

RECOMMENDED

- 3) the appropriation of the Hawthorn Road site from the General Fund into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in order that it can be developed for new council housing.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.01 pm
and closed at 8.35 pm

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

11 Dec 2018

Business Improvement District

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Cllr David Bush |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Ruth Bamford Head of Planning, Regeneration |
| Ward(s) Affected | Central and Abbey wards |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | Yes |
| Key Decision | Key Decision |
| | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To provide an update on the progress of a Business improvement District within Redditch Town Centre and to invite participation from the Council as an owner of buildings within the BID area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note:

- 2.1 Note the receipt of relevant information relating to the proposed Redditch Business Improvement District (Appendix 1 and 2)**
- 2.2 To agree a position on the vote in favour of the BID with regard to the Council's properties in the Town Centre.**

To delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Regeneration and Portfolio Holder to;

- a) Exercise the Council's vote in support of the proposed BID in the ballot in respect of properties in the Council's ownership/occupation within the BID area, which will be entitled to cast a vote on the ballot.**

3. KEY ISSUES**3.1 Background**

- 3.2 A Business Improvement District is a legally and geographically defined partnership for area improvement and service delivery, funded by levy paying businesses within that agreed boundary. It is managed and operated by a BID Company – a non-profit company run by and for its members.**

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- 3.3 BIDs are business-led initiatives supported by government legislation, which gives local businesses the power to get together, decide what improvements they want to make in their area and how they will manage these. BID's have the power to raise and spend funds locally.
- 3.4 BIDs are typically run as not for profit companies and are controlled by the businesses that fund them. There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, 4rcleansing and environmental measures.
- 3.5 A BID's mandate is for a maximum of five years. A BID wishing to continue beyond that must reaffirm its mandate through re-ballot, based on a further proposal.
- 3.6 The process of developing a BID involves widespread consultation with businesses to ascertain what improvements they want and would be prepared to pay for. A BID proposal is then produced and a 28 day postal ballot held where businesses vote 'for' or 'against' the proposed programme. For the BID to go ahead, two conditions must be met; firstly, a majority of those voting have to vote 'yes' and secondly those 'yes' votes have to correspond to more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.
- 3.7 The local authority has a statutory responsibility to support the development of BIDs and facilitate their establishment. This includes conducting the ballot and collecting and enforcing the levy. The authority must also confirm that the proposed BID does not conflict with area plans and schemes. If the local authority is of the opinion that the Business Improvement District arrangements are likely to conflict to a significant extent with an existing policy, place a financial burden on rate payers or the burden from the levy is unjust, it can decide to veto the proposals. The local authority can only veto proposals within 14 days from the date of the ballot. If a yes vote is achieved there will be a requirement to ensure the BID body has good governance in place – the activities of the BID body will be scrutinised by the lev payers who fund the BID. In particular the BID will need to ensure the correct arrangements are in place relating to membership of the BID body, board elections and annual reporting mechanisms.
- 3.8 It should be noted that the emerging BID does not conflict with the Local Plan; the Town centre Strategy and other informal area plans and schemes. Indeed the BID would support the work being undertaken by the Redditch Regeneration Board, Safer Redditch and the work of town centre co-ordinator. The BID would also assist in the following Council strategic purposes;

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- Help me run a successful business
- Keep my place safe and looking good
- Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
- Provide and support high quality, culturally diverse events and arts activities

Financial Implications**4.0 Statutory Responsibility of the LA**

The Council will be responsible for billing, collection and recovery of the BID levy. This will incur costs in terms of setting up the BID Billing System, which needs to be separate from the main Business Rates billing process. The indicative cost of this is as follows;

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Ballot Software | £2,720 |
| Billing Module | £17,320 |
| Services Costs | £5,440 |
| Annual License Fee | £3,464 |

4.1 Council owned Buildings

If the BID is successful in securing a majority vote at the proposed ballot, then there will be a cost to the Council during the lifetime of the BID, in respects of properties that it owns within the proposed BID boundary. Based on the initial analysis the total rateable value of properties owned by the Council is just under £523,000, therefore the estimated annual cost to the Council based on a 2% levy is £10,450 per during the lifetime of the BID.

It is now common place for these costs to be recovered from the BID Company and these costs will need to be factored into the BID Business Plan process. This means that in due course costs to the council associated with collecting the BID levy can be recouped.

- 4.2 There will also be costs incurred to the Council for running the ballot which the Returning Officer will be responsible for under the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 ("the Regulations") which can be managed using existing budgets and staff.

Legal Implications

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**11 Dec 2018

- 4.4 The establishment of a BID requires specific procedures to be followed particularly with regards to the ultimate ballot and these procedures are contained within the Regulations. These procedures will be overseen by the Returning Officer, Solicitor to the Council, Legal Services and Electoral Services.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.5 BIDS are usually proposed by an outside body which in this case is Redditch Town Centre Partnership.

At present the initial findings of the feasibility and planning reports indicate that monies gained from a BID should focus on marketing and events in particular, both for inward investment purposes and perception of the town. This would support work already carried out by the Kingfisher Centre and could provide a collaborative approach between the shopping centre, BID and the Borough Council. This will be explored further as the process continues.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.6 No EIA required at this stage. The BID company will be required to publish its own Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that all services take into account reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT**6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Initial Feasibility Report
Appendix 2- Planning Stage Report
Appendix 3- RBC Local Plan No 4 Inset map showing TCP & Bid Boundary

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**8. KEY**

TCP – Town Centre Partnership
BID – Business Improvement District
RBC – Redditch Borough Council

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

11 Dec 2018

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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**Redditch TCP
Feasibility Study
April 2018**

MAKING PLACES **WORK**

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1) Executive Summary

Central Management Solutions has carried out a Feasibility Study on behalf of Redditch Town Centre Partnership (TCP), examining the issues that are important to businesses within Redditch town centre in order to ascertain the degree to which a Business Improvement District (BID) could be a viable model for increasing and enhancing the provision of services to businesses within the town.

A BID is business-led and funded through a levy charge on businesses within a defined geographical area and they provide additional services designed to improve the local trading environment.

It is important that the limitations of a BID Feasibility Study are understood. It is designed only to advise clients as to whether the development of a BID is viable and whether it is likely to be able to deliver the type of projects and services that businesses in the area feel would be beneficial. It provides initial financial modelling and assesses the willingness of the local authority to support a BID Proposal, if submitted. Finally, it assesses local capacity to assist with delivering a BID Proposal and resultant ballot process.

A Feasibility Report comes with health-warnings. It does not conclude financial modelling or eventual projects and services. Equally, it does not provide estimates as to likely voting outcomes. This is all obtained in the next stage, the Planning Stage. At conclusion of the Feasibility Stage, clients can only conclude that a BID may be worth further investigation and so proceed to the Planning Stage.

From the analysis of the data gathered in Feasibility, CMS recommends progressing to the next stage of BID development in Redditch.

1.1 Key recommendations and conclusions

1. A BID could be viable in Redditch, certainly the areas where businesses have suggested that improvements could be made around the level and the impact of the marketing is an area where BIDs in other localities have had real success.
2. The 'on-the-ground research' suggests that knowledge of BIDs is extremely low. This is not surprising given this Feasibility Study is the first attempt at the introduction of this concept in Redditch.
3. A BID would be financially viable in the location at the upper end of the recommended BID Levy Rate (1.75% - 2%). Given the relatively small budget available it is likely that the BID will need to focus on the delivery of one or two core service areas e.g. improved marketing, in order that it can most successfully use the resources that are available to it.
4. The town centre is clearly dominated by the Kingfisher shopping centre and a clear balance will need striking between the needs and concerns of the centre tenants and those outside of the centre. Any communications plan in the lead up to ballot will need to be mindful of the BID not appearing to be 'Kingfisher centric' whilst appreciating its significant place within the town centre.
5. CMS recommends that because of the above factors, the Town Centre Partnership should progress the research to the next stage of development planning, allowing for a more in-depth study of the exact issues and likely projects that a BID for Redditch could deliver.



2) SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis is designed as an overview of Redditch town centre and will be developed further if the decision is to progress towards a ballot. The Steering Group will need to be certain by the time it triggers a ballot that the strengths and opportunities presented by a BID outweigh the threats and can start to tackle some of the weaknesses.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good quality shopping centre ● Over branding because of Kingfisher Shopping Centre ● Above expected level of retail index ● Parking ● Accessibility | <p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perception ● Dominance of Kingfisher Shopping Centre ● General appearance outdated ● Hidden old town ● Ring road ● Lack of short stay parking ● Signage ● Lack of identity ● No specialist markets |
| <p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outside events ● Adapt to change outside town centre ● Outside markets from funding ● Shift in perception ● Palace theatre ● Signage ● Increasing affluence of local market | <p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Longbridge ● Grand Central ● Bromsgrove – evening economy |



3) The Project Plan and the i5 Stages

The i5 stages of BID development are a recent progression on the CMS Five-Stages of BID Development. They not only set out the tasks that need to be undertaken but also how the project team (a Steering Group and their chosen contractor) should be acting throughout each Stage. This Feasibility Stage has been about 'investigation', and it is during the more in-depth Planning and Local Authority Stages that real 'insight' will be gained and a likely ballot outcome determined. The Stages are;

- 1. Investigate** (Feasibility Stage) - Establish the need, situational analysis, SWOT analysis, assess business interest and insight, gauge public and private sector support, crude viability test, financial assessments, including development costs, assessing capacity locally, raising awareness, communications.
- 2. Insight** (Planning and Local Authority Stages) – Develop the purpose, proposition and vision, primary research (various methods) at local level, consultation (including head offices), communications, operating agreement, baseline agreement(s), service level agreement(s), ballot processes, voter database and CRM, contingencies for failure, Proposal and rules, financial modelling, 'Go-ahead' moment.
- 3. Inspire** (Campaign Stage) - Visual identity, Business Plan, communications strategy and collateral, campaign launch, monitoring the ballot, handling objections, winning the ballot.
- 4. Implement** (Establishment Stage) – Delivery plan and budget (Year 1), governance arrangements, contract procurement, staffing and HR, financial controls.
- 5. Interrogate** (Establishment Stage) – Establishing a culture of improvement, setting performance measures, annual review process, independent review(s), billing processes, levy payer communications, including billing leaflet.



The i5 Stages to BID Development

| FEASIBILITY | PLANNING & LOCAL AUTHORITY | CAMPAIGN | ESTABLISHMENT | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Investigate | Insight | Inspire | Implement | Interrogate |
| Building the picture by gathering knowledge | Detailed planning and research using results to determine the strategy | Stimulating interest, enthusing and encouraging participation | Turning ideas into realities | Establishing a culture of constantly measuring, reviewing and improving throughout the term of the BID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the need • Situational analysis • Competitor/SWOT analysis • Assess business interest and insight • Gauge public and private sector support • Crude viability test • Financial assessments, including development costs • Assessing capacity locally • Raising awareness • Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the purpose, proposition and vision • Primary research (various methods) at local level • Consultation (including head offices) • Communications • Operating agreement • Baseline agreement(s) • Service level agreement(s) • Ballot processes • Voter database and CRM • Contingencies for failure • Proposal and rules • Financial modelling • 'Go-ahead' moment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual identity • Business Plan • Communications strategy and collateral • Campaign launch • Monitoring the ballot • Winning the ballot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery plan and budget (Year 1) • Governance arrangements • Contract procurement • Staffing and HR • Handling objections • Financial controls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a culture of improvement • Setting performance measures • Annual review process • Independent review(s) • Billing processes • Levy payer communications, including billing leaflet |



4) Project Timeline

If the Steering Group progresses to the next stage, timelines must remain indicative to allow the BID to develop at the right pace for the area. Sufficient contingency must be allowed to ensure that each Stage is completed fully and satisfactorily. The easiest way to come unstuck whilst developing a BID is to rush the process, thereby failing to build support locally prior to ballot. With these caveats in place, an indicative timeline for Redditch to reach a ballot might be:

| Five-Stages of BID Development Timeline | | | |
|---|---------------|----|---------------------|
| Investigate | May 2018 | to | July 2018 |
| Insight | August 2018 | to | November 2018 |
| Inspire | November 2018 | to | February/March 2019 |

This suggests that a ballot could be achieved in Redditch by the Easter of 2019. It is important to note that there are three times during the year where statistical evidence suggests it is best to go to ballot to maximise chances of success. These are:

1. February to March/April (depending on Easter) – in 2019 this is achievable for Redditch.
2. May to July (subject to Bank Holidays in May and school holidays in July) – this is the contingency.
3. October to November (completing the ballot prior to Christmas trading) – This is also an option in 2019.

With this in mind, the likely start date for a new BID, allowing 3 months after ballot for the Establishment (Implement) Stage would be July 2019.



5) Feasibility Objectives

CMS has been instructed by Redditch TCP to conduct a Business Improvement District (BID) Feasibility Study of the area.

As part of this Feasibility Study CMS has:

- Reviewed the work already undertaken, supplementing and refreshing where necessary, whilst working within the widest possible area for any BID to ensure maximum inclusivity. As the research and consultation progresses, the area may change and will, most likely, then shrink rather than expand.
- Gathered a response that is a representative sample (representative of both the types of businesses to be included and the geography of the draft BID area) to ensure that at least 10% of businesses have been contacted.
- Carried out initial work on the ratings extract. This is an analysis of the business rates list and will start to gauge the likely levy yield taking into account likely discounts, exemptions, thresholds, caps etc. used in the first instance as the data for first contact.
- Carried out basic financial modelling across proposed levy rates, most likely between 1% and 2% of rateable value.
- Other models to a BID may need to be considered. CMS will compile a report that documents the modelling work done, business feedback and next steps and will recommend other models if necessary.
- The data available will need to be reported to demonstrate:
 - (a) the business types within the catchment
 - (b) responses received (by sector)
 - (c) the most influential voters by rateable value, and
 - (d) the most influential voters by number of hereditaments
- Feasibility Stage - Required Outcomes:
 1. An overview that a BID is worth exploring
 2. Council support for the process
 3. Commonality of interest amongst businesses
 4. A database of ratepayers
 5. Initial financial modelling demonstrating viability.

6) Potential BID Income

It is often easy to assume that establishing your likely BID income is as simple as picking the highest possible levy rate that you believe businesses will be willing to vote for.

In reality, there are a number of considerations when establishing the correct parameters for ensuring the correct set of levy boundaries. Primarily though, the rate at which your levy is set should be based on the income needed to provide the services that businesses want but should be within those recommended in the British BIDs National BID Criteria (updated version published in January 2018).

In reviewing the potential BID income it should be emphasised that the figures represented are indicative only. Rateable values and occupiers change frequently and a collection rate of 95% has been assumed. The two variables examined from the information currently available were:

1. Levy rate
2. Rateable value (RV) threshold above which business pay a levy

| Threshold (£) | No. Hereditaments | Levy Rate (%) | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 1 | 1.25 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 2 |
| 5000 | 378 | £171,318 | £214,148 | £256,978 | £299,807 | £342,637 |
| 7500 | 337 | £169,016 | £211,271 | £253,525 | £295,779 | £338,033 |
| 10000 | 302 | £166,150 | £207,688 | £249,226 | £290,763 | £332,301 |
| 12500 | 272 | £162,989 | £203,736 | £244,483 | £285,230 | £325,978 |
| 15000 | 253 | £160,599 | £200,749 | £240,899 | £281,049 | £321,199 |

The thresholds below which businesses do not have to pay have been reviewed at £2,500 variables between (and including) £5,000 to £15,000. This would mean the BID might be made up of a minimum number of hereditaments of circa 253 and a maximum of circa 378. These figures are lower than the industry average number of levy payers in a BID area. It may therefore be likely that a higher headline levy rate is required in order to ensure any BID has enough income to deliver projects of value to the businesses.

From the above analysis, a BID for Redditch could generate an annual income between £160,599 and £342,637. Further analysis will be required during the Planning Stage to establish the level of income needed in order to meet the expectations of businesses.

Based on a levy rate of 2%, a business in a hereditament with a rateable value (RV) of £10,000 would pay £200. A business with a RV of £100,000 would pay a levy of £2,000 and a business with an RV of £500,000 would pay a levy of £10,000.

It is common for BIDs to have a discounted levy policy for businesses who are tenants of shopping centres. This is because certain services the BID may provide for the whole area, like extra cleaning or security services, may already be provided by the shopping centre as part of their tenancy agreement.



Some BIDs also offer discounts for hereditaments owned by charities. If it is decided that a discount should be given to shopping centre tenants in Redditch, given the large number of hereditaments housed within the Kingfisher centre, this is likely to have a significant impact on the levy available.

It is also worth noting that on average, BIDs collect 10% of their income from voluntary contributions from businesses or organisations that do not qualify to pay the levy but that benefit from its services. Further modelling of this can be included in the Planning Stage survey on request.

