



Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Thu 6 Dec
2018
6.30 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch

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Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 6th December, 2018

6.30 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:

Joe Baker (Chair)
Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair)
Joanne Beecham
Michael Chalk
Andrew Fry

Pattie Hill
Anthony Lovell
Gemma Monaco
Jennifer Wheeler

1. Apologies and named substitutes

2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip

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, and any Party Whip.

3. Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 October 2018 (Pages 1 - 14)

4. Sexual Health Services in Redditch update (Pages 15 - 16)

5. Public Bus Services in Redditch update (Pages 17 - 18)

6. Homelessness Policy (Homelessness Reduction Act) (Pages 19 - 26)

7. Review of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy - Pre-Scrutiny - To follow

8. Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups - Update Reports (Pages 27 - 28)

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Wheeler

Members are asked to note that there are recommendations for the Committee to consider from meetings of the group held on 19th October and 26th November 2018. These have been recorded in separate reports as they relate to different things. The first report is attached and the second

b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Wheeler – Verbal Update

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9. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 29 - 44)

Executive Committee minutes attached.

The next edition of the Executive Work Programme will be published on 3rd December 2018. That version of the work programme will be included in an additional papers pack for Members' consideration.

10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 45 - 48)



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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

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Chair

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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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Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Sexual Health Services

- 1) What sexual health services are currently available for people to access in Redditch?
- 2) Where can people access sexual health services in Redditch?
- 3) How are sexual health services advertised to residents?
- 4) How do service hours at Small Wood House and Arrowside Unit compare to service hours two years ago?
- 5) What work do you do in schools to educate young people about sexual health services and safe sexual behaviour?
- 6) What number of appointments in relation to sexual health have been made in Redditch? (Please provide the latest data available).
- 7) How do the number of appointments compare to five years prior to that date?
- 8) To what extent is the following monitored?
 - a) The number of times each person attends sexual health clinics.
 - b) The number of new patients attending sexual health services for the first time.
- 9) To what extent is there an issue in Redditch with people in their 50s or older participating in unprotected sexual activities?
 - a) How is this problem being addressed?
- 10) What uptake has there been of online testing in Redditch?
- 11) To what extent do you think that the information that is provided on emergency contraception on the NHS webpage for Smallwood House could be improved? (This information was accessed via the following link:
<http://www.knowyourstuff.nhs.uk/worcestershire/clinics/small-wood-house/>)
- 12) With reference to the same page on the internet please could you clarify the opening times of services for all age groups (the opening times for those aged under 21 are clear).
- 13) How long is the waiting list for long-acting contraceptives such as implants?
- 14) The webpage dedicated to Arrowside Unit records that patients should call for an appointment after 9.30am. To what extent is this meeting the needs of residents? (E.g. those working night shifts, young people at school etc.)
- 15) To what extent is it possible to book appointments online with Small Wood House, the Arrowside Unit, Doctors' surgeries in Redditch and any other facilities that provide sexual health services?
 - a) If online appointments are not available please could you advise whether there are any plans to introduce online booking in the future?
- 16) Is there anything else that you would like to add for our consideration?

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Bus Questions

- 1) What changes, if any, have been made to bus services in Redditch in the last five years?
- 2) How have the changes to bus services been communicated to Redditch residents?
- 3) To what extent are current buses in service energy efficient?
- 4) What are the current strengths of the bus services in Redditch?
- 5) What are the challenges facing bus services in Redditch?
- 6) How can public sector organisations help to address these challenges?
- 7) Is there anything else that you would like to add for our consideration?

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Report to Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee 6th December 2018

