

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wed 14 Jan
2009
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Access to Information - Your Rights

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000, has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

Your main rights are set out below:-

- Automatic right to attend all Council and Committee meetings unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Automatic right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect minutes of the Council and its Committees (or summaries of business undertaken in private) for up to six years following a meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect lists of background papers used in the preparation of public reports.
- Access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.
- Access to a public register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc.
- A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public must be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council and its Committees etc.
- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
Jess Bayley and Helen Saunders
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: 01527 64252 (Ext. 3268 / 3267) Fax: (01527) 65216
e.mail: jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk / helen.saunders@redditchbc.gov.uk
Minicom: 595528**

آپ انگریزی میں مدد چاہتے ہیں – نسلیاتی رسائی [Ethnic Access] سے رابطہ کریں ٹیلیفون: 01905 25121

ইংরেজি ভাষার বিষয়ে সাহায্য চান – এথনিক অ্যাকসেস [Ethnic Access] এর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন,
টেলিফোন: 01905 25121

‘Potrzebujesz pomocy z Angielskim – skontaktuj się z Ethnic Access Tel: 01905 25121’

Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

Members of the Public

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

Special Arrangements

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

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

Further Information

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

Fire/ Emergency instructions

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

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

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

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

The emergency Assembly Area is on the Ringway Car Park.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
 - The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)
- and**
- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 14 January 2009

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: P Mould (Chair) R King
D Smith (Vice-Chair) W Norton
K Banks D Taylor
M Chalk D Thomas
W Hartnett

1. Apologies and named substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee. (No Specific Ward Relevance)
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip. (No Specific Ward Relevance)
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 16)	To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record. (Minutes attached) All Wards
4. Actions List (Pages 17 - 18)	To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List. (Report attached) All Wards
5. Call-in and Pre-Scrutiny	To consider whether any Key Decisions of the Executive Committee's most recent meeting(s) should be subject to call-in and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan require pre-scrutiny. (No separate report). All Wards

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Wednesday, 14 January 2009

6. Task & Finish Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents	To consider any scoping documents provided for possible Overview and Scrutiny review. (No reports attached) All Wards
7. Task and Finish Groups - Progress Reports	To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The current reviews in progress are: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group – Chair, Councillor P Mould;2. Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group – Chair – Councillor M Chalk; and3. Third Sector Funding Task and Finish Group – Chair – Councillor D Thomas. (Oral reports) All Wards
8. Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group - Final Report	To consider a revised final report from the Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group. (Report to follow) All Wards
9. Housing Mutual Exchange	To consider appropriate arrangements for reviewing housing mutual exchange. (Oral report) All Wards
10. Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Leisure and Tourism (Councillor Peter Anderson) (Pages 19 - 22)	To receive a presentation from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism on themes proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (Report attached) All Wards

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Wednesday, 14 January 2009

11. Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Questions	<p>To consider and approve a series of questions for the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety to address during her Annual Report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(No report attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
12. Referrals	<p>To consider any referrals to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Committee or full Council• Other sources. <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>All Wards</p>
13. Work Programme (Pages 23 - 26)	<p>To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Forward Plan / Committee agendas• External publications• Other sources. <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
14. Exclusion of the Press and Public	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".</p> <p>All Wards</p>



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December
2008

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, M Chalk, W Hartnett, R King, D Taylor and D Thomas.

Also Present:

Councillors Cookson and Farooqui

Officers:

A Heighway, E Hopkins and P Rose and L Tompkins

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and H Saunders

122. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence or any named substitutes.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

124. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on Wednesday 6 November and Wednesday 26 November be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

125. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered its list of agreed actions and specific mention was made of the following matters:

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

a) Joint Scrutiny into Flooding Group recommendations

Officers referred to item five on the Actions List and informed Members that all Councillors had been invited to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the presentation of the Flooding Review recommendations was due to take place, on Wednesday 4 February.

b) Communications Task and Finish Group

Members also discussed item six on the Actions List and noted that Officers were due to present a report to the Executive Committee on 7 January which proposed the re-introduction of a Civic Newspaper. This would address recommendation 5) of the Communications Review report. The other recommendations of the Communications Task and Finish Group would be reconsidered in an amended form at the meeting of the Executive Committee on Wednesday 18 February.

c) Scrutiny of Performance Training

Item eight on the Actions List was also discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers explained that Mr Philip Whiteman, from the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham, had been invited to deliver this training. The training session had subsequently been booked to take place on the evening of 23 March, a scheduled date for a Member Development event. All Members would be invited to attend this session. Officers confirmed that Bromsgrove District Council, Stratford District Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council would all be approached to discuss the possibility of offering this training as part of a shared service arrangement.