Factors that may eventually influence hereditament numbers and levy include:

1. The final BID area
2. Any discount applied to charities
3. The actual cost of services required
4. Changes to the British BIDs National BID Criteria (Revised January 2018)
5. Potential or planned developments in the area during the term
6. Any threshold applied (lower end)
7. Any cap applied (top end)
8. Any other discounts or exemptions allowed (e.g. consideration needs to be given to the fact that, unusually, there are two separately rated car parks in the top five levy payers).
9. Local factors required to make a successful ballot



7) Sectors and Areas

7.1 Top 20 levy payers

| Business | Local Address 1 | Rateable Value (£) |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Debenhams | 19 Walford Walk B97 4EE | 500000 |
| Redditch Borough Council | The Town Hall, Alcester Street, , B98 8AH | 460000 |
| Marks & Spencer PLC | 1 Walford WalkB97 4HJ | 425000 |
| The Range | 14-18 Park Walk, B97 4HD | 405000 |
| Primark | 76 Evesham Walk, Evesham Walk, B97 4EX | 392500 |
| Wickes | Redditch Ringway, REDDITCH, B98 8DU | 382500 |
| Heart of Worcestershire College | New College, Peakman Street, B98 8DW | 370000 |
| H & M | 45--47 Evesham Walk,, B97 4ET | 352500 |
| Boots | 1-4 Kingfisher Walk, B97 4EY | 352500 |
| Dunelm | Unit 3a 60 Grove Street, B98 8AY | 342500 |
| Kingfisher Limited Partnership | Car Park 2 Silver Street,, B98 8AH | 297500 |
| The Governor of Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre | Trinity College/ 6th Form, Centre, Easemore Road, REDDITCH, B98 8ER | 231000 |
| Aldi | Unit 1 Trescott Road, Trafford Park,, B98 7AH | 228000 |
| HM Court Service | Magistrates Court, Grove Street, B98 8DB | 228000 |
| Wilko Retail Ltd | 7 Kingfisher Square, Kingfisher Centre,, B97 4EQ | 225000 |
| Lidl (UK) G.M.B.H | Unit 3b 60 Grove Street, B98 8AY | 198000 |
| TK Maxx Ltd | Evesham Walk, B98 8AH | 180000 |
| Petsmart | Unit 2 Trescott Road, Trafford Park, B98 7AH | 170000 |
| Bensons for Beds | Redditch Ringway, B98 8DU | 166000 |
| Holiday Inn Express | Hewell Road,, B97 6AE | 157000 |

CMS believe that the top 20 hereditaments are unlikely to cause serious problems for the establishment of a BID, provided that discounts are provided for charitable institutions (including colleges and theatres), and that attempts are made to engage with them all in the planning process.



7.2 Organisations with most hereditaments

| Occupiers Name | Number of Votes |
|--|-----------------|
| Kingfisher Limited Partnership | 26 |
| Nansen Properties Ltd in Members Voluntary Liquidation | 5 |
| ATM Site (Notemachine) at Morrisons PLC | 4 |
| Worcestershire County | 3 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 3 |
| Warwickshire & West Mercia Community Rehab Company | 2 |
| Vodafone Limited | 2 |
| Thomas Cook Retail Limited | 2 |
| The Dow Surgery | 2 |
| Telefonia UK Limited | 2 |
| Poundstretcher Limited | 2 |
| J D Wetherspoon Plc | 2 |
| Bullivant Media Limited | 2 |
| Buildbase Limited | 2 |
| Boots Opticians Professional Services Limited (3062) | 2 |
| Ali Azhar Potia T/A S R Fones | 2 |

There are a relatively low number of multiple voters within the proposed BID area. Despite this, a significant amount of the overall votes sits with the Kingfisher shopping centre and any BID that is to be successful will need to ensure it meets the needs of the centre and the wider town. If the support of the Kingfisher centre is gained prior to ballot, success will be vastly more likely.



7.3 Sector Split

Businesses have been placed into four categories. These sectors have been pre-judged by the researchers and are not, necessarily, indicative of how occupiers may view themselves. However, it is useful to ascertain the predominant audience and levy payer for the BID. It is also important to note that an analysis of this type is only helpful on the 'simple majority' side of any future ballot. It does not presently take into account the size of premises as judged on the 'majority by rateable value' side:

1. Retail (where purchase is not for consumption on the premises)
2. Leisure (where an activity or product is for consumption on the premises)
3. Office (where a transaction is highly unlikely on the premises and the location is primarily a place of work)
4. Other (i.e. car parks)

The town centre composition is shown below:

| Sectors | Number of hereditaments | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Retail | 237 | 62.6 |
| Leisure | 51 | 13.5 |
| Office | 80 | 21.2 |
| Other | 10 | 2.7 |
| Total | 378 | 100 |

*Note: The above is total businesses above a threshold of £5,000.

Commentary on the Proposals going forward.



8) On-the-ground Research Survey

The initial 'on-the-ground' feasibility questionnaire is designed as a prompt for businesses to start to understand their priorities for additional services, regardless of whether these are delivered by a BID or not. It also helps to assess knowledge of, and the appetite for, the principle of a BID.

Often, once the Planning Stage is completed, the priorities change. At this stage, however, the research is only undertaken to ascertain whether there is:

1. Business appreciation of what improvements may be available.
2. Some consensus as to the benefits of improvement.
3. Some willingness to work towards such improvements.
4. A likely range of services and projects that could be delivered by a BID.

Additionally, more detailed research is required during the next Stage to establish not only business priorities but also project specifics and engagement of head office voters.

8.1 Who was surveyed?

At present 43 of the 378 businesses have been surveyed giving an overall response rate of 11% across the area, with a clear mixing being drawn from inside and outside of the Kingfisher centre. The sample also reflects the split the town has between Retail and Leisure premises but more work will be needed to further engage with the office sector within the town.

Responses to the survey were received in the following sectorial splits:

| Sector Split | Number of hereditaments represented in responses | Percentage of response |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Retail | 38 | 88 |
| Leisure/Food/Drink | 4 | 10 |
| Office | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 43 | |

The findings of the feasibility survey come with significant 'health-warnings'. They represent only 11% of total hereditaments; they do not include head offices; they may not include all of the relevant 'influencers'; the ratings list will change and the sectorial split is not entirely representative.

8.2 Survey Conclusions

- The research indicates that crime and the perception of crime as well as the availability of parking spaces are core issues to the businesses community but issues where the general consensus is that they are issues that are being well-managed already.



- Other issues that were of concern to businesses included rough sleepers and begging and marketing of the place. More research will be needed to ascertain the degree to which rough sleeping and begging are being responded to but generally businesses appear to be suggesting that the standard of marketing and the level of marketing need to be both increased and improved.
- Businesses responded very favourably to the amount of and quality of events being put on in Redditch.
- The cost of parking scored the least satisfactory rating in the survey and is an area for more research as the project develops.
- When asked to describe the town centre the most common response was “quiet” and “boring” but supplemented with a general view that the town is “clean”.
- A significant number of respondents also mentioned that they felt the town appeared to be dated.
- A large majority of respondents in the survey stated that they would like to be more actively involved in the town centre, which is encouraging. The survey suggests that engagement in town centre events by businesses is relatively high and this also bodes well for business.
- 49% of respondents felt that they would recommend Redditch to a friend, with 21% saying “maybe” and 30% saying “no”, suggesting that a good proportion of those working in the town see value and pride in their place.
- 93% of responders had no knowledge of what a BID was or what a BID does prior to completing the survey, meaning a key objective for the next stage of research will be to grow knowledge and support for the concept of a BID for Redditch town centre.



9) Strategic Plans

Redditch Council plan 2017-2020

The Redditch Council plan 2017-2020 includes a specific section titled “Help me to run a successful business” (P8&9), the aspirations set out in this section include:

1. Enhancing the retail, leisure and residential offer
 - Produce a regeneration prospectus setting out key investment, development and improvement opportunities in the Town Centre
 - Aim to bring forward development in the Town Centre on opportunity sites at Edward Street and Church Road
 - Develop the Town Centre, including proactive engagement with the owners of the Kingfisher shopping centre
 - Identify options to improve access into the town Centre
 - Improve the vibrancy and variety of the outdoor market
 - Work with Worcestershire County Council to improve signage and way marking in Redditch
 - Work with landowners to identify / progress development opportunities in the district centres

2. Positively promote Redditch as a place to live, work invest and visit and encourage new inward investment
 - Work with partners and the local business community to promote Redditch to external investors
 - Work proactively with existing landowners and developers to promote available employment sites and premises
 - Work with the Kingfisher shopping centre to promote Redditch Town Centre
 - Bring forward the appropriate development of the Redditch Gateway site

These priorities could be supported well by a BID for Redditch that provided a method of funding additional marketing of the place helping to complement the above aims and objectives and with a real focus on bringing consumers into Redditch by highlighting its core offer as a secondary and easily accessible shopping destination.



10) Conclusion

Redditch is the oldest of the “new towns” located in the north-east of Worcestershire, England, approximately 15 miles south of Birmingham. Its close proximity to such a large city brings with it both significant benefits and challenges.

As a retail destination, it must ensure that its offer is understanding of the fact that local consumers have the option to visit Birmingham very easily and that it will not be able to compete with the overall offer that Birmingham can provide. Instead a real focus should be given to giving its local catchment reasons to come into Redditch instead of travelling the additional distance.

The convenience of having such a large amount of secure off-street parking is clearly a pull factor for Redditch, although the initial survey suggests that the cost of parking is an issue many businesses are concerned about.

In 2003-2004, government passed legislation permitting the creation of BIDs to England (with the rest of the UK to follow). Since that time and the creation of the first BID in Kingston-Upon-Thames in January 2005, the UK has seen over 290 BIDs created, most in town and city centres, although with a minority in industrial and commercial districts. Today, BIDs generate over £75 million a year from levy (source; Nationwide BID Survey 2016, British BIDs) and are delivering beyond place management and are becoming instrumental to the reshaping of places in order that they are equipped for the next decade and beyond.

Whilst there has not been any investigation into the principle of a Business Improvement District for Redditch prior to this feasibility study, there is a strong town centre partnership in place bringing together the local business community, the public sector and the wider organisations including faith groups.

It is also clear that issues commonly seen in other locations including a lack of good quality parking and delivery of events are being delivered well in Redditch. The early indication is that for a BID to be successful within Redditch and with a modest income of circa £250,000, it will need to focus its delivery into one or two key areas of delivery to ensure maximum value. The very early indications are that the area that could have most support and also the greatest effect is marketing.

CMS recommends that at this stage there is no reason to suggest that a BID wouldn't be successful in Redditch and could meet the specific needs of the place well. As a result of this it would seem appropriate to move to the next stage of research into a BID, the 'insight stage', including a far more in-depth on-the-ground research piece with a focus on exploring specific marketing services which a BID could provide in Redditch and would gather the support of the business community.

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**REDDITCH BID
PLANNING STAGE REPORT**

November 2018

MAKING PLACES **WORK**

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Planning Stage Survey Summary

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Introduction

Following the Planning Stage presentation in October 2018 this report includes this information supplemented by the additional business meetings, timeline to ballot and financial modelling.

190 businesses hereditaments have been involved in the consultation to date. There are 378 hereditaments in the provisional BID area. This is equivalent to a 50% response rate. Crucially. The project has the support of the major shopping centre. Whilst the BID needs to provide services across the town, the shopping centre is clearly a significant draw into the town and support from its tenants and management will be vital to the success of the BID.

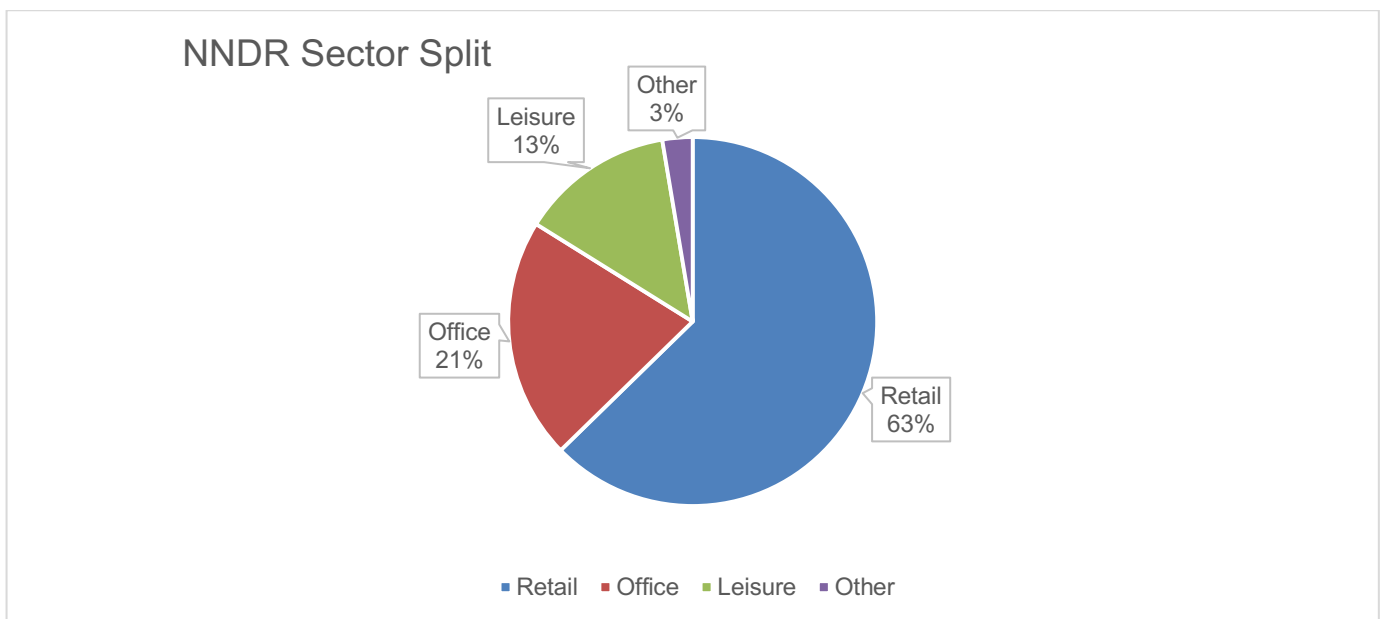
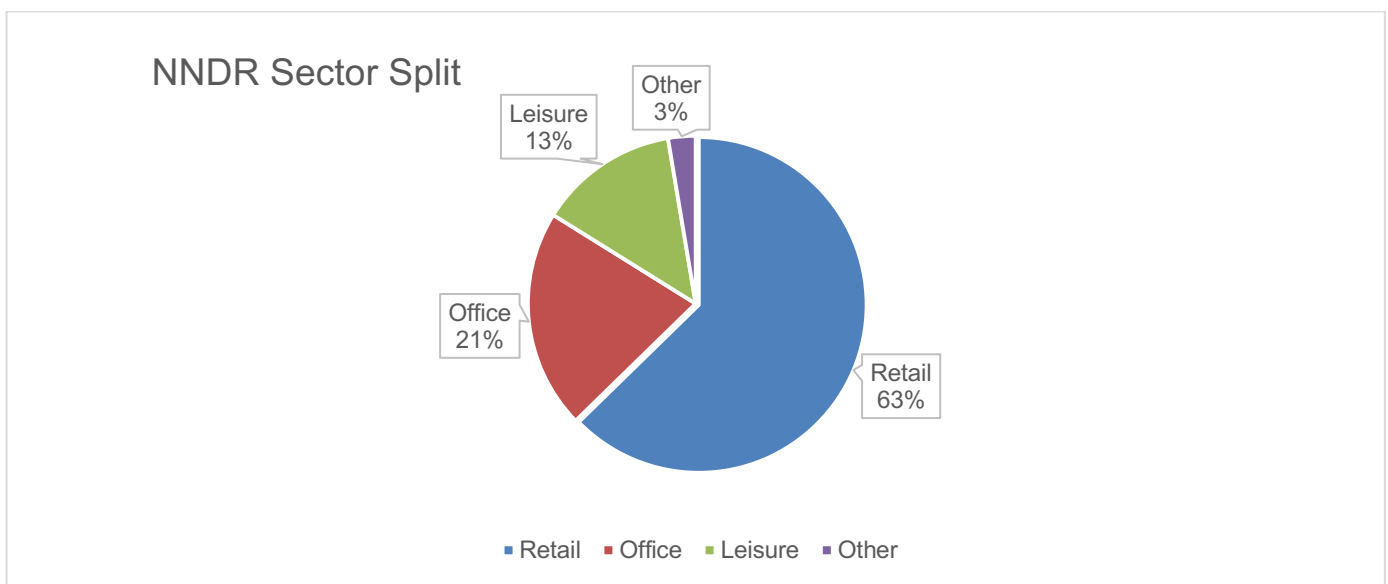
Executive summary

- 1) There is solid support for the principle of a BID in Redditch. 10% of hereditaments surveyed responded that on a 0-10 scale of support, they supported the principle of a BID to the maximum possible extent, 10 out of 10. 47% of hereditaments surveyed responded they supported the principle of a BID to a level of 7 out of 10 or above.
- 2) The main concerns of local businesses are the 'Perception of Redditch Town Centre as a destination', and "The look and feel of the town centre".
- 3) The sector splits show that there is a broad consensus of both support for the BID and priority projects that a BID should deliver.
- 4) In terms of a vision there is a strong desire to improve the perception of the town centre as a destination as well as businesses saying they would like to see more events in the town centre, which should be marketed, to increase footfall.
- 5) A BID for Redditch, has the potential to generate a levy income of around £200K per annum. In order to do this the BID will need a levy rate of 1.75% or 2%. This is at the higher end of the levy rate scale but is necessary in order to generate a budget that can deliver what businesses want.

Methodology and research

The survey results were gathered between 1st August 2018 and 14th August 2018. The responses were gathered via face to face interviews.

As far as possible we looked to receive a range of responses based on the sector split of the hereditaments contained in the NNDR list.