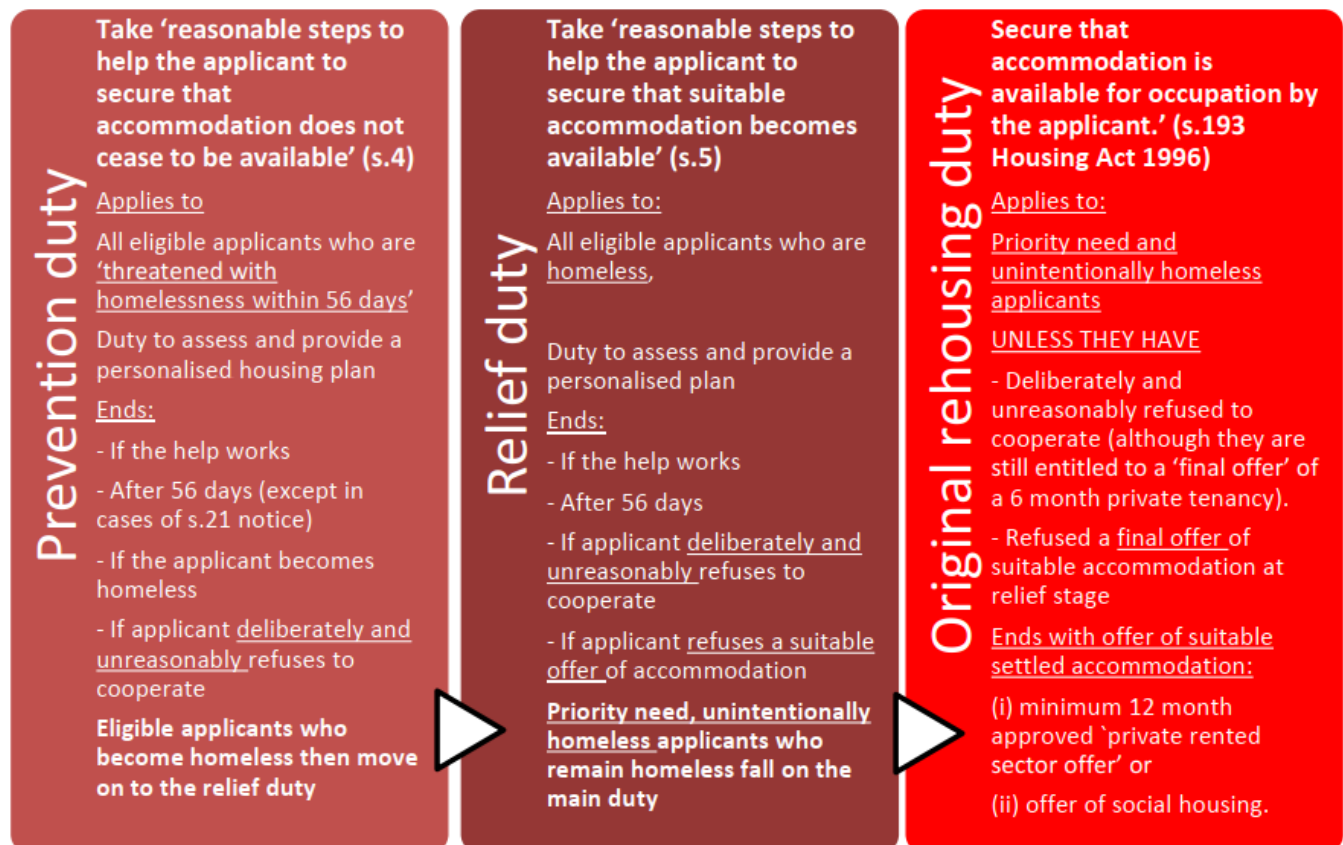
The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and its impact in Redditch

Introduction

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is widely regarded as the biggest change to the rights of homeless households in the last fifteen years, and places a much greater emphasis on local authorities intervening early to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas. This report sets out the main changes introduced by the Act, and looks at its impact in Redditch. It is worth noting that the council's housing options service is currently being restructured, with due consideration being paid to the requirements of the Act going forwards.

The main changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act effectively bolts 2 new duties onto the original statutory rehousing duty, so in short, councils are now legally required to attempt to prevent homelessness, or relieve it, before they assess households under the original housing duty as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended in 2002). These 2 new duties apply to all eligible households, and there is no consideration of intentional homelessness or priority need, and the prevention duty does not rely on a local connection. The legislation is complex so is probably best summarised in a diagram:



The 2017 Act is also accompanied by a new code of guidance, and 2 sets of regulations.

In terms of the new duties there are 3 particular areas of focus – assessing and agreeing a plan, preventing homelessness and relieving homelessness. The key elements of these are set out below:

Subsection under new Section 189A Housing Act 1996	New duties to assess applicants and develop a personal plan
(1)	The authority <u>must make an assessment</u> of the applicant's case
(2)	This assessment <u>must include an assessment of—</u> (a) the <u>circumstances that caused the applicant to become homeless or threatened with homelessness,</u> (b) the housing needs of the applicant including, in particular, <u>what accommodation would be suitable</u> for the applicant and any household members, and (c) <u>what support would be necessary</u> for the applicant and any other relevant persons to be able to have and retain suitable accommodation.
(3)	The authority <u>must notify the applicant,</u> in writing, of the assessment
(4)	The authority <u>must try to agree</u> with the applicant: • any steps the applicant is to be required to take to have and retain suitable accommodation • the steps the authority are to take
(5)	If the authority and the applicant reach an agreement, the authority <u>must record it in writing</u>
(6)	If the authority and the applicant cannot reach an agreement, the authority <u>must record in writing:</u> (a) why they could not agree, (b) any steps the authority consider it would be reasonable to require the applicant to take and (c) the steps the authority are to take.
(7)	The authority <u>may include in a written record produced under (5) or (6) any advice for the applicant</u> that the authority consider appropriate (including any steps the authority consider it would be a good idea for the applicant to take but which the applicant should not be required to take)
(8)	The authority <u>must give to the applicant a copy</u> of any written record produced under subsection (5) or (6)
(9)	Until such time as the authority consider that they owe the applicant no duty, they must keep under review— (a) their assessment of the applicant's case, and (b) the appropriateness of any agreement reached

Subsection under new Section 195 Housing Act 1996	New duties when an applicant is threatened with homelessness within 56 days
(1)	Who it applies to: Where the local housing authority are satisfied that an applicant is— (a) <u>threatened with homelessness</u> , and (b) <u>eligible</u> for assistance.
(2)	What the authority must do: The authority must <u>take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available</u> for the applicant's occupation.
(3)	In deciding what steps they are to take, the authority <u>must have regard to their assessment of the applicant's case</u>
(5)	How the duty comes to an end: If any of the circumstances in subsection (8) apply, the authority may give notice to the applicant bringing the duty to an end.
(8)	The circumstances are that the authority are satisfied that— (a) the applicant has <u>suitable accommodation available</u> for occupation, <u>and a reasonable prospect of having suitable accommodation available for occupation for at least 6 months</u> , or such longer period not exceeding 12 months as may be prescribed (b) the authority have complied with the duty under (2) and the <u>period of 56 days</u> beginning with the day that the authority are first satisfied as in (1) <u>has ended</u> (whether or not the applicant is still threatened with homelessness) - unless a valid s.21 notice has been served and has expired or will do so within 56 days (c) the applicant has <u>become homeless</u> , (d) the applicant has <u>refused an offer of suitable accommodation</u> and, on the date of refusal, (a) applied (e) the applicant has <u>become homeless intentionally</u> from any accommodation that has been made available under (2), (f) the applicant is <u>no longer eligible for assistance</u> , or (g) the applicant has <u>withdrawn the application</u> .
(10)	The duty under (2) can also be brought to an end under sections 193B and 193C (notices in cases of <u>applicant's deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate</u>).

Subsection under new Section 189B Housing Act 1996	New duties when an applicant is homeless
(1)	Who it applies to: Where the local housing authority are satisfied that an applicant is— (a) <u>homeless</u> , and (b) <u>eligible</u> for assistance.
(2)	What the authority must do: Unless the authority refer the application to another local housing authority (to which they have a local connection), the authority <u>must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation becomes available</u> for the applicant's occupation.
(3)	In deciding what steps they are to take, the authority <u>must have regard to their assessment</u> of the applicant's case
(4)	How the duty comes to an end: Where the authority are satisfied that the applicant <u>has a priority need, and are not satisfied that the applicant became homeless intentionally</u> , the duty (2) comes to an end at the <u>end of the period of 56 days</u> beginning with the day the authority are first satisfied as mentioned in (1).
(5)	If any of the circumstances in subsection (7) apply, the authority <u>may give notice</u> to the applicant bringing the duty to an end.
(7)	The circumstances are that the authority are satisfied that— (a) the applicant has <u>suitable accommodation available</u> for occupation, <u>and a reasonable prospect of having suitable accommodation available for occupation for at least 6 months</u> , or such longer period not exceeding 12 months as may be prescribed (b) the authority have complied with the duty under (2) and <u>the period of 56 days</u> beginning with the day that the authority are first satisfied as in (1) <u>has ended</u> (whether or not the applicant has secured accommodation) (c) the applicant has <u>refused an offer of suitable accommodation</u> and, on the date of refusal, (a) applied (d) the applicant has <u>become homeless intentionally</u> from any accommodation that has been made available under (2), (e) the applicant is <u>no longer eligible for assistance</u> , or (f) the applicant has <u>withdrawn the application</u> .
(10)	The duty under (2) can also be brought to an end under sections 193B and 193C (notices in cases of <u>applicant's deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate</u>).