RESOLVED that

subject to the above comments, the contents of the Actions List be noted.

126. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

There were no call-ins or suggestions for pre-scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

127. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents for consideration at the meeting.

128. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received update reports in relation to current reviews.

a) Council Flat Communal Cleaning – Chair, Councillor P Mould

The Chair explained that the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group was scheduled to meet on Friday 9 January. Group members had also arranged to attend a meeting of the Borough Tenants' Panel on Tuesday 27 January to consult with tenant representatives over the Group's potential proposals for cleaning arrangements. He explained that the Group was hoping to attend a meeting of the Leaseholders Group to undertake similar consultation work.

b) Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group – Chair, Councillor M Chalk

Councillor Chalk explained that Officers were working to provide costings for a number of the Group's recommendations. He suggested that the Group was on course to report back before the Committee on Wednesday 14 January.

c) Third Sector Task and Finish Group – Chair, Councillor D Thomas

Members agreed that this report would be covered under item eight on the agenda.

RESOLVED that

the Task and Finish Group update reports be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

129. THIRD SECTOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP - REPORT

The Third Sector Review report was presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor D Thomas, and Councillors Banks and Farooqui.

The Chair of the Group explained that the Group had produced an executive summary report and a larger, evidence-based report. These reports contained the Group's recommendations. She informed Members that the larger report contained further information about the recommendations.

The Chair of the Group reminded the Committee that Mrs Ann Sowton, from the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN), a local infrastructure organisation that worked in support of all local third sector organisations, had been co-opted onto the Task and Finish Group. Mrs Sowton had been invited to participate due to her extensive experience of working in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The Chair of the Group explained that as part of the review process the Group had interviewed a number of expert witnesses. This included interviews with relevant Officers from Redditch Borough Council and with Officers from two best practice organisations: Gloucester City Council and Worcestershire County Council. She explained that the Group had hosted a Voluntary Sector Grants Consultation Event on Friday 21 November which had been attended by representatives of local third sector organisations. The contributions from representatives of the third sector had been considered during subsequent meetings of the Group and had informed the Group's recommendations.

The Committee discussed the first recommendation: '*we recommend that the Council adopt a written policy and procedure*'. The Chair of the Task and Finish Group explained that the Group had not written a Grants Policy and Procedure for the consideration of the Committee. Instead, they had approved a number of principles which they believed should be incorporated into a final written Grants Policy and Procedure. The Group believed that this written Grants Policy and Procedure should be produced by relevant Officers.

Members of the Group explained that the Council did not have a written Grants Policy and Procedure. Draft Grants Policy and Procedure documents had been produced but had never been approved. However, based on the evidence gathered during the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

course of their review, the Group had come to the conclusion that a written Grants Policy and Procedure would represent best practice and therefore should be adopted at Redditch Borough Council. The Chair explained that the Group had also believed that a written Grants Policy and Procedure document would bring some stability to the Council's grants process. The Group had felt that this had been absent in recent years due to piecemeal alterations to the grants process.

Members discussed recommendation 1f: *'decisions about funding for both the Shopping, Investing and Giving parts of the framework, should be made on a yearly basis'*. A number of Members suggested that this recommendation appeared to conflict with recommendation 5f: *'we recommend that there be...a review of how multi-year funding arrangements should be implemented as part of the Council's grants process'*. Officers explained that there was no conflict between these two points. Recommendation 1f, related not to providing funding for only one year but rather to decisions about funding being made on an annual basis. Members requested that recommendation 1f be altered to clarify this principle.

Officers explained that multi-year funding arrangements would be very complicated to implement at Redditch Borough Council. The standard arrangements for multi-year funding conflicted with the Council's procurement rules. They suggested that this potential for conflict indicated the need for further work to be undertaken to review the Council's Procurement Code, as proposed in recommendation 5e.