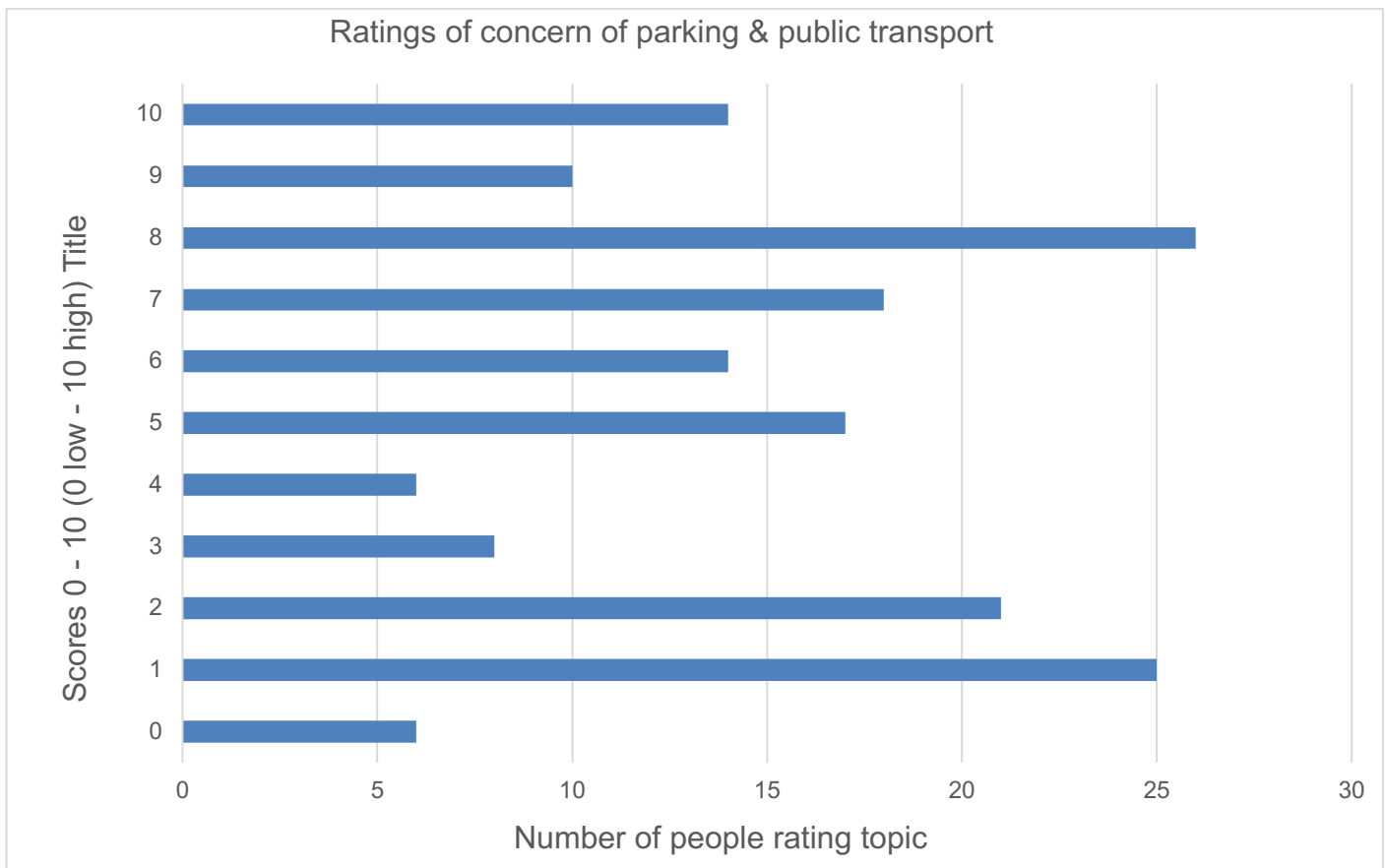


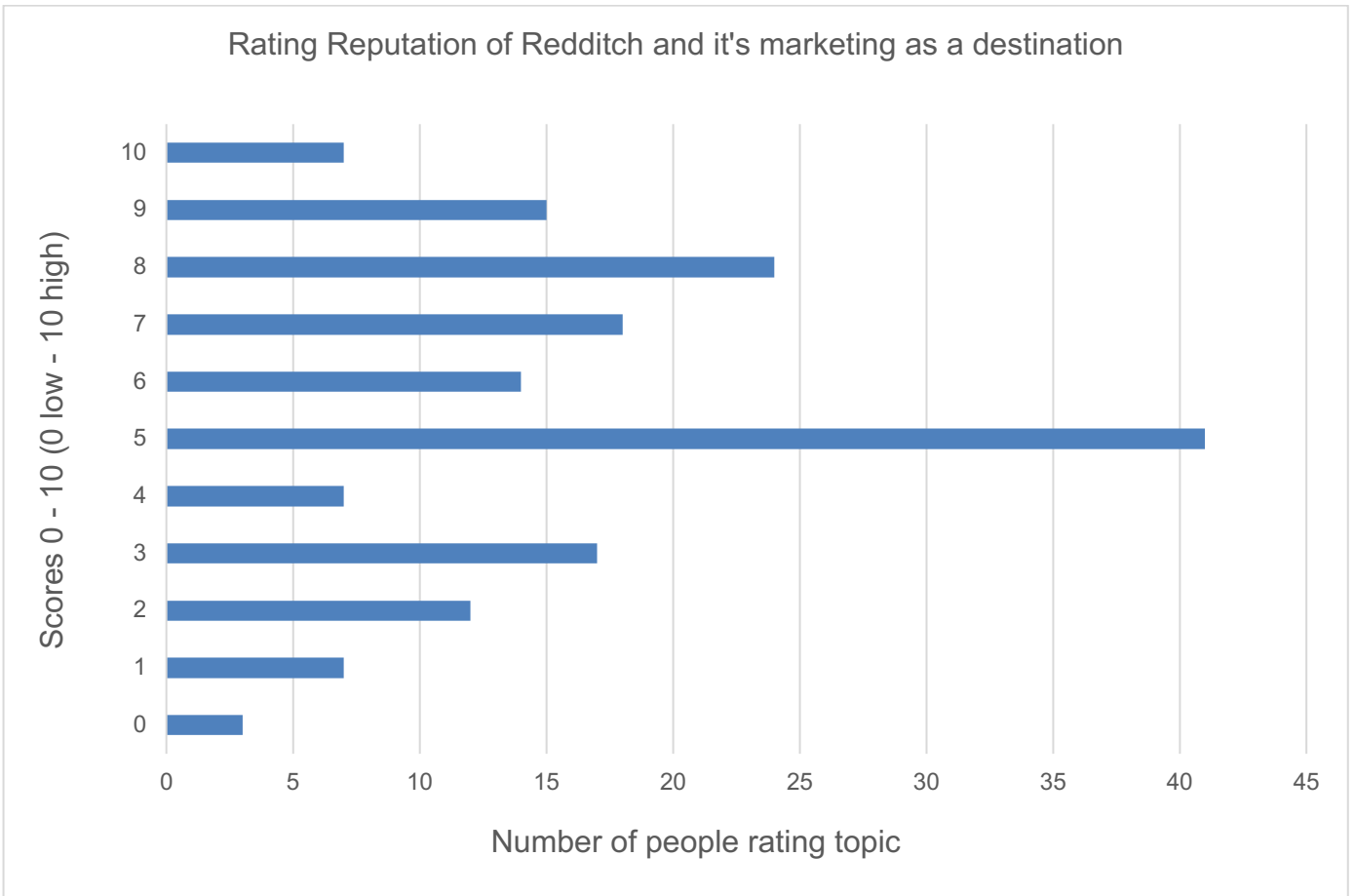
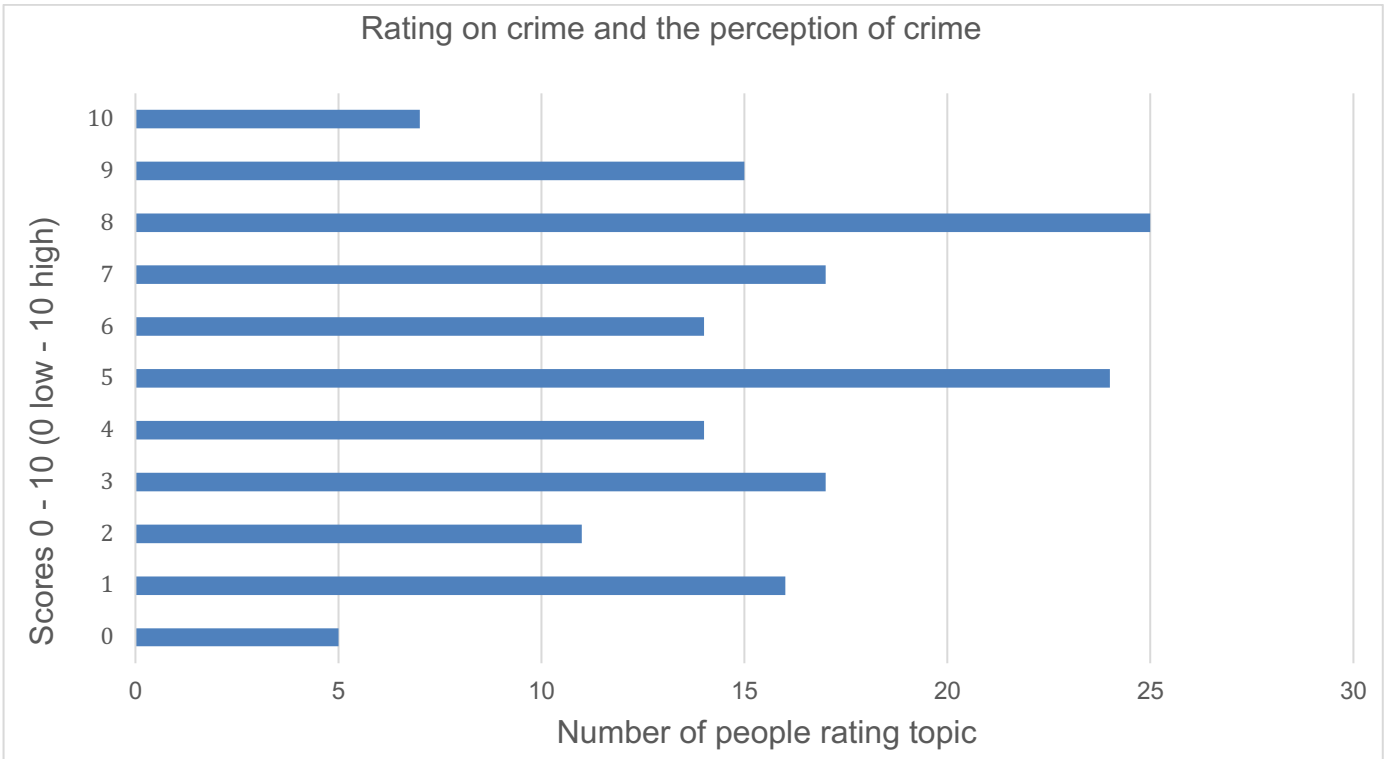
The national BID development guidelines administered by British BIDs recommends a survey response rate representing at least 50% of all hereditaments in the area at this stage of a BID's development. We have achieved a response from 165 of the 378 hereditaments in the provisional BID area in paper form, this has been supplemented with conversations with key stakeholders in the Council and the shopping centre to take consultation above 50%.

We also received responses from 12 of the top 20 hereditaments (excluding Marks and Spencer's) by rateable value in the BID area.

Survey results

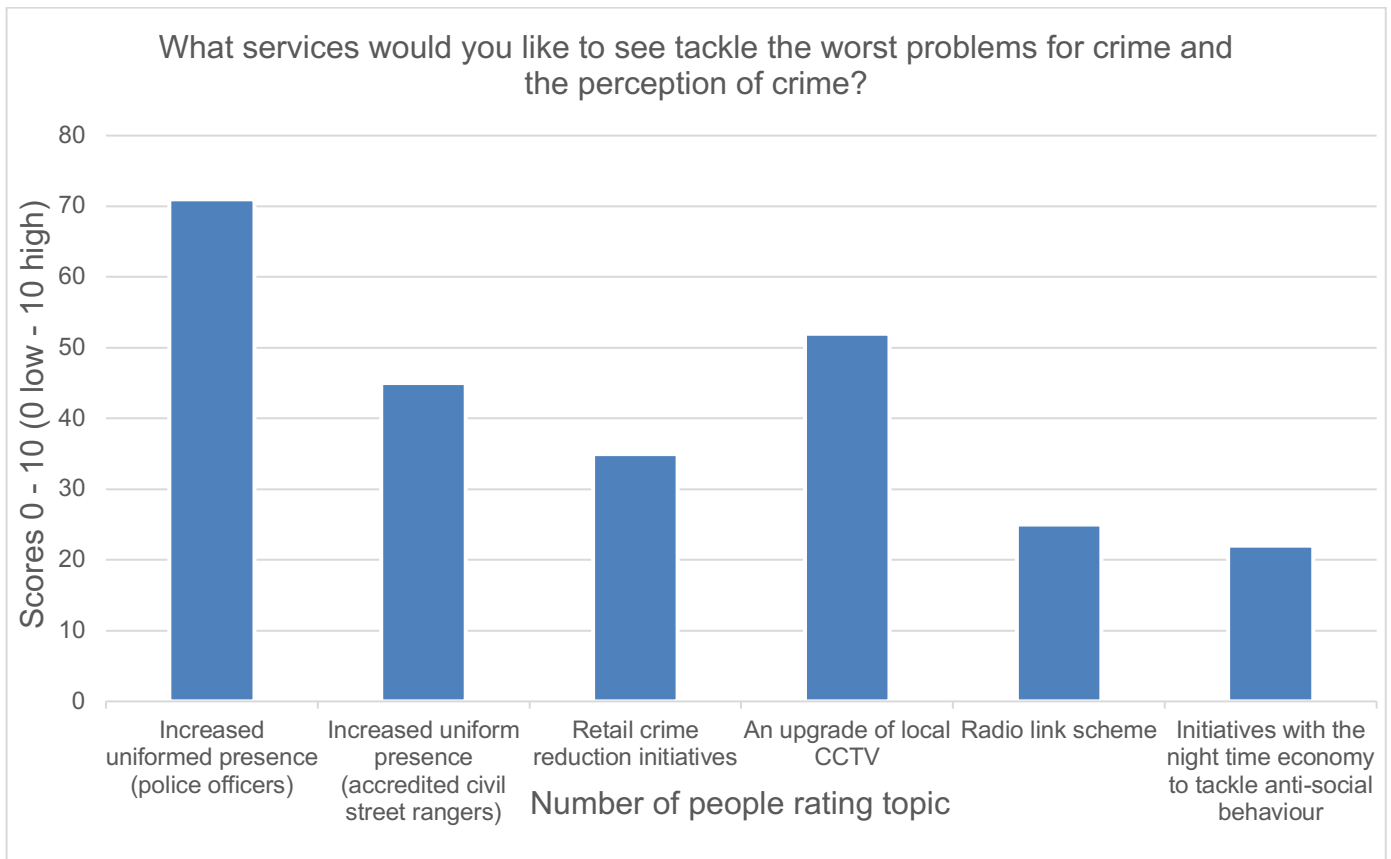
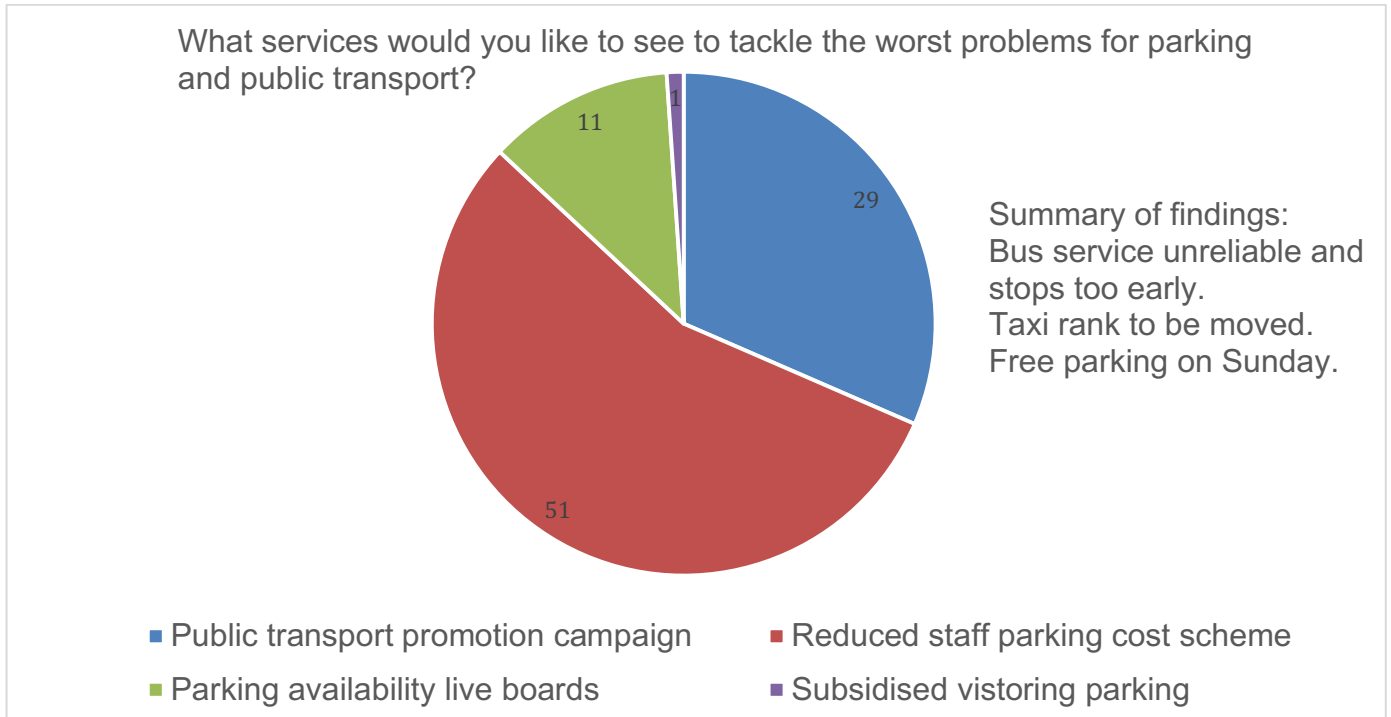
Q1: On a scale of 0-10 (0 being lowest 10 being the highest), how much are these issues a concern for you as a business?