Duty to refer

In addition to the changes outlined above, the other important development introduced by the Act is the 'duty to refer', which places a duty on certain other public bodies such as hospitals and prisons to refer potentially homeless residents (with their consent) to the local authority for help. This was implemented slightly later, in October 2018. In Worcestershire all the district councils have agreed to promote the duty to refer amongst all partners, rather than limiting this to organisations named in the Act which are:

- prisons and young offender institutions
- secure training centres and secure colleges
- youth offending teams and probation services (including community rehabilitation companies)
- Jobcentres
- social service authorities (both adult and children's)
- emergency departments, urgent treatment centres and hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the regular armed forces

The impact of the Act in Redditch

In advance of the introduction of the Act in April 2018, a number of actions were taken to prepare the housing options service (and associated teams/policies and procedures) in readiness for its implementation. Some of these were examined in detail in a report submitted to the Executive Committee in January 2018, and are summarised here:

- Various training events for housing options staff on the incoming legislation
- Council's housing allocations policy updated to incorporate new prevention and relief duties
- IT system introduced to meet new national data reporting requirements
- IT system also generates new decision letters and personalised housing plan for officers
- 2 new career-graded staff successfully recruited
- Email alert system implemented to enable duty to refer accompanied by local communications campaign publicising duty to refer
- Enhanced partnerships via creation of a new Homelessness Forum/grant application approach for agencies working on homelessness

- The new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has been utilised to increase outreach support provision with Nightstop and provide 24 hours support at St Basils so that they can accommodate more complex cases
- Pathways for vulnerable client groups (for example care leavers and the First Home Scheme, young people, mental health) have been developed in line with the new homelessness code of guidance

Data set April 2018 to 22/11/18



If practice is in line with the new legislation we should see prevention and relief activity levels well above those associated with accepting a full homeless duty and the data set bears this out - since April 2018 only 2 households have been accepted as homeless with the majority of the team's casework resulting in prevention or relief of homelessness. By way of contrast, Redditch Borough Council accepted a full homelessness duty to some 100 households in each of the previous 3 years.

The data set above is a 'real time' snapshot of all casework and the provider is currently working on creating ways of analysing this in more detail. The 308 closed cases will comprise of a number of outcomes, including prevention and reliefs, so we are awaiting further technical support in order to be able to provide historical analysis of the team's caseload as well as this current overview. All the strategic and operational housing related measures on the dashboard are currently being reviewed with any changes being made by the end of the year.

Challenges and risks going forwards

Although the housing options service has successfully implemented the Homeless Reduction Act at a local level, it is probably too soon to be certain that pressures won't build up in the system over time, and these risks are around:

- The additional administrative requirements associated with the Act can lead to backlogs in casework and lengthen waiting times for appointments
- Accommodation options haven't increased to cater for the greater focus on prevention and relief so the increase in duties has not been accompanied by an increase in resources
- Recruitment issues can impact on provision of service - high turnover rates of temporary staff can be particularly challenging with a national shortage of experienced staff driving up the rates of pay

Derek Allen

Housing Strategy Manager

November 2018

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6th December 2018

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - PROPOSALS

Lead Scrutiny Member	Councillor Jenny Wheeler
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Planning and Regeneration
Ward(s) Affected	Central and Abbey wards.
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides Members with an opportunity to consider a proposal that has been made by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group in respect of the Redditch Business Improvement District.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

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

3. KEY ISSUES**Background**

- 3.1 The Budget Scrutiny Working Group is responsible for reviewing items that have financial implications for the Council to ensure that the Council is achieving value for money.
- 3.2 During a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group on Friday 19th October Members considered information about proposals for the introduction of a Redditch Business Improvement District (BID). The group chose to investigate this matter due to their awareness that the introduction of a BID would have financial implications for the Council. The details discussed during the meeting can be viewed in an extract from the notes of that meeting, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 Based on the information provided by the Redditch Town Centre Co-ordinator the group concluded that the Council should support the introduction of a Redditch BID.
- 3.4 Should the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse this proposal the recommendation will be considered by the Executive Committee on 11th December alongside the report in respect of the proposed Redditch BID.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**6th December 2018