The Committee discussed recommendation 1e: *'third sector organisations should have opportunities to bid for both Strategic Grants and contracts as part of the Council's Shopping arrangements'*. Members questioned whether Service Level Agreements (SLAs) could be offered as part of this framework. The Chair of the Group confirmed that theoretically SLAs could be offered as part of this arrangement. However, she informed Members that, unlike contracts, SLAs were not legally binding agreements.

The Chair of the Group explained that Worcestershire County Council utilised a bespoke form of Shopping arrangement in the form of Strategic Grants. Strategic Grants were large grant agreements between the Council and the recipient third sector organisation. Robust monitoring arrangements were utilised to ensure that the terms set out in a contract or Strategic Grant agreement were adhered to. In the event that the recipient third sector organisation could not prove that they had fulfilled all the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

terms set out in the agreement the Council could justifiably withhold any further instalments for funding.

The Committee discussed recommendation 1i: '*organisations should demonstrate an outcomes focus in applications for funding*'. Members questioned whether it would always be possible for organisations to demonstrate that they achieved certain ambitious or large outcomes. However, the Chair explained that this represented best practice in relation to funding third sector organisations and that relevant Officers would provide guidance to ensure that unrealistic expectations about outcomes did not impact on the grants process.

The Committee discussed recommendation 1h: '*decisions about grants should be made in accordance with assessment of need rather than in accordance with demographic considerations*'. Members of the Group explained that the idea of allocating grants in accordance with demographic considerations had been raised during the course of the Voluntary Sector Grants Consultation Event. Delegates had unanimously opposed distributing funding in accordance with demographic considerations and had instead suggested that the Council should distribute funds in accordance with needs.

Members discussed recommendation 1j: '*the Council's funding application forms should be aligned with Worcestershire County Council's application forms*'. The Committee questioned whether different application forms would be available for smaller and larger grants. The Chair of the Group explained that the two main forms utilised by Worcestershire County Council were for their larger, Strategic Grants, and smaller, Community Grants.

Members discussed recommendation 1l: '*organisations should be able to secure full cost recovery with all applications for full cost recovery being assessed on a case by case basis*'. This was an issue that had been raised during the Consultation Event. Delegates had explained that when full cost recovery was not available organisations could have difficulties delivering the services or activities for which they had been awarded funding.

The Committee considered recommendation 1m: '*small grants should be regarded as sums valued at a maximum of £5,000 and large grants should be regarded as grants valued at over £5,000*'. Members suggested that this was a relatively large sum particularly for small, community-based organisations. Officers explained that this figure had been identified as the cut off amount between large and small grants at both Gloucester City Council and

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

Worcestershire County Council. Moreover, the figure of £5,000 was significantly less than the £10,000 limit for Project Grants currently adopted by the Council.

The Committee considered recommendation 2a: *'we recommend that the Council's purpose for funding the third sector should be aligned to the following mission statement "Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community Sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant third sector is vital to our community. We feel that in the current economic climate we must ensure that our valuable resources are used to best effect"'*.

Members suggested that the final sentence should be removed from the mission statement because it appeared to assume that the existing economic climate would continue to apply in the future, which might not necessarily be the case.

The Committee discussed recommendation 3: *'we recommend that the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework be adopted for the Council's Grants Process'*. The Chair of the Group explained that the Group had decided not to recommend any prescriptive arrangements for the division of the grants budget between the Shopping, Investing and Giving elements of the funding framework. In some years the Executive Committee might not want to buy any services as part of the Shopping element of the grants process, which would leave more money available to distribute as part of the Investing and Giving elements of the funding process.

Recommendation 4: *'we recommend that the Council officially endorse the Worcestershire Compact'* was also discussed by the Committee. The Chair of the Task and Finish Group explained that the contents of the Worcestershire Compact agreement should be regarded as providing a framework for best practice. The Worcestershire Compact agreement had been formally approved by all the other local authorities in Worcestershire. However, in Redditch, the Worcestershire Compact had only been approved by default. The Task and Finish Group had felt that this situation needed to be addressed through formal endorsement of the Compact.

Finally, the Committee considered the potential sixth recommendation, relating to Officer support, that had been proposed by the Task and Finish Group. The Chair of the Group explained that the Group had recognised that if their other recommendations were endorsed additional work would be created for Officers managing the Council's grants process. Under