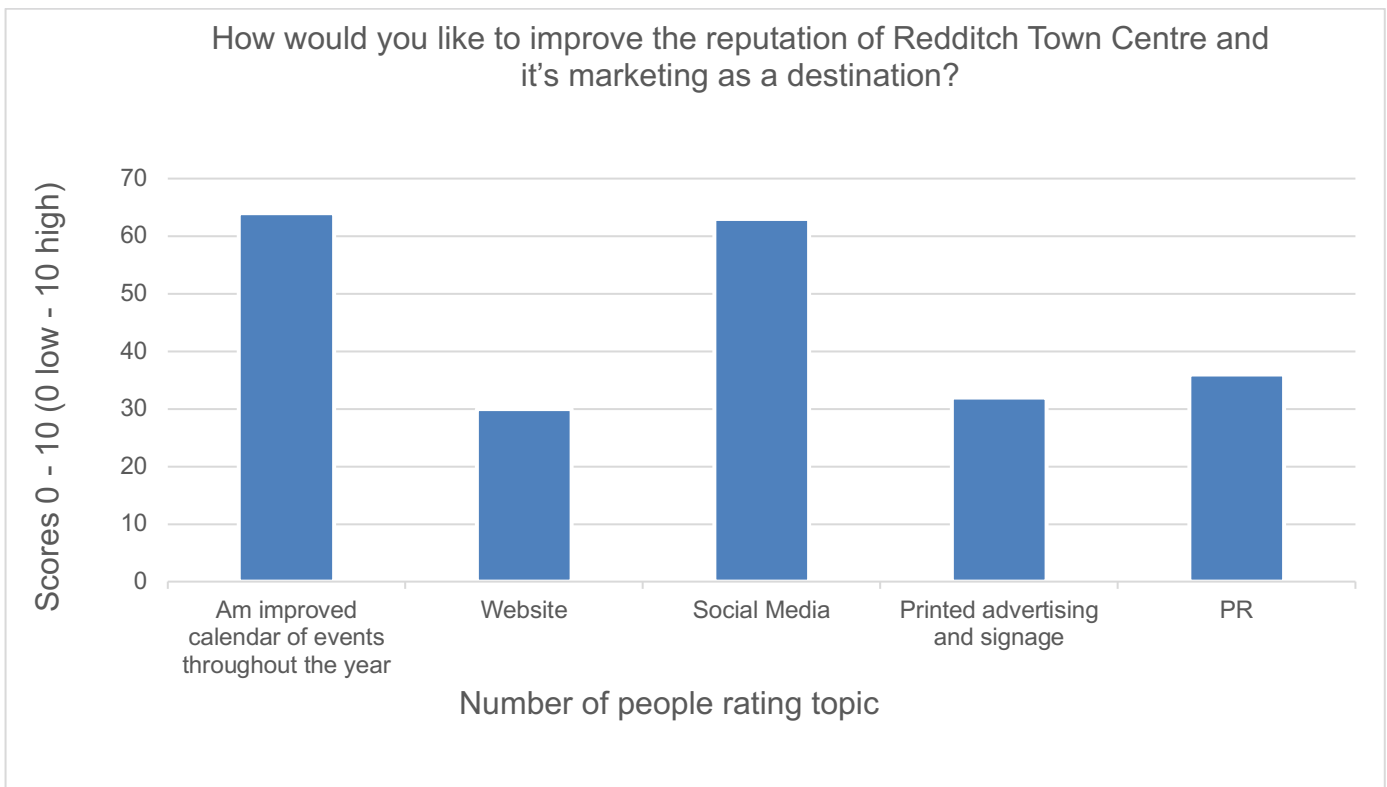






Q2: What services would you like to see to tackle the worst problems you highlighted above?





Q3: If you could pick three words or short sentences to describe Redditch Town Centre as it currently is what would they be?

Frequent word to describe Redditch now:

Drab, dull, outdated, tired, needs improving/development, empty shops and units. Also many businesses said: busy and clean. Out of 331 words submitted, 204 were negative.

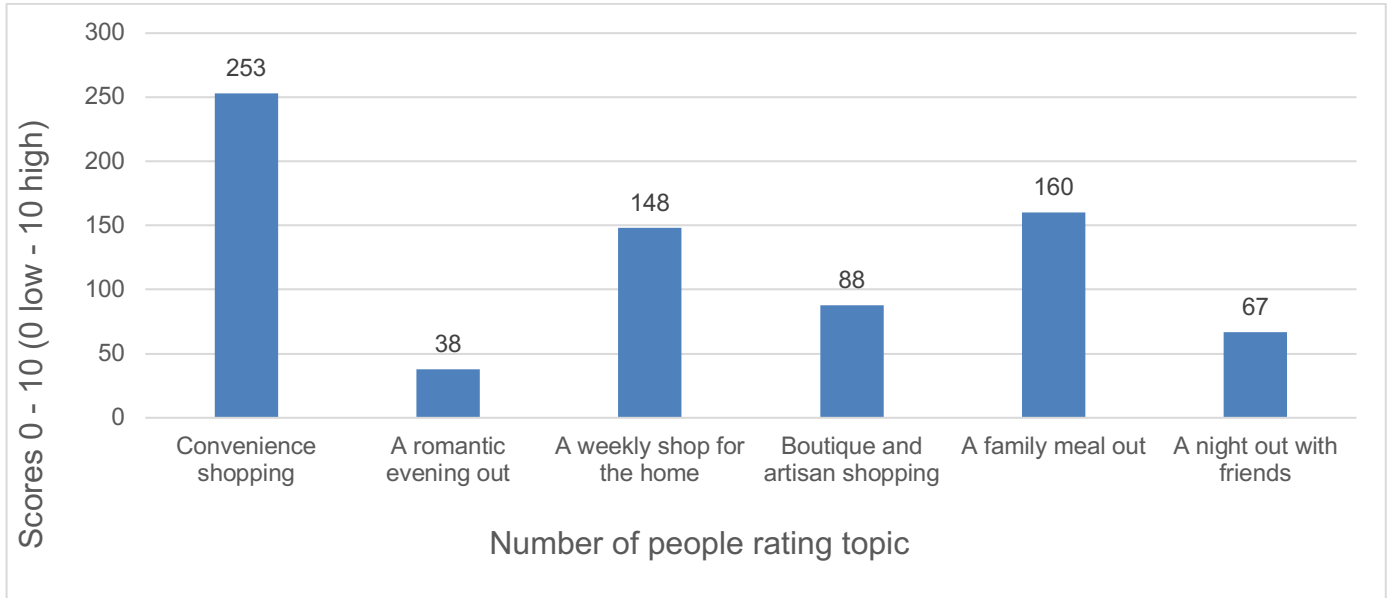
Q4: If you could pick three words or short sentences to describe how you would like Redditch Town Centre to be in two years' time, what would they be?

Word frequently used to describe how businesses would like Redditch to be in 2 years

included: variety of shops, a destination, busier, full of people and shops, cleaner, reducing ASB/beggars, to feel safer, modern, thriving, vibrant.



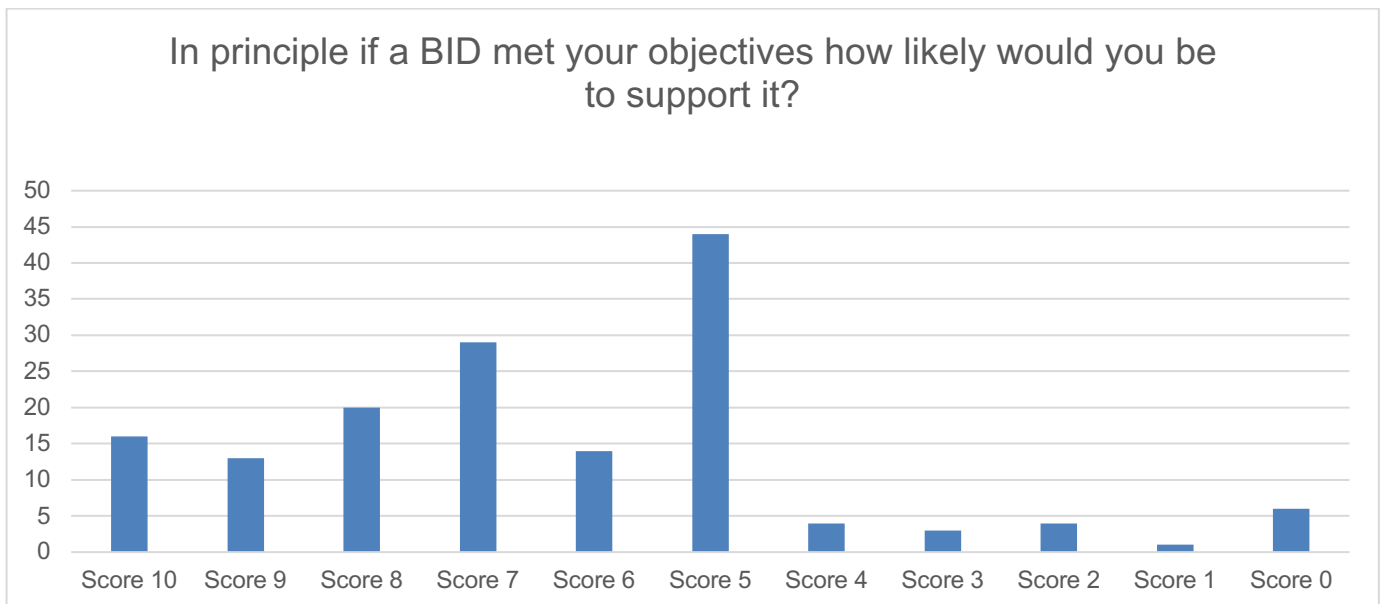
Q5: What kind of activities do you feel the Town Centre area is good for?



Q6: If you could change one thing about the High Street area to improve trade what would it be?

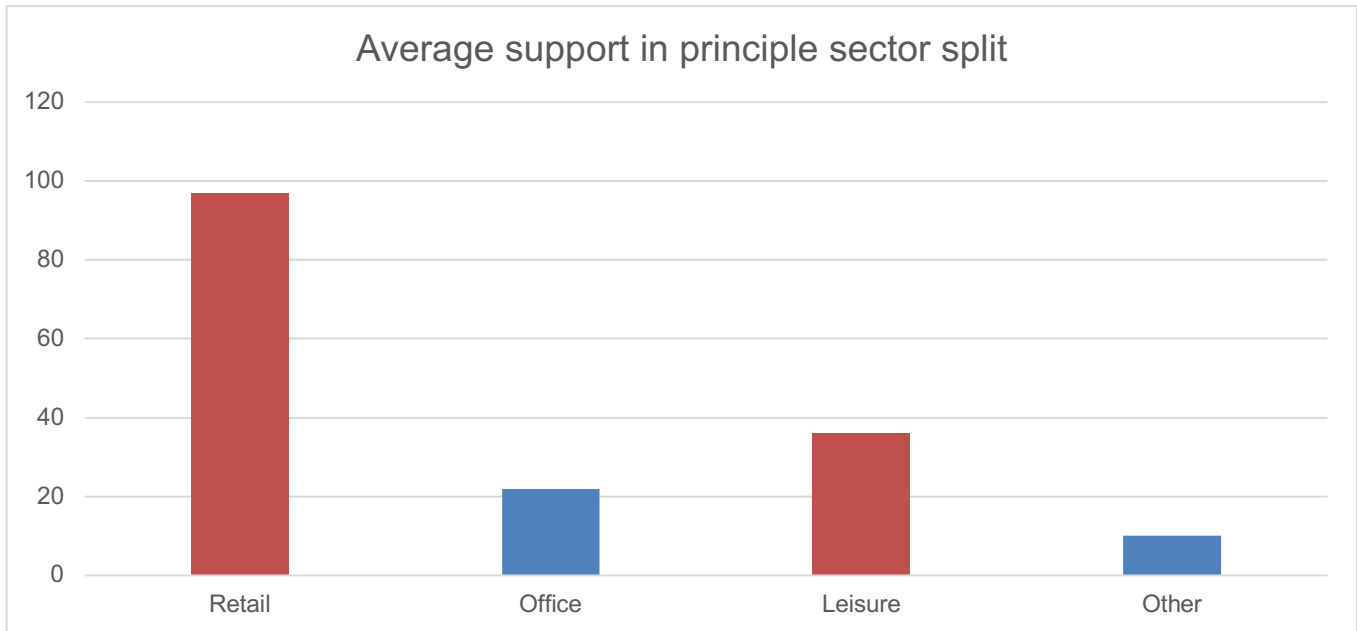
In the main responses were to have a variety of shops, bigger brands, supermarket, fill shops - to attract high spend people. Have events to increase footfall. Deal with ASB.

Q7: In principle, if a BID could deliver services that met your priorities above, how likely would you be to vote yes in a ballot? (0= absolutely not, 10= absolutely)

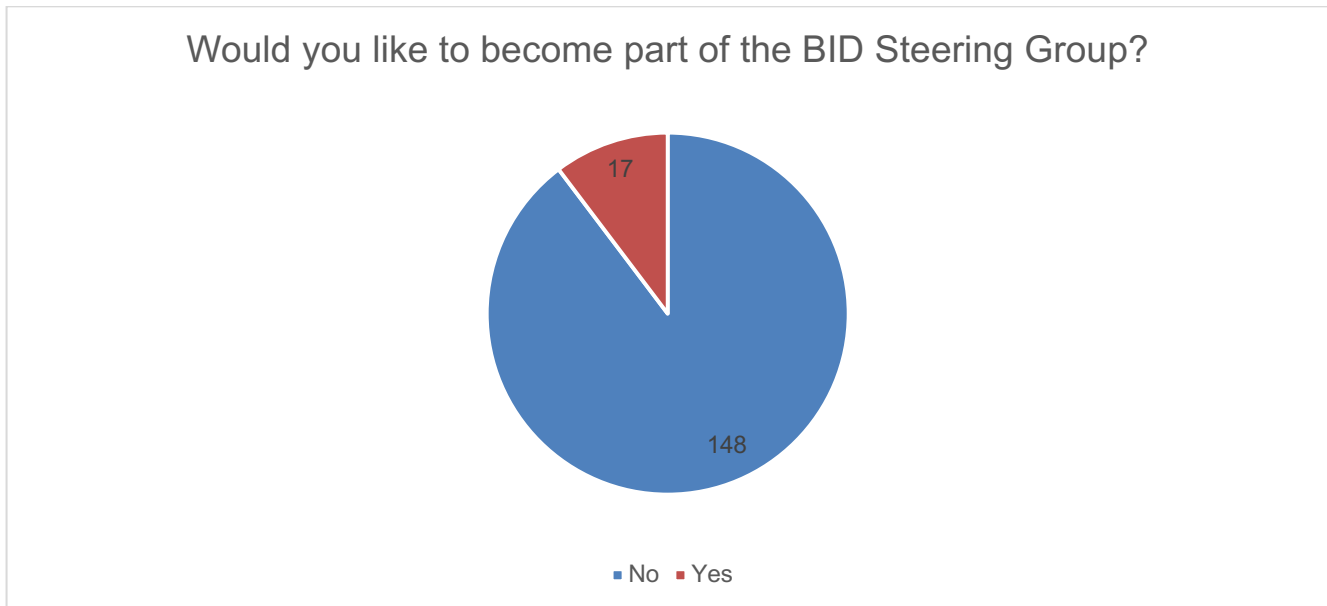




Sector Split:



Q8: Would you be interested in becoming part of the BID steering group?



A full list can be obtained upon request on the understanding that it will be used in accordance with all the relevant rules relating to the use of individual person data in data protection law.

NOTE: The comparatively small number of Industrial/Other hereditaments who responded, and the broad nature of the sector group, means the significance of a differential comparison would be negligible.

Financial modelling

| Threshold | No of hereditaments | LEVY RATE | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 1.25% | 1.50% | 1.75% | 2% |
| 5000 | 289 | £133,377 | £160,052 | £186,728 | £213,403 |
| 7500 | 250 | £130,451 | £156,541 | £182,631 | £208,721 |
| 10000 | 222 | £127,467 | £152,960 | £178,454 | £203,947 |
| 12500 | 200 | £124,542 | £149,450 | £174,359 | £199,267 |
| 15000 | 164 | £118,567 | £142,280 | £165,994 | £189,707 |

A BID in Redditch is likely to generate in the region of £213,000 of spend per year. This is at the lower end of incomes generated by a BID and there will be a clear need to focus resource towards one core delivery areas.

Recommendations and next steps

There is an appetite for a BID to deliver the projects highlighted. The average turnout at a BID ballot is 47%. Therefore the amount of businesses involved in the consultation to date is encouraging.