Financial Implications

- 3.5 There are direct financial implications for the Council which are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. The Budget Scrutiny Working Group agreed that this financial implications for the Council would be offset by the potentially beneficial impact that the introduction of a Redditch BID could have on the vibrancy of the local economy.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 There are no direct legal implications for the Council.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 In the event that a BID is introduced in Redditch town centre the Council would be required to co-ordinate the ballot for local businesses. Council Officers will also be required to collect the levy from eligible companies if it is determined through the ballot process that a BID should be introduced in Redditch.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 No specific customer or equalities and diversity implications have been identified.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Extract from the notes of the meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on Friday 19th October 2018.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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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

.....
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

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 23 October 2018

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

Appendix 1 - 5.33 Change of Circumstances

All applicants are required to notify the Housing Options Team at the Council immediately of any change to their circumstances which may affect their priority for housing. Applicants will need to provide proof of their change before it is assessed.

Applicants who have had a change of circumstances and have not informed the Council may have their application suspended whilst an investigation takes place in order to determine eligibility. The applicants' banding will be reassessed at the point that they submit the change of circumstances (not at the point when the circumstances change) and this will then determine their band start date. If an applicant does not respond to contact from the Council within one month, their application will be closed.

Applicants should notify the Council of any change in their circumstances. For example:

- A change of address, for themselves or any other person on their application
- Any additions to the family or any other person they would wish to join the application
- Any member of the family or any other person on the application who has left the accommodation
- Any confirmed pregnancy
- Changes of name
- Changes in financial circumstances, including change of employment
- Accommodation issues
- Medical or other housing needs

5.34 Additional Preference – Community Contribution of Key Workers and Volunteers.

The Council wants to recognise the many people who provide key worker services to the Borough, for example nurses, social workers and police officers, and will award an additional waiting time of six months for those applicants in key worker occupations. The key worker status can apply to either the applicant or joint applicant. The responsibility will be on the applicant or joint applicant to provide the evidence to be awarded this additional preference.

I. Applicants Volunteering

Applicants volunteering for a minimum of 20 hours per month with a registered charity and for a continuous period of at least six months, at the point of application, at review and the same at the point of offer will be awarded an additional six months waiting time.

II. Applicants who are full time carers

Applicants who are unable to take up key worker or volunteering positions because they care for someone on a full time basis and have done so for a minimum period of six months (before applying) and are in receipt of carers allowance (due to disability or frailty), , will qualify for the award of an additional six months.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

6th December 2018

WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	Minutes of previous meeting	Chief Executive
	Consideration of the Executive Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive
	Call-ins (if any)	Chief Executive
	Pre-scrutiny (if any)	Chief Executive
	Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups – feedback	Chair of Task Group / Short, Sharp Review
	Working Groups - feedback	Chair of Working Group
	Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS	
	Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel	Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel
	Tracker Report	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
	Updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Redditch Borough Council representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Annual Monitoring Report – Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

6th December 2018

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
6 th Dec 2018	The public bus service in Redditch	Diamond Bus Company
6 th Dec 2018	Homelessness Policy (Homelessness Reduction Act)	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
6 th Dec 2018	Review of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
6 th Dec 2018	Sexual Health Services in Redditch	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3 rd Jan 2019	Overview and Scrutiny – Select Committee Findings and new Government Guidance	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3 rd Jan 2019	Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 to 2022/23 - Update	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3 rd Jan 2019	Development Partner to Progress the Possible Redevelopment of Winyates and / or Matchborough District Centres and Surrounding Areas – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3 rd Jan 2019	Waste collection for houses of multiple occupation (TBC)	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3 rd Jan 2019	Pre-decision Scrutiny - Matchborough and Winyates District Centre Redevelopment Consultation	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

6th December 2018

3rd Jan 2019	Private Sector Home Repair Assistance Policy Update	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
3rd Jan 2019	Acute Hospital Services Review – Proposed Short Sharp Review	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
18th Feb 2019	Medium Term Financial Plan – Proposed Budget – considering scrutiny proposals	Relevant Lead Director
21st March 2019	CCTV Service Provision Review – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
21st March 2019	Pre-decision Scrutiny - Service Delivery Options – HRA Gas Maintenance	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
21st March 2019	Tenancy Conditions for Council Housing Tenants and Tenants Handbook	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
OTHER POSSIBLE ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY – DATE NOT FIXED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Gateway • Parking on roads inappropriately • Landscaping • Local Hospital Service Provision – outcome of Health Commission • Mental health services • Health services for young people • Cuts to school budgets and parental choice • Council owned shops and rateable values • The night time economy 	

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