The next steps are as follows;

Establish a business led steering group

Create a final consultation document and website that lays out what a BID for Redditch could achieve

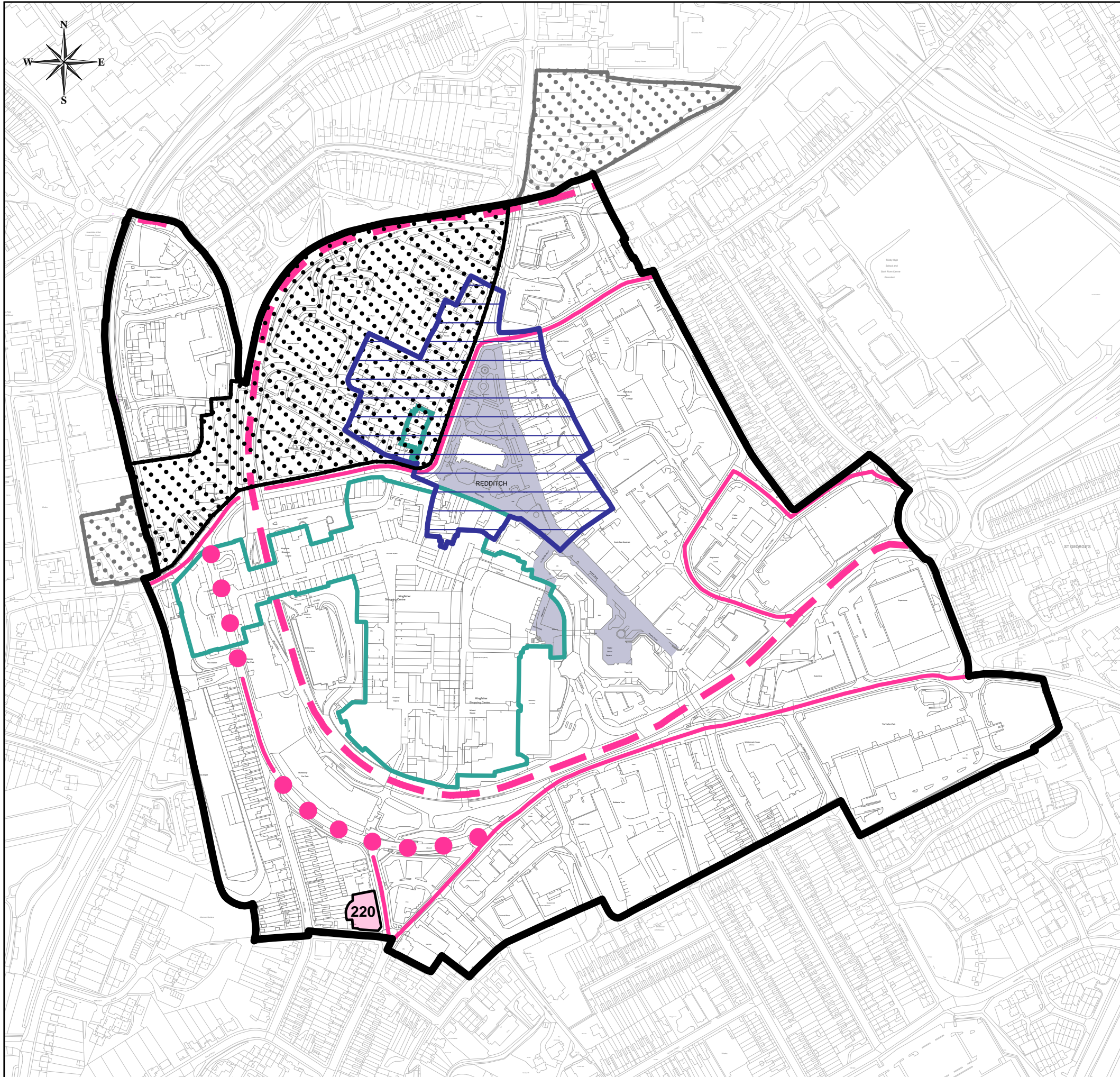
Serve Notice to the secretary of state for a March ballot.

*Steering Group to sign off Final Consultation document at December board meeting. The Final Consultation document provides businesses (local and head office where applicable) another opportunity to provide feedback into the emerging business plan before it is signed off by the Steering Group.

It is clear that there is broad support for the development of a BID in Redditch. It is also clear that a BID could provide services to directly address the majority of the concerns highlighted in the survey.

The results suggest the BID should look to provide a strong marketing offering to improve the perception of the town centre to both customers and potential investors. The BID should also look to provide services designed to better promote and support events in the town centre and look to provide extra ones where possible. The results also suggest that the BID should look to build a strong relationship with the council and other relevant authorities to tackle crime and concerns over parking through means that meet the concerns of local businesses.

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KEY

-  Town Centre (Policy 30 Town Centre and Retail Hierarchy, Policy 31 Regeneration for the Town Centre, Policy 33 Use of Upper Floors)
-  Retail Core (Policy 32 Protection of the Retail Core) (for exceptions, refer to policy)
-  Designated Conservation Area (Policy 36 Historic Environment and Policy 38 Conservation Areas)
-  Civic Open Space (Policy 13 Primarily Open Space)
-  Town Centre Strategic Site (Policy 31 Regeneration for the Town Centre)
-  Sites allocated for housing development to meet the Strategic Housing Target for the period 2011-2030 (Policy 4 Housing Provision)
-  District Distributor (Policy 22 Road Hierarchy)
-  Local Distributor (Policy 22 Road Hierarchy)
-  Public Transport Route-Buses and Emergency Vehicles Only (Policy 20 Transport Requirements for New Development)

**Borough of Redditch
Local Plan No.4**



Town Centre Inset Map

Development Plans
Redditch Borough Council
Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
Worcs
B98 8AH

Tel: 01527 64252
Email: devplans@redditchbc.gov.uk

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Drawn: EN/AG | Scale: 1/4000 | Drawing No: P2202/2.3 |
| Surveyed: N/A | Date: JANUARY 2017 | © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100024252 |

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Budget Scrutiny

Friday, 19 October 2018

Working Group

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Chair), and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Lyndsey Berry and Chris Forrester

Committee Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

4. TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP - INTERVIEW WITH THE TOWN CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

Members welcomed the Town Centre Co-ordinator to the meeting and invited her to provide some background information about the work of the Redditch Town Centre Partnership.

Redditch Borough Council had commissioned a Town Centre Strategy in 2008. A number of priority projects had been included in this document, which had included a proposal to introduce a Town Centre Partnership. The Town Centre Co-ordinator had been appointed to help establish the Town Centre Partnership and to co-ordinate their work. Those appointed to the partnership operated in a voluntary capacity. In 2012 the partnership had become a Community Interest Company (CIC) with a board of directors. At this time the partnership had scaled up its activities.

The partnership had worked on a number of projects to date, including a Dragons' Den style initiative called 'Pitch Your Plan' and had provided some funding to local businesses. The main aim of the partnership was to improve the vibrancy of the town centre and to improve linkages outside the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. People from a range of backgrounds sat on the board of the partnership including local Councillors and representatives of local businesses, St Stephen's Church, the company that managed the market and many more.

.....
Chair

Budget Scrutiny

Committee

Friday, 19 October 2018

In recent years those involved with the Redditch Town Centre Partnership had realised that it was not doing as much as it could, primarily due to financial constraints. The partnership had worked on various initiatives to raise funding, such as the Redditch Monopoly. The approach of other partnerships to raising money had also been investigated and it was as a result of this that the idea of a Redditch Business Improvement District (BIDs) had first been identified. BIDs were in place in other parts of the country, such as Nottingham and parts of Birmingham such as King's Heath. An external consultant had been commissioned the previous municipal year to investigate the potential to introduce a BID in Redditch. The consultant's findings, together with information about the financial implications of a BID for Redditch Borough Council, would be outlined in a report to the Executive Committee, due to be considered in December 2018. Should the BID be agreed by the partnership a shadow BID Board would be established.

Members were advised that the timelines for the BID were as follows:

- A feasibility study was commissioned in August 2018.
- Some initial groundwork and research had been conducted over subsequent months.
- The aim would be to complete the process by Christmas.
- In January 2019 the partnership would launch a campaign to encourage local businesses to sign up to the BID.
- In March a ballot of local business would take place.

BIDs were legally and geographically defined areas, though in Redditch the BID would reflect the defined area set out in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4. Contributions towards the BID area were collected through a levy and used to implement the actions within the BID Business Plan decided by the businesses. One legal requirement of BIDs was that they could not be used to provide statutory Council services. Typically most Councils had Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the BID.

Business within the BID area would have an opportunity to vote on whether the BID should be introduced. The BID would be successful if 50 per cent of businesses in the area voted for the BID and if this related to the equivalent of 50 per cent of the rateable value of businesses in the area. Even if businesses voted against the introduction of the BID, if the process was successful all eligible businesses would need to pay their contribution towards the BID. There was a mandatory length of five years for each BID. At the end of that period businesses would need to be balloted again.

On the date of the meeting Officers were working with consultants to prepare a business plan which would be based on the research

Budget Scrutiny

Committee

Friday, 19 October 2018

that had been undertaken by the external consultants. Should the BID be agreed the businesses within the BID area could decide what to spend the money on.

The levy that would be paid by each business remained to be determined. Currently the proposal was that those businesses with a rateable value of less than £10,000 would not be required to pay the levy. It had been calculated that if all eligible businesses paid a levy of 1.5 per cent this could raise approximately £250,000 per annum. This could be spent on the town centre.

There were some costs attached to establishing the BID. This included the costs of researching and planning a BID through to Ballot stage and the creation of a BID company which would cost £70,000. This would be funded using a mixture of grants, Redditch Town Centre Partnership and the Kingfisher Shopping centre. An initial outlay of £30,000 spent by the Council on the BID could be recouped from the BID funds. If the BID was agreed, the Council would have a statutory responsibility to provide support by collecting the levy and managing the ballot.

The Council would need to be a levy payer; for the Town Hall, Palace Theatre and the market. This was likely to cost the Council approximately £10,000 per annum. There were a number of organisations that would need to pay the highest levy, which would include organisations that might no longer have a branch in Redditch but were paying rent as their lease had not yet come to an end.

As part of their work the consultants had undertaken some initial consultation with organisations that would be affected. Negative responses had only been received from eight per cent of those consulted. Dispensations could be provided for educational establishments so that schools and colleges were not financially penalised. This would need to be considered by the shadow BID board.

The BID process would sit alongside and would complement the town centre regeneration work that was being undertaken through the One Public Estate process. It was possible that, should the BID be agreed, the shadow BID board and then later the final board could act as a consultee for the work on the regeneration of the town centre.

Officers noted that there was a need to be cautious as sometimes the idea of a BID was rejected at the ballot stage. In Kidderminster this had recently happened, but like most areas Kidderminster would be going out to consultation once again. Information about

Budget Scrutiny

Committee

Friday, 19 October 2018

the impact of BIDs in other parts of the country would be included in the report to the Executive Committee.

At the end of the debate Members agreed that the BID could have a beneficial impact on the vibrancy of the local economy. The group therefore

RECOMMENDED that

the Executive Committee should support the introduction of a Business Improvement District in Redditch town centre.

ACTION: the Town Centre Co-ordinator to circulate copies of the feasibility study for the Redditch Business Improvement District (BID).

The Meeting commenced at 11.00 am
and closed at 12.12 pm

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**11th December 2018**POLICY FOR COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME**

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor David Bush, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre and Commercialism |
| 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 Members are requested to consider a draft Policy and Councillor Guidance notes for the recently approved Councillor Community Grants Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **the attached Policy and Guidance Notes for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme found in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report be approved, and implemented for the 2019/20 Councillor Community Grants Scheme.**

3. KEY ISSUES**Background**

- 3.1 On 19th November 2018, Full Council agreed to change the way in which the Council allocates grant funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Redditch, moving away from awarding funding through a corporate competitive grant giving process to one where each Ward Councillor has a designated budget to propose spend on projects across Redditch and within their Ward.
- 3.2 This change means that the current VCS Grants Policy is now out of date. A new Policy has therefore been written to reflect the changes in the scheme and sets out the overarching parameters that the scheme must work within. In addition there is a set of guidance notes for Councillors which explains the process in a step by step fashion. It was agreed by Full Council on 19th November that this new Policy and

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****11th December 2018**

guidelines be considered and agreed at a future Executive Committee meeting. The new policy and guidelines are found in Appendix 1 and 2.

- 3.3 Some elements of the previous policy have been maintained within this new policy. Stipulations around the types of groups and the types of projects the Council will fund have not fundamentally changed and so have been set out in the new Policy just as they were in the previous policy.
- 3.4 In addition, feedback about the new scheme which was received by the VCS and other stakeholders has been considered and used to inform some of the new guiding principles in the Policy.

Financial Implications

- 3.5 The Executive Committee has agreed that the Councillor Community Grant Scheme has a budget of £145,000 for 2019/20. Each Councillor will receive £5,000 to spend on projects being delivered in their own ward or in wards across the town.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme, ensuring that we comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Local Authorities must comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code and Best Value duties
- 3.10 The scheme will enable the Council to incur this expenditure in compliance with these statutory requirements. Individual members do not have delegated authority to make payments but can propose a payment from the sum 'allocated' to them to support organisations and projects which meet the Council's VCS Grants Programme Policy,

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**11th December 2018

which will be signed off by the Head of Community Services who holds the corporate grants budget.

Customer / Equalities Implications

- 3.11 One of the objectives of the Councillor Community Grants Scheme Policy is to ensure that proposals for funding are dealt with equitably. It makes clear to Councillors the rules of the scheme so that they can allocate funding in a transparent and fair way.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Councillor Community Grants Scheme Policy will be implemented to alleviate a number of risks to the Council including funding being directed to inappropriate organisations or projects and risks from any organisations receiving funding which then subsequently close. The Guidance Notes set out the process Councillors should follow to allocate their £5,000 of the Grants budget correctly and appropriately.
- 4.2 The VCS Grants Coordinator is available to discuss this process both with VCS groups interested in applying and with Councillors who are looking to allocate the funding. They will be able to help both parties get the best out of this process which should assist in mitigating risks for the Council.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Policy for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme
Appendix 2 – Councillor Guidance Notes for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- VCS Grants Programme 2019-20 Executive Report – October 2018
- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Voluntary Sector Task Group Report 2014
- Reference Executive Committee report 2010

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Redditch Borough Council

Policy for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme

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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.
- 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 only applies to the allocation of grants to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. It does not apply to any other means of financial support from the Council that may be available under other schemes.
- 2.2 Information contained within this document applies to grant funding from Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations through the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.

3. Purpose of Grant Funding

- 3.1. Redditch Borough Council is committed to supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to help them deliver projects and activities which have a positive and beneficial impact on the local community and its residents.
- 3.2. The Councillor Community Grant Scheme will make financial contributions to support certain voluntary and community sector groups in Redditch that actively assist the community to enjoy a better quality of life.
- 3.3. Funding will only be provided where it is demonstrated that a defined and positive impact will be made. Organisations must demonstrate an outcome focussed approach and that their project and/or activity will clearly support one or more of the Council's Strategic Purposes which are:
 - Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality.
 - Provide good things for me to do, see and visit.
 - Keep my place safe and looking good.
 - Help me run a successful business.
 - Help me to be financially independent.
 - Help me to live my life independently.

- 3.4. Each year, the Executive Committee can stipulate that a portion of each Councillors funding pot be spent in a certain way or using a particular criteria.
- 3.5. The Councillor Community Grant Scheme enables Councillors to support the allocation of these funds to the Voluntary Community Sector to facilitate positive and creative projects and activities for the benefit of the people of Redditch within their respective wards and/or district wide. At the same time it enables them to become even more closely involved in their communities and to have a better understanding of their needs and priorities. Each Councillor will have an allocation of £5,000 to support qualifying projects

4. Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply for a grant, an organisation must be able to prove to that:

- it is voluntary, non-profit making and operated with no undue restrictions or limitations on membership;
- they have a clear legal identity - they must have a democratic structure and can demonstrate effective management of the organisation's business;
- it has a bank account in the name of the organisation that requires the authorisation of at least two people who are unrelated to each other and who don't live in the same household to make payments or withdrawals of any kind from the account;
- it operates in the Borough of Redditch on behalf of Borough residents;
- it actively promotes equality issues within its structure and operations;
- it meets all legal requirements; and
- all previous grants received from Redditch Borough Council have been spent in accordance with the grant award conditions attached to them.

5. What will and will not be funded by a grant

- Grant applications will only be considered for projects and activities that will be undertaken in the Borough of Redditch, and/or will be for the direct benefit of its residents.
- Grants may be given to fund core costs of VCS groups, direct delivery of projects/activities and revenue or capital projects (excluding structural purchases i.e. building or building works).
- The Council encourages joint/partnership applications from more than one voluntary sector organisation.
- Organisations can apply to more than one Ward Councillor for grant funding contributions towards their project e.g. one or more Councillor within the ward for which the project will be delivered or to several or all Councillor within the borough if the project or activity is delivered district-wide. This must be declared as part of the application and the collective amount requested cannot exceed a total of £20,000.
- Grants will not be awarded to any organisation if it is deemed to be a political party, has the nature of a political party, or is engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.
- Funds will not be provided 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 does not exclude applications from faith-based groups who want to deliver community based projects.

- Grants cannot be used for retrospective funding; that is to replace money that has already been spent, or to cover items or services that have already been bought.
- No ongoing commitment should be given to the funding of salary costs or the project. This is a one off payment.

Any grant awarded must only be used for the approved purpose, i.e. applicants must be able to demonstrate how the funding will be spent as outlined in their grant application and they will have to retain evidence of actual expenditure

6. Risk considerations in grant giving

- 6.1. The Council has a clear duty to ensure that best use is made of its resources. Risk is considered in this process in relation to failure to achieve best use of Council resources, it does not consider risk assessment of, for example, items related to health and safety.
- 6.2. The Council does understand however that the creativity and innovation of the voluntary sector can carry risks for non-delivery, for example where a new idea does not work out as intended but will use the general principle of requiring a lower level of risk the higher the amount of funding provided. Maximum levels of funding will only be provided where the risk of non-delivery is very low.
- 6.3. In order to achieve an appropriate balance between managing risk and supporting innovative ideas or new organisations, a grant limit of £3,000 will apply to:
- organisations that have been in existence for less than one year;
 - organisations that do not have audited accounts;
- 6.4. Any project or activity proposals above this amount (£3,000 - £20,000) will require the group or organisation to:
- have a good track record of delivery;
 - be in receipt of a range of funding streams; and
 - be registered with either the Charity Commission or Companies House, or other appropriate government regulator.

Evidence of all the above will be provided to the Ward Councillor/s and the Grants Team.

- 6.5. Payment schedules will also support the monitoring of accountability for use of public money whilst appreciating the possible cash-flow issues that may be experienced by voluntary and community sector organisations. The general principle will be that a payment schedule of frequent monitoring and instalments is agreed with Grants Team staff. General guidelines for payment schedules are:
- Grants of £3,000 or less will be paid in full in advance of the project being delivered. Payment will be made to successful applicants within 1 month of approval with monitoring information required once the project or activity is successfully delivered;
 - Grants of between £3,000 and £20,000 will normally be paid in a minimum of two equal instalments. The timings of and the number of instalments will be agreed by the group/organisation and the Grants Team at the start of the project and all subject to satisfactory monitoring.

7. Grant Conditions

- 7.1. Information on the conditions that will apply to a grant will be made available to all applicants before they apply. Monitoring information will be required on all grants (see section 9).
- 7.2. All grant offers will be subject to the grant recipient accepting the grant conditions. A full set of grant conditions and monitoring requirements will be agreed with grant recipients before the final grant award is made. No changes will be made after this time.
- 7.3. Monitoring will be signed off by Grants Officer before each payment is due, with any concerns being discussed with the Head of Community Services.
- 7.4. VCS Groups will not be able to carry any unspent funding into the following financial year. All funding should be spent with the year the grant is awarded.
- 7.5. Any funding which Councillors have not allocated will be returned to the Council budget at the end of the financial year.
- 7.6. The Head of Community Services will have delegated authority for final approval of all applications received in the scheme. Their decision is final and not subject to any appeal process.
- 7.7. No proposals for allocation of funding will be possible during the pre-election "Purdah" period.

8. The Process

- 8.1 The budget for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme will be set prior to November by the Executive Committee for projects commencing after the 1st April of the following year.
- 8.2 Opportunities for grant funding will be openly advertised using a range of options. To ensure objective assessment of all Councillor Community Grant Scheme grant applications, the following processes will apply:
 - VCS Groups will approach the relevant Ward Councillor representing the area where the activity or project will take place and/or Councillor/s for district wide projects and discuss their funding proposal. Once the Ward Councillor is happy to endorse the proposal VCS Groups will complete and submit a short payment request fund which will be processed by the Grants Team.
 - All ward Councillors will receive appropriate training in grant assessment, and will be supported by the Grants Team throughout the process. Training will also ensure that all ward Councillors are up to date with current trends and policies within the grant giving arena that affect the VCS.
 - The Council will not award any grant to an organisation whose application has not gone through this process.
 - If the proposed project or activity targets vulnerable adults or children the Council will require that the group delivering the project or activity has an appropriate safeguarding policy in place. Further information of the minimum requirements of this policy is detailed in the grant conditions section of the Councillor Community Grant Acceptance Form.
 - If for any reason the project does not go ahead the recipient of the funding must contact the relevant Members and/or the Grants Team to discuss alternative

proposal for the use of funding and ensure that any allocation is returned to the Council.

- The Members Code of Conduct applies to the implementation of the scheme. Members must declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) in the proposal. No proposal can be put forward in which the Member has a DPI or ODI which would usually require a Member to withdraw from a meeting.
- In the year of a Council election no commitments, payments or related publicity may be undertaken once the Notice of Election has been published until after the date of the election.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1. All grant funded projects will be monitored with applicants obliged to submit details of how the project is progressing.
- 9.2. Monitoring requirements that will apply to a grant will be commensurate with the amount of money awarded, and will be agreed by the Grants Team with the funded organisation before final confirmation of a grant award is made.
- 9.3. Receipts and other monitoring information may be requested by the Council as proof of spend within six months of the grant being received by the organisation.
- 9.4. Regular monitoring of the project will enable the Council to make sure that the outcomes and effectiveness of the funding as well as the funding expenditure are all consistent with the original funding proposal.
- 9.5. The Council reserve the right to withhold future payments and reject any further applications if they are dissatisfied with how grants funds have been used.

10. Joint Proposals

- 10.1 Councillors may agree to jointly fund an application or proposal with other Councillor/s from within the same ward area to maximise grant funding and the benefit to the local community they serve - formal confirmation will be required from all Councillors involved in any joint proposals.
- 10.2 Councillors may also agree to jointly fund (or contribute to) a proposal with other Councillor/s for projects and activities e.g. district wide projects. Again, formal confirmation will be required from all Councillors involved in any joint proposals, the organisation must declare its funding request and to which Councillors it has applied for funding. This must be declared as part of the application process and the collective amount requested cannot exceed a total of £20,000.

Councillor Community Grant Scheme (CCGS) - Councillor Guidance Notes for 2019 / 2020

Each Ward Councillor has an allocation of £5,000 per annum which he/she can use to support Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) organisations in the Borough to deliver projects and activities in their ward or across Redditch which will have a positive and beneficial impact in the community and on its residents.

Ward Councillors should have a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of their local areas. By working closely with all VCS groups within their areas they can ensure that any proposed activity or project is addressing those needs and the aims and objectives of the Council.

Councillors may also wish to use their allocation (or part of it) to jointly fund a project or activity with other Councillors within their ward or join another/several Councillors within the borough to support a project or activity that is delivered and positively affects the whole district (this must be declared as part of the application process and the collective amount requested cannot exceed a total of £20,000).

It has been agreed that for 2019 / 2020, £350 be dedicated from each Councillor's allocation to project(s) which deliver on issues around cultural awareness and the promotion of cultural cohesion. The types of projects which might be funded might focus on using educational means, arts, drama, food, sports to bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures in Redditch.

The following step by step process illustrates the main aspects of the scheme and aims to guide Councillors through the process.

Step 1 – Councillor Briefing and Training

- Before any Councillor can begin to allocate funds from their grant pot they must attend a Councillor training session which will explain the principles of the scheme and the process in more detail. These training sessions will be held around April and May 2019.
- Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Councillor Community Grants Scheme Policy, which will be part of this training.

Step 2 – Approach and Discussions with VCS Groups

- Councillors can either approach VCS groups directly to discuss the utilisation of their funding pot or they can wait until they are approached by VCS Groups who would like to propose projects for funding.
- Councillors should gather as much information as possible about the project and the group delivering the project during their discussions to ensure it fits within the required criteria as set out in the Policy. Councillors should then provide the group with the Payment Request Form to fill in, and return to the Councillor, who will sign off the proposal on the Payment Request Form once they are happy with it, and then send it to the Grants Team.

Step 3 – Criteria and Considerations for Funding

- Councillors need to be satisfied that the group they propose to allocate funding are: a voluntarily, non-profit group; is well run with effective management; financial/banking arrangements in place; that they promote equality issues and is open to all; meets all legal requirements; and that all previous grants received from RBC have been spent in accordance with the grant award conditions attached to them.
- It is for each Councillor to consider the financial viability of the group making the application and for the project being proposed. All assurances must be obtained prior to approving the grant funding and submitting the Payment Request Form. The Council need to ensure that public money is allocated appropriately, ensuring the best outcomes for Redditch and Redditch people and with the least risk to the Council.
- Councillors should consult with the Policy for more information about what can or cannot be funded. If in doubt, Councillors can speak to the Grants Team for further clarification.
- Councillors need to ensure that they are clear as to how the funding will be spent and how it would promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward/district and its residents. This needs to be conveyed on the Payment Request Form. The application will only be cleared for payment if the rationale is clear and fits within the criteria as set out in the Councillor Community Grant Policy. An unclear or weak rationale may be queried by the Grants Team and may prolong the payment process.
- Councillors will also need to be confident that there is strong evidence of need and that the group have set achievable targets and are taking the right approach to achieve them.
- Councillors should be aware that the Members' Code of Conduct applies to their decisions. No proposal can be put forward where you have a declared interest in the group and/or the proposed project or activity the group have put forward. Each case must be considered individually and early advice should be sought from either the Grants Team or Democratic Services on the nature of any potential interest.
- It will not be possible to propose allocations during the pre-election "Purdah" period.

Step 4 – Consideration of Joint Bids (where applicable)

- Joint bids are welcomed from two or more councillors within the same ward. It is possible for a joint bid to support a project in a particular ward but also attract attendees from a wider geographical area but this must be made clear in the 'rationale' provided in the Payment Request Form.
- Joint bids and/or contributions towards district-wide projects are also permitted. Organisations can apply to several or all Councillors within the Borough if the project or activity is delivered district-wide. This must be declared as part of the application process and the collective amount requested cannot exceed a total of £20,000.
- One form should be submitted by a lead councillor detailing the joint bid. Confirmation will be required (either by email or countersignature) by the other councillors showing that they agree to the submission, confirm their financial contribution and confirm the declaration.

Step 5 - Submission of the Funding Request Form and payment

- Councillors will be encouraged to submit forms electronically from their RBC email account (unless by exception and by prior notification), to ensure a clear audit trail and reduce the possibility of misuse and send to grants.team@redditchbc.gov.uk . Forms can, if necessary, be submitted by hard copy with a signature/s.
- Forms are NOT accepted directly from an organisation seeking financial support. Should any be received, they will be directed to the local Ward Councillor/s.
- Councillors should not include account details on the submission form. If the payee's details are not contained within the Council's financial system they will be contacted directly by the Grants Team.
- The Grants Team may undertake additional checks on the project and VCS group requesting funding especially if the funding requested is over £3k.
- Councillors will be sent an email once the payment has been authorised and released. This email will also advise Councillors of how much remains in their CCGS fund.
- Any spend by organisations on an event/project prior to authorisation is undertaken at their own risk. Members cannot give categorical assurances that the funding will be provided until the form has been properly authorised.
- Councillors should be mindful that any payment represents a formal decision to spend tax-payer funds. The details will be published on the Council's website and records will be held for public inspection at the Town Hall for 6 years.

Step 6 - Publicity

- Any publicity arising from the CCGS should not be party political and should reference the Council's contribution. Councillors must not 'give the impression' that the payment is from them personally.
- All Ward Councillors must adhere to the rules of 'purdah' during election period other situations where purdah will apply and payment proposals cannot be made during this time.

Step 7 – Monitoring

- The Grants Team will monitor each project using the Monitoring Form. Depending on the amount awarded to the group, this may occur once when the project is completed or at staged intervals to coincide with the release of an agreed part payment of the grant.

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**11th December 2018**RBC RESPONSE TO BDC'S ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Cllr M Dormer |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | YES |
| Relevant Head of Service | Ruth Bamford |
| Ward(s) Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | Yes via Planning Advisory Panel |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has been consulting on the Bromsgrove District Plan Review, Issues and Options document, which sets out potential strategic options for the District and potential issues within the District which need to be addressed in the Local Plan Review. BDC sought comments on all aspects of the document. BDC also consulted on the draft Green Belt Purposes Assessment Methodology and Site Selection Methodology as part of the same consultation. The consultation ran between 24th September and 19th November.
- 1.2 Appendix A is the informal officer response submitted to the consultation, due to the scheduling of meetings it has not been possible to have this response considered by members in advance of the deadline for comments. The consultation is non statutory and should a further or different response need to be submitted it is possible to do this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the report be noted.

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

the draft Officer Response to Bromsgrove District Plan Review Issues and Options (as attached at Appendix A) be approved by Council and submitted to Bromsgrove District Council as a formal consultation response.

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**11th December 2018

- 3.2 BDC is carrying out the consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It is important that Redditch Borough Council engages at the appropriate stages in planning process, this is the first substantive opportunity to respond to the proposals.

Service / Operational Implications**Summary of Response**

- 3.3 The Bromsgrove District Plan Review Issues and Options consultation is the first consultation stage of the planning strategy for BDC, this plan once adopted will replace the extant Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2011-2030 (BDP) which was adopted in 2017. The Issues and Options document is asking opinions on a variety of topics: strategic issues; housing; employment; transport; town centre and local centres; social infrastructure; natural and historic environments and climate change and water resources.
- 3.4 Within the Strategic Issues part of the plan, *Strategic Issues 4: Board options for development distribution and allocating land uses* proposes nine broad options for development distribution. Option 6 *Focus development on the edge of Redditch*, would require a close working relationship with BDC to ensure services and facilities within RBC are fully supported. Option 8 *Reconsideration of existing unconsented allocations on the boundary with Redditch Borough* could adversely impact RBC as these sites are currently allocated in the BDP for Redditch's housing need.
- 3.3 The full representation in relation to the strategic issues is contained in the response at Appendix A.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.4 There are no Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications associated with this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risks associated with not responding to this consultation is that RBC's views will not be taken into account by BDC. Specifically, if further responses and attendance at future examinations are required it is essential that the Council's views are expressed as clearly and early as possible.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A - RBC response to Bromsgrove District Plan Review Issues and Options consultation

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bromsgrove District Council Issues and Options Consultation document

7. KEY

RBC – Redditch Borough Council

BDC – Bromsgrove District Council

BDP – Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030

BORLP4 – Borough of Redditch Local Plan 4 (2011-2030)

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel: 01527 881603

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Redditch Borough Council

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 Walter Stranz Square,
 Redditch,
 Worcs, B98 8AH

Bromsgrove District Council Issues and Options Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Issues and Options consultation documents. Please accept this response as an Officer Response from Redditch Borough Council (RBC). Members of RBC will be invited to endorse this response at its Executive Committee meeting on 11th December 2018 and Council on 28th January 2019. I will provide you with an update at this juncture.

RBC wishes to limit its response to strategic matters that relate to Redditch Borough.

Q. SI 10: Which combination of the above options do you feel are the most appropriate and sustainable to meet the District's future needs and why?

RBC's concerns relate specifically to *Strategic Issue 4: Broad options for development distribution and allocating land uses – Option 6: Focus development on the edge of Redditch and Option 8: Reconsideration of existing unconsented allocations on the boundary with Redditch Borough Council*. Should either of these options be chosen alone or as part of a wider distribution development strategy, RBC raises the following:

Option 6: Focus development on the edge of Redditch

Should sites be proposed adjacent to Redditch Town, RBC requests the opportunity to discuss existing nearby facilities and services which would be within Redditch Borough and be used by future residents of these site(s). Regardless of whether allocations are at a scale to require certain facilities and services, it is likely that future residents would travel to Redditch Town centre and local centres to use facilities and services due to their proximity to the Town. It is therefore important that RBC as well as facility and service providers within RBC are involved in the site selection, allocation and policy formation process to ensure a cohesion and integration of any proposed allocation sites with Redditch Town.

Option 8: Reconsideration of existing unconsented allocations on the boundary with Redditch Borough Council

There are two existing cross-boundary housing sites (Brockhill and Foxlydiate) and one employment development site (part of Eastern gateway) in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2011-2030 on the edge of Redditch. Within the Bromsgrove administrative area Brockhill provides 600 dwellings for Redditch Borough and the Foxlydiate site provides 2,800 dwellings. All of the 3,400 dwellings on these two sites are for Redditch's housing need. It was due to Redditch Town being constrained by its administrative boundaries which led to these allocations.

Central government is seeking to maintain its aspiration of 300,000 dwellings per annum being built. The standard method for assessing housing need, which was released in July 2018, is currently under review with proposed changes and clarifications are out for consultation. The numbers within the Issues and Options document use the 2016-based

data as per the initial standard method, while the consultation on changes to planning policy and guidance including the standard method for assessing housing need specifies that the 2014-based data should now be used. But even irrespective of this, in the longer term the formula for the standard method will be reviewed and a new method expected by the time the next projections are issued.

Due to these circumstances, the housing need for RBC is unclear. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that the two cross-boundary housing allocation sites are not required for Redditch to meet its housing need. These sites should be retained for Redditch's housing need until 2030 as per the current plan. In addition it is pointed out that Redditch will have housing needs beyond 2030 and it is important for the Bromsgrove Plan Review to have regard to this matter.

As an aside, BDCs local housing need within the Issues and Options document, for all the plan period options, exceeds the quantity of dwellings within the allocated cross-boundary sites at Foxlydiate and Brockhill. Therefore as part of the Local Plan Review, BDC would still need to undertake a Green Belt Assessment and propose suitable and sustainable sites to remove from the Green Belt and allocate for development regardless of whether Foxlydiate and Brockhill numbers went towards Bromsgrove's housing need. It is anticipated that this process will identify sites that are more suitable from a sustainability perspective for Bromsgrove needs than sites contiguous to Redditch town.

Once the broad options for development distribution are chosen RBC will need to understand and comment on any issues which may impact RBC.

I trust that you find these comments constructive and help towards coming to conclusions regarding the Issues and Options. The Bromsgrove Local Plan Review is clearly a process that will take some time and will therefore be undertaken in the coming years. RBC is of course entirely willing to work with you to ensure that the Local Plan Review is soundly prepared and provides a co-ordinated approach to growth within Bromsgrove District without compromising the needs and issues for Redditch Borough.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE11th December 2018**Finance Monitoring Quarter 2 2018/19**

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Tom Baker-Price |
| Relevant Head of Service | Jayne Pickering |
| Non Key Decision | |

1. Purpose and summary

This report details the Council's final financial position for 2018/19 for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

2. Recommendations

The Executive Committee is asked to

RESOLVE that

- 2.1 That Executive Committee note the current financial positions for the quarter April – September 2018 as detailed in the report.

That Cabinet recommend to Council

- 2.2 Approval that an increase in the 2018-19 Capital Programme of £16k s106 monies for use on improving the Batchley Play area.

3. Revenue budgets

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial information across the Council. The aim is to ensure officers and members have relevant information to consider the overall financial position of the Council. The report reflects the finances across the Strategic Purposes to enable Members to be aware of the level of funding attributed to these areas and how this compares to budget. The summary at 3.4 shows the financial position for revenue funding for 2018/19
- 3.2 Financial reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis and a detailed review is undertaken with financial support to ensure that all issues are considered and significant savings or cost pressures addressed. This report aims to focus on the key variances to budgets to ensure a focus is undertaken during the year on areas where there are significant savings or additional costs.
- 3.3 The £9.094m original budget as included in the table below is made up of the budget approved in February 2018.

In addition the Latest Budget 2018/19 of £9.352m includes transfers to/from reserves of £258k which is shown in appendix 2.

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| |
|--|
| Revenue Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2018/19 |
|--|

Please note figures have been rounded

| Strategic Purpose | Original Budget 2018/19 £'000 | Revised budget 2018/19 £'000 | Budget to date 2018/19 £'000 | Actuals 2018/19 £'000 | Variance 2018/19 £'000 | Projected outturn 2018/19 £'000 | Projected Variance 2018/19 £'000 |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Keep my place safe and looking good | 3,829 | 4,133 | 1,961 | 1,979 | 18 | 4,091 | -43 |
| Help me run a successful business | 3 | 3 | -34 | -43 | -8 | -18 | -21 |
| Help me be financially independent | 358 | 273 | 18 | 27 | 8 | 282 | 9 |
| Help me to live my life independently | 156 | 156 | -82 | -124 | -42 | 138 | -18 |
| Help me find somewhere to live in my locality | 864 | 864 | 432 | 284 | -148 | 740 | -124 |
| Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit | 1,391 | 1,416 | 762 | 744 | -18 | 1,408 | -9 |
| Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose) | 2,494 | 2,507 | 2,477 | 2,889 | 411 | 3,351 | 843 |
| Totals | 9,094 | 9,353 | 5,535 | 5,757 | 221 | 9,991 | 638 |
| Corporate Financing | -9,094 | -9,353 | -13,695 | -14,212 | -517 | -10,206 | -853 |
| Grand Total | 0 | 0 | -8,159 | -8,455 | -296 | -215 | -215 |

Financial Commentary:

There are a number of significant variances across the strategic purposes. The summary above shows the overall position for the Council and the main variations are as a result of:

Keep my place safe and looking good

These budgets include those relating mainly to environmental services, planning, CCTV and other activities to deliver against the purpose to ensuring an area is a safe and attractive place for the community.

The variances to report are :

- There is a variance within Planning Policy projected **£46k** due to salary savings.

Help me run a successful business

The budgets within the strategic purpose include economic development, all licenses and costs associated with the town and other Properties within the Borough.

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- There are a number of savings on general supplies and services budgets along with utility budgets of **£21k**

Help me be financially independent

The strategic purpose includes all costs relating to the support of benefits and the administration and delivery of Council Tax services in the Borough.

- There are no significant variances this quarter to report.

Help me to live my life independently

There are a number of budgets relating to the delivery of the strategic purpose including; Lifeline and Community Transport.

- There has been additional income received within the Lifeline service due a new contract that has been procured with Cannock Chase District Council. This will be reflected in 2019/20 budgets.

Help me find somewhere to live in my locality

The costs associated with homeless prevention, housing strategy and land charges are all included in this strategic purpose. It is worth noting that these costs solely relate to those charged to the General Fund not the Housing Revenue Account

- The variance shown in this strategic purpose is due to salary savings as a consequence of posts not being filled. It is anticipated that this will be addressed in the full housing review.

Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit

The majority of budgets within this purpose relate to Leisure and culture services.

- There are no significant variances this quarter to report.

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

All support services and corporate overheads are held within the enabling purpose. These include; IT, HR, Finance, Management team and other support costs.

- There are a number of unallocated savings that sit within the corporate / enabling service of **£382k** to quarter 2. It is anticipated that these will be offset by service savings during the year as detailed with savings monitoring at point 4 below.
- Within Customer services support there are projected savings of **£75k** due to salary vacancies and additional income received.
- There are other salary vacancies within Equalities & Policy and Legal Services projected **£117k** by the end of 2018/19 however this is offset against some additional salary costs within PA's and Directorate support due to redundancy and pension costs following a restructure **£43k**.

Corporate Financing

The variance shown is due to section 31 grant the council has now received in 2018/19. The Council does not budget for section 31 grant as it is not announced until the start of the financial year and there is always a risk that it is reduced or withdrawn, similar to new homes bonus in the past. The grant is increasing to reflect Government decisions to reduce the rate burden on small businesses and it is intended to compensate the Council for its share of business rates that has been foregone. In view of the prominence of the grant it is planned to introduced it into the budget 2019/20 but contribute 50% to a NNDR reserve to cover the risk of it being reduced.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE11th December 2018**4. Savings Monitoring**

4.1 The medium term financial plan included £721k of savings identified to be delivered during 2018/19. The breakdown of these savings is attached at appendix 3. To quarter 2 £356k has been realised against the budgeted April to September savings of £360k. In addition there are £777k of unidentified savings for 2018/19 which sit within the corporate / enabling service as highlighted in the table above. To date a projection for year-end 2018/19 £219k has been identified against these unidentified savings. These savings will be offset against the unidentified savings for quarter 3.

5. Cash Management

5.1 The cash position of this Council at the start of the financial year and the expected end of year cash positions for the coming financial years is shown in the table below.

| Date | £m | Position |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| As at 31 st March 2018 (Actual) | 7.0 | Borrowing |
| As at 30 th September 2018 | nil | Borrowing |

Borrowing

As at the 30th September 2018 there are no short term borrowings with associated borrowing costs within the quarter and £103.929m in long term borrowing with associated costs in the quarter of £888k. All long term borrowing costs relate to the HRA.

An interest payable budget has been set of £34k for 2018/19 due to expenditure relating to current capital projects.

Investments

At 30th September 2018 there were £2.5m investments held.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE11th December 2018**6. Capital Budgets****Capital Budget Summary – Overall Council
Financial Year 2018/19**

6.1

Please note figures have been rounded

| Strategic Purpose | Original Budget 2018/19 | Revised budget 2018/19 | Budget to date 2018/19 | Actuals 2018/19 | Variance 2018/19 | Projected outturn 2018/19 | Projected Variance 2018/19 |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Keep my place safe and looking good | 2,913 | 2,913 | 1,457 | 1,287 | -169 | 2,338 | -576 |
| Help me run a successful business | 80 | 80 | 40 | 0 | -40 | 0 | -80 |
| Help me to live my life independently | 1,271 | 1,271 | 634 | 533 | -103 | 629 | -642 |
| Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit | 102 | 102 | 51 | 25 | -25 | 44 | -58 |
| Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose) | 150 | 150 | 75 | 5 | -70 | 150 | 0 |
| Totals | 4,876 | 4,876 | 2,438 | 2,029 | -409 | 3,521 | -1,355 |

Keep my place safe and looking good

The variance for quarter 2 mainly relates to the Locality Capital budget. This is due to majority of the schemes dependant on approval from Worcestershire County Council and therefore causing delays due to slow responses. It is likely that a request will be made to continue the project into 2019/20.

Help me run a successful business

The variance relates to Improvements at the Business Centres and this is now likely to be delayed until April 2019/20 and therefore a request will be made to carry forward the capital budget to the New year.

Help me to live my life independently

The underspend projected relates to a number of projects firstly the Energy Efficiency installations. This fund has been unable to be spent this year due to the need to procure the energy advice service prior to restarting the Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund. The energy advice service will be procured with a 3 year contract April 2019 - March 2022. There is a underspend showing on discretionary home repairs assistance which is due to a Lack of applications being received despite advertising. There will be a request to carry forward an underspend on the disabled facilities grants due to delays in referrals from occupational therapists and reduced demand in private sector.

Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit

There is a small underspend projected at quarter 2 this is a s106 budget for the regrading of football pitches

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at Terry's Field, Redditch . This is due to the project now requiring to take place post season and therefore will commence April 2019 and will require the budget carrying forward to the new financial year.

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

There is a variance in quarter 2 due to the project not yet commencing but it is expected to be completed by the end of 2018/19.

7. Housing Revenue Account

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April – September 2018.

8. Earmarked Reserves

The position at the start and end of 2018/19 is shown in Appendix 2.

9. General Fund Balances

The General Fund Balance as at the 31th March 2018 is £1.790m. A balanced budget was approved in February 2018 to include identified savings which have been built into individual budget allocations. This also included a planned use of balances for 2018/19 of £89k.

10. Legal Implications

No Legal implications have been identified.

11. Service/Operational Implications

Managers meet with finance officers on a monthly basis to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

12. Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

No direct implications as a result of this report.

13. Risk Management

The financial monitoring is included in the corporate risk register for the authority.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – HRA Monitoring April – March 2018/19

Appendix 2 – Earmarked Reserves 2018/19

Appendix 3 – Savings Monitoring 2018/19

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel: (01527) 881208

Appendix 1

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)**REVENUE 2018/19 Quarter 2**

| | 2018/19 Full Year Budget £'000 | 2018/19 Budget to Date Apr - Sept £'000 | 2018/19 Actuals Apr - Sept £'000 | 2018/19 Variance Apr - Sept £'000 | 2018/19 Projected Outturn £'000 | 2018/19 Projected Variance £'000 | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|------|
| INCOME | | | | | | | |
| Dwelling Rents | 22,805 | 11,878 | 11,886 | -8 | 22,805 | 0 | |
| Non-Dwelling Rents | 483 | 392 | 429 | -37 | 483 | 0 | |
| Tenants' Charges for Services & Facilities | 648 | 337 | 318 | 19 | 630 | 18 | |
| Contributions towards Expenditure | 18 | 9 | 27 | -18 | 54 | -36 | |
| Total Income | 23,954 | 12,616 | 12,660 | -44 | 23,972 | -18 | |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | |
| Repairs & Maintenance | 5496 | 5,187 | 2,582 | 2,670 | 88 | 5,370 | 183 |
| Supervision & Management | | 8,542 | 1,859 | 1,463 | -396 | 8,386 | -156 |
| Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges | | 149 | 75 | 61 | -14 | 169 | 20 |
| Provision for Bad Debts | | 400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | -200 |
| Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets | | 6,129 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,129 | 0 |
| Interest Payable & Debt Management Costs | | 4,179 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,179 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 24,586 | 4,516 | 4,194 | -322 | 24,433 | -153 | |
| Net cost of Services | 632 | -8,100 | -8,466 | -366 | 461 | -171 | |
| Net Operating Expenditure | 632 | -8,100 | -8,466 | -366 | 461 | -171 | |
| Interest Receivable | -36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 36 | |
| Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay | 280 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -280 | |
| Use of Balances | -876 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -461 | 415 | |
| Transfer to Earmarked Reserves | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| (Surplus)/Deficit on Services | 0 | -8,100 | -8,466 | -366 | 0 | 0 | |

Financial Commentary:

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April - September 2018

The three major variances are due to the following:

- Non-dwellings rents: the timing of annual advance bills being raised
- Repairs & Maintenance: voids repairs costs have been higher than expected along with ad hoc repairs
- Supervision & Management: the variance is predominantly due to vacant posts pending the ongoing review of the Housing function

For items where budgets to date show as zero this is due to these costs being allocated as part of the year end processes

HRA CAPITAL 2018/19 Quarter 2**Strategic Purpose****Help Me to Find Somewhere to Live in my Locality**

| | | 2018/19 Full Year Budget £'000 | 2018/19 Budget to Date Apr - Sep £'000 | 2018/19 Actuals Apr - Sep £'000 | 2018/19 Variance YTD £'000 |
|-------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| C1012 | 1-4-1 Housing Replacement | 1,902 | 951 | 389 | -562 |
| C1201 | Catch Up Rep-Bath Replacements | 100 | 50 | 0 | -50 |
| C1202 | Catch Up Rep-Kitchen Upgrades | 100 | 50 | 3 | -47 |
| C1203 | Catch Up Repairs | 0 | 0 | 51 | 51 |
| C1204 | Asbestos General | 1,000 | 500 | 36 | -464 |
| C1205 | Structural Repairs | 60 | 30 | 0 | -30 |
| C1206 | General Roofing | 50 | 25 | 0 | -25 |
| C1207 | Electrical Upgrades | 400 | 200 | 291 | 91 |
| C1209 | Upgrade Of Central Heating Systems | 400 | 200 | 139 | -61 |
| C1210 | Window Replacements | 100 | 50 | 0 | -50 |
| C1222 | Equipment & Adaptations | 696 | 348 | 265 | -83 |
| C1241 | Solid Wall Insulation | 0 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| C1248 | Drainage | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| C1249 | Water Supply | 50 | 25 | 0 | -25 |
| C1250 | Environmental Enhancements | 375 | 188 | 22 | -166 |
| C1255 | FRA Works | 500 | 250 | 12 | -238 |
| C1256 | Stock Condition Survey | 150 | 75 | 10 | -65 |
| C1257 | Fencing Renewals | 90 | 45 | 0 | -45 |
| C6300 | Design & Supervision | 350 | 175 | 0 | -175 |
| | | 6,323 | 3,162 | 1,239 | -1,923 |

Financial Commentary:

The projects form the basis of an interim capital improvement plan pending the outcome of a comprehensive stock condition survey. The survey will be used to inform the budgets required for the 30 year business plan.

Works are also currently being undertaken on a needs only basis pending the survey outcome

1-4-1 Housing Replacement: 4 properties out of a proposed new development of 11 properties completed in September 2018

| Description | Balance b/fwd 1/4/2018 | Transfers in existing reserve 2018/19 | Transfers out existing reserve 2018/19 | New Reserve 2018/19 | C/fwd 31/3/2019 | Comment |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | |
| GF Earmarked Reserves | | | | | | |
| Business Rates Grants | -7,406 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -7,406 | Small Business Rate Relief - Ringfenced grant |
| Commercialism | -47,505 | 0 | 10,140 | 0 | -37,365 | To help fund costs in relation to commercialism projects |
| Community Development | -3,905 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -3,905 | To support the costs associated with community projects |
| Community Safety | -270,470 | 0 | 270,470 | 0 | -0 | External grant funding to be released over a number of years on Community Safety Projects ongoing |
| Corporate Services | -150,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -150,000 | Funding for Locality Enhancements |
| Customer Services | -12,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -12,000 | Contribution to WCC for an open portal |
| Electoral Services | -47,763 | -11,459 | 8,113 | 0 | -51,109 | To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government |
| Equalities | -11,250 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -11,250 | To fund licence fees |
| Equipment Replacement | -83,200 | 0 | 6,807 | 0 | -76,393 | ICT equipment reserve |
| Housing Benefits Implementation | -80,565 | -24,011 | 0 | -22,885 | -127,461 | Specific welfare reform grant received |
| Housing Support | -568,857 | -38,372 | 6,258 | 0 | -600,971 | Government Specific Grant - annual funding |
| Land charges | -9,137 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -9,137 | To fund potential litigation in relation to Land Charges |
| Land Drainage | -161,660 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -161,660 | To support costs associated with health and safety issues within the environment |
| Leisure | -20,760 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -20,760 | To support set up costs relating to the new Leisure company |
| Mercury Emissions | -33,886 | 0 | 33,886 | 0 | 0 | To be used to re line the cremators |
| Parks and Open spaces | -10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -10,000 | To fund a review of the local allotments. |
| Public Donations | -12,646 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -12,646 | Accumulated donations for designated projects. |
| Sports Development | -19,561 | 0 | 19,561 | 0 | -0 | Ringfenced grants for a number of sports development activities to improve Health and Wellbeing in the Borough |
| Town Centre | -55,716 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -55,716 | To support improvements in the Town Centre High Street |
| Warmer Homes | -11,580 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -11,580 | To support the costs associated with community projects (repair) |
| Totals | -1,617,867 | -73,842 | 355,235 | -22,885 | -1,359,359 | |
| HRA Capital Reserve | | | | | | |
| Capital Reserve-HRA | -19,835,404 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -19,835,404 | Reserve to enable the debt repayment on HRA, and future repairs and maintenance along with support for the Housing Growth Programme. |
| Totals | -19,835,404 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -19,835,404 | |

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REDDITCH - SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM 18-19 BUDGET ROUND

Appendix 3

| Department | Description of saving | 2018-19 £'000 | Comments | Quarter 2 | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---|------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | On target Y/N | Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000 | below target Y/N | Pressure £'000 |
| Business Transformation | Annual Revenue Budget Saving | -177 | Review of IT contract spend | Y | | | |
| Community Services | accommodation charge | -18 | Review of budget required | Y | | | |
| Community Services | telephones | -4 | Review of budget required | Y | | | |
| Community Services | travellers and unauthorised campers costs | -7 | Review of budget required | Y | | | |
| Community Services | staff savings from reduced mileage and reduced hours | -3 | Review of budget required | Y | | | |
| Community Services | additional income | -2 | Review of income generated | Y | | | |
| Community Services | NNDR | -1 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Community Services | accommodation charge | -18 | Review of budget required | Y | | | |
| Corporate | Amalgamate postage budget | -14 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Corporate | RBC staff awards | -3 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Corporate | Insurance | -27 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| CAFS | Reduction in Hrs | -5 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| CAFS | Additional income | -125 | Additional income based on previous year | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Fuel and Vehicle R&M | -67 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Materials, equipment and waste disposal | -21 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Overtime | -6 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Utilities | -4 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Contractors and Credit Card Fees | -5 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Increase in cremation income | -50 | Additional income generated | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Additional work for County Council and inflation of fees | -15 | Additional income generated | Y | | | |
| Environmental Services | Replacement waste bins | -72 | Revenue savings achieved by capitalising all bin replacements | Y | | | |
| Corporate | Subscriptions | -4 | Savings identified | N | | | 4 |
| Corporate | Subscriptions | -25 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Corporate | Subscriptions | -8 | Savings identified | Y | | | |
| Leisure & Cultural Services | savings on spend budgets | -5 | Mainstream funding no longer needed received/in place | y | | | |

| Department | Description of saving | 2018-19 £'000 | Comments | On target Y/N | Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000 | below target Y/N | Pressure £'000 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Leisure & Cultural Services | Furniture purchase for Chamber and CR2/3 - budget allocation is more than required | -4 | Savings identified | y | | | |
| Leisure & Cultural Services | Vehicle Costs | -3 | Savings identified | y | | | |
| Leisure & Cultural Services | savings on accommodation costs | -8 | Savings identified | y | | | |
| Leisure & Cultural Services | Additional income | -20 | Increased income generated at Palace Theatre | y | | | |
| TOTAL | | -721 | | | 0 | | 4 |



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 18th October,
2018

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Pattie Hill, Anthony Lovell and Jennifer Wheeler

Also Present:

Dr. Frances Howie, Sue Harris (Worcestershire Health and Care Trust) and Councillor Greg Chance

Officers:

Matthew Bough, Kevin Dicks, Farzana Mughal and Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and Farzana Mughal

46. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joanne Beecham and Gemma Monaco. Members were advised that Councillor Salman Akbar was attending as substitute for Councillor Gemma Monaco and Councillor Julian Grubb was attending as substitute for Councillor Joanne Beecham.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

48. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th September, 2018 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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6th September, 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

49. HEREFORD AND WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Director of Strategy and Partnerships for Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Director of Public Health for Worcestershire County Council provided an update in respect of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire's Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) and provided an overview of the work of the STP work streams.

It was reported that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire's Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was signed off in 2016. The STP Programme Board had agreed on its top priorities which needed to be addressed to meet the objectives of Health and Well-being; Care and Quality and Finance and Efficiency.

The following points were then highlighted:

- There was a complex set of arrangements for the delivery plan in place;
- There had been a lot of public engagement work undertaken.
- It was recognised that the main issues were, transport links, health, and the availability of beds in hospital.
- The approach to prevention, self-care and promoting independence.
- Developing out of hospital care.
- Establishing clinically and financially sustainable services.
- Social Prescribing Schemes were now developing in both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Worcestershire was covering the majority of practices in the County through six pilot programmes.
- Lifestyle Behaviour Change Programmes – The Healthy Lifestyle Trainer Service remained in place in Herefordshire and was delivering support, focused on priority neighbourhoods. In Worcestershire the Living Well Service continued to deliver support.
- Frontline staff were provided with training to ensure that appropriate advice was given to patients.
- Progress was being made in respect of digital inclusion.
- Neighbourhood Teams were integrated multidisciplinary teams of physical and mental health care professionals for adults including the over 65s, requiring community services. They worked closely with GPs, primary care services, social care

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services and the third sector to provide joined-up responsive, expert care and treatment.

Following the presentation Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- Maternity Services were using a system whereby all public health information and data was recorded, in terms of the number of cesareans, pre-births etc.
- There was support provided for patients with eating disorders.
- The Local Neighbourhood Team could be contacted for any information required.
- Members raised concerns that there had been issues of accessing services at the right time.

In response to Members asking about the challenges faced, it was stated that one of the biggest challenges was around resources and that there was a national shortage of specialists available throughout the workforce.

The Committee was informed that moving forward those working on the STP were keen to engage with ward Councillors in order to work with them on meeting the needs of local residents. However, there was some uncertainty about how those working on the STP could engage with Councillors. The Chief Executive stated that he attended the Alliance Board for health services on behalf of the Council and that at the next meeting of the Board he would seek advice in relation to how Members could be engaged in the process.

Members that the Committee should continue to receive an update on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP as it was important to them to understand the ongoing work that was being delivered.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) report be noted; and**
- 2) **a further update on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire's Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) be provided to the Committee at a later date as required.**

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50. EMERGENCY PLANNING (CIVIL CONTINGENCIES) ANNUAL UPDATE

The North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager provided an update on emergency planning arrangements for the Council. This update was being provided in accordance with one of the recommendations that had been made by the Civil Contingencies short Sharp Review in 2017:

During the update Members were advised that two significant incidents had occurred in 2018 which required both an internal and multi-agency debrief process to be commissioned. The internal debrief reports for the following would be discussed at a Corporate Management Team (CMT) meeting in November. Areas identified for development were incorporated into an action plan for CMT management:

- Wythall Surface Water Flooding – May 2018
- Partial Building Collapse – July 2018

A review of the following arrangements was pending discussion and approval at the CMT meeting in November 2018:

- Corporate Emergency Plan
- Corporate Business Continuity Plan
- Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Council Rest Centre Operational Annex
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Flooding Response Framework
- Three debrief reports - suggested action plans.

There were currently 11 plans for North Worcestershire with an additional 34 plans locally. All plans were up to date or pending approval.

Training was being planned for Duty Incident Response Officers to undertake internally or within the multi-agency environment as appropriate to the role undertaken. This was expected to be signed off by the end of the year.

It was clarified that Cobra was another name for the civil contingencies committee which led responses to national crises.

The Committee was informed that the current post holder was scheduled to undertake maternity leave in December 2018. Cover arrangements had yet to be agreed.

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The Chair concluded by thanking the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager for attending the meeting and providing the report.

51. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - COUNCIL HOUSING GROWTH PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report in relation to the Council Housing Growth Programme. The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader provided information on the proposed development sites.

It was reported that on 30th January, 2017, the Council agreed the Council Housing Growth Programme and funding of £12.5 million was allocated to this project. A number of options to increase the Council's housing stock were agreed including commissioning the construction of new Council houses.

Following a desk top exercise, the Council identified a number of sites that could be added to Phase 2 of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) New Build Programme.

The sites identified were considered to be HRA assets with the exception of Hawthorn Road Community Centre (the former Redditch Play Council site) which was a General Fund asset and the proposal was to transfer this to the HRA.

Officers had assessed the possible numbers and type of properties that could be delivered on the suggested sites. It was anticipated that the ten sites that had been identified could provide a total of 67 new council homes, subject to planning. Having considered the housing needs of the Borough, it had been found that there was a high demand for two bedroom bungalows.

The cost of development for the number of properties on each of the sites was estimated to be £8.173 million.

The Housing Strategy Manager was undertaking a process to appoint a development agent to assist in delivery and provide support to Council officers. Subject to approval, it was proposed that the sites would undergo detailed discussions, in terms of, design and layout, and be submitted for planning permission to achieve a rapid start on site. The project would progress through a number of processes toward delivery, including, consultation with stakeholders and planning approval.

The Council was proposing that properties delivered through the Council Housing Growth Programme be let at affordable rent,

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where permitted. As part of the Council Housing Growth Programme £3.285 million had been spent on purchasing from the open market, 'off plan' and through s.106 agreements. The remaining budget was £9.215 million.

Members supported the Housing Growth Programme and expressed the view that this was beneficial for the housing needs of the Borough. Members therefore agreed that it would be appropriate for the Hawthorn Road site to be moved from the General Fund into the HRA, in order that it could be developed for new Council housing.

In response to Members questions, the Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader explained that off-site housing would be considered if the Council concluded this was a more efficient way to reduce construction times and could lead to cost savings. It was further stated that a practical decision would be agreed after all elements had been considered in relation to what was best to meet the housing needs of local residents in Redditch.

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader confirmed, in terms of affordable rent, that this was set in accordance with government guidance, which stipulated that this could be up to a maximum of 80% of private market rents. The Council could determine its own level of affordable rent under that 80% threshold.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the sites in Appendix 1 be included in Phase 1 of the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) new build programme and proposals to progress the development of HRA new build council housing on them be approved;**
- 2) properties delivered through the Council Housing Growth Programme be let at Affordable Rent, where permitted; and**
- 3) the appropriation of the Hawthorn Road site from the General Fund into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in order that it can be developed for new council housing.**

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52. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

The Chief Executive presented the Corporate Peer Challenge and advised the Committee that other local authorities had also participated in similar exercises.

Since 2012 the Local Government Association (LGA) had provided, as part of its support to the sector, the facilitation of Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) reviews whereby senior Members and Officers from other local authorities, supported by LGA staff, visited the Councils with the objective to inform their improvement plans and how to develop corporate learning. It was designed to be forward looking, and to facilitate reflection on issues and how they might be resolved. While it could be used as an external 'health check' on the authority's corporate governance, the peer challenge was not a form of inspection.

The report outlined the outcomes and next steps resulting from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPS) which took place in January and February, 2018.

The Peer Team considered the following five questions which formed the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges. These were the areas that were believed to be critical to the Councils' performance and improvement:

- Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Did the Council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
- Financial planning and viability: Did the Council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and was there evidence that it was being implemented successfully?
- Capacity to deliver: Was organisational capacity aligned with the Council's priorities and did the Council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
- Political and managerial leadership: Did the Council provide effective political and managerial leadership through its elected Members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
- Governance and decision-making: Was political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that responded to key challenges and enabled change to be implemented?

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The Peer Team were based at both the Redditch and Bromsgrove offices during the four day review. There was an initial 'scene setting' and 'checking the brief' discussion with the Chief Executive and Leader. These were done separately for each Council.

Meetings and discussion sessions then took place with a range of officers, Members and other stakeholders enabling the peer team to explore the issues relevant to the purpose, scope and suggested terms of reference for the peer review.

At the end of the initial on-site activity there was a feedback session and members of the Executive Committee (Redditch), Cabinet (Bromsgrove) and Corporate Management Team were invited to attend and presented with the findings of the initial three day review. A further day in February was then held for the team to review their initial findings based upon further discussions and investigations. Again the Executive Committee, Cabinet and Corporate Management Team were invited to attend. This was followed by a written feedback report summarising the peer team's feedback with their recommendations for improvement.

Following consideration by the Senior Management Team and Leaders of both Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils, an action plan had been produced. Due to the change of political control in Redditch this report had been delayed in order to allow the new Leader and Executive in Redditch to discuss this with their counterparts in Bromsgrove.

In terms of the establishment of a single workforce, the Corporate Management Team had concluded that there was not sufficient benefit in terms of moving to a single organisation at this point in time for the following reasons:

- Work was ongoing around the harmonisation of policies and procedures which would address some of the issues that gave rise to this recommendation. This would include reviewing the Scheme of Officer Delegations, particularly around the HR delegations.
- Work was ongoing around the harmonisation of the Job Evaluation Schemes and the potential costs associated with this – dependent on this, consideration would be given to the positives and negatives of moving to a single employer.
- Work continued to be undertaken to change the culture of the workforce across both authorities.

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Although these arrangements were not appropriate at this time, it's not to say that this would not be considered again in the future.

It was clarified that the lead people identified in the Action Plan which stated "Leaders" this was referred to Leaders of the Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils rather than to political party group leaders. It was agreed that the action plan should be amended to reflect this accordingly.

The Chair sought clarification in relation to actions 9, 10 and 11 and questioned why Redditch Borough Council needed to undertake a review in respect of the Constitution, as he felt that the current constitution and procedures worked well in Redditch. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that at the last Council meeting Members had endorsed changes to the constitution. Those undertaking the Corporate Peer challenge had concluded that in Redditch too many decisions were taken by Council, and many could be taken by the Executive committee. Changes had to be made to the constitution to reflect this.

As the Chair felt that actions 10 and 11 were related more to Bromsgrove, he requested that these actions be specified as applying to Bromsgrove District Council only.

The Chief Executive clarified that he had frequent meetings with the leaders and would discuss and monitor progress in relation to the Corporate Peer Challenge at these meetings. Members were advised that progress would also be monitored in the performance reports.

RECOMMENDED that

Actions 10 and 11 in the Action Plan arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge should be amended to refer to Bromsgrove District Council only.

53. HOUSING ATTITUDE SURVEY - MEMBER DISCUSSION

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch) informed the Committee that following the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event on 25th June 2018, Members had proposed to undertake a 'Housing Attitudes Survey' primarily looking at what residents in Redditch really thought about a range of housing issues, their expectations and experiences.

Following discussions, Members expressed the view that it was important that the Council understood the challenges facing

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housing services. Members noted however, that as part of the work on the review of Housing and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which had been considered at the previous meeting of the Committee, some consultation work was already taking place with tenants and further surveys would duplicate this work.

Members therefore agreed that the Committee should not proceed with the 'Housing Attitude Survey'. However, as the Tenancy Conditions for Council Housing Tenants and Tenants Handbook was included on the Executive Work Programme in March, 2019, Members agreed to pre-scrutinise this item as it related to the experience of residents.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should not launch a 'Housing Attitude Survey'.

54. PARKING OUTSIDE SCHOOLS - PROPOSED SHORT SHARP REVIEW

Members gave consideration to a proposal to undertake a Short, Sharp Review in respect of the issues around parking outside schools. This issue had been identified as a problem during the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning event in June 2018, and the Committee noted that this was raised following some Members receiving complaints from residents about the issue.

For any review of parking the Council would need to consult with the public and partner agencies, including, schools, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police and other relevant agencies. The Chair was proposing that the review should be completed in three to four months.

Members discussed the proposal and recognised that there was a major issue in Redditch with people parking inappropriately outside schools and causing problems for residents and other road users. However, Members concluded that a review would be beneficial, though acknowledged that something had to be done.

The Chief Executive informed Members, that the Head of Environmental Services and Inspector Mark Chappell were working together to discuss the issues around inappropriate parking and if Members were keen, it could be arranged for Redditch Councillors to meet with them to discuss the issues raised in their wards.

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RESOLVED that

that a meeting to be arranged with Members to meet with the Head of Environmental Services and Inspector Mark Chappell to discuss the issues in relation to parking around school.

55. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Members considered the Executive Committee minutes from a meeting held on 11th September, 2018 and the Executive Committee's Work Programme.

It was noted that the Budget Scrutiny Working Group would be pre-scrutinising many of the items with specific financial implications, including the Fees and charges 2019/20 report. In addition it was agreed that the group should pre-scrutinise the Redditch Business Improvement District item.

The following items were identified as suitable for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Private Sector Home Repair Assistance Policy Update. Members agreed that this should form the basis of an overview to be presented to the Committee in the new year, rather than an item for pre-scrutiny.
- Tenancy Conditions for Council Housing Tenants and Tenants Handbook, to be pre-scrutinised at a meeting in March 2019.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 11th September, 2018 be noted;**
- 2) **the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted; and**
- 3) **the following items be included on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as agreed:**
 - a) **Private Sector Home Repair Assistance policy Update; and**
 - b) **Tenancy Conditions for Council Housing Tenants and Tenants Handbook.**

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56. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch) presented the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19. It was noted that the Pre-Scrutiny Redditch Improvement District (BID) would be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

Members noted that the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee in December, 2018, was comprehensive. However, it was appreciated that all items would be given due attention.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.

57. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - VERBAL UPDATES

Councillor Wheeler provided verbal updates in respect of the following Working Groups:

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group

It was reported that two meetings of the group had taken place since the last meeting of the Committee. Members were informed that the Head of Environmental Services was invited to the latest meeting to discuss the budgets for Environmental Services. Members had also discussed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It was agreed that an update in respect of Housing Services and work on the Housing Action Plan should be provided every quarter.

Members were also provided with a presentation in respect of the Council's budget framework, including the fees and charges. It was stated that there were £777,000 of unidentified savings in the budget that needed to be found.

Members noted that the next Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting was scheduled to take place on 19th October, 2018 and the Town Centre Co-ordinator had been invited to discuss the work of the town centre partnership, in particular, the proposals in respect of the Redditch Business Improvement District.

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b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group

It was reported that the group had held its first meeting on 8th October 2018 and each Member of the group had identified which of the six strategic purposes they wished to focus on which had been matched to their expertise. It was agreed that all Members of the group would focus on 'Provide good things for me to do, see and visit', which was considered appropriate given all the changes that were due to be made to the way in which Leisure and Cultural Services were delivered.

It had been agreed that training should be provided on the Measures Dashboard to ensure that Members understood the data provided and how to navigate the system. The training was expected to be delivered at the next meeting of the group on 10th December, 2018. Due to the relevance of the dashboard to all Members the Chair of the group proposed that all Members would be welcome to attend the training.

58. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Councillor Chalk provided a written update in respect of the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He advised that the questions and answers by the Mayor were available for consideration if required.

Members were also provided with a written update in respect of Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

59. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Pattie Hill, presented the minutes from the latest meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED that

the notes of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on 26th September, 2018 be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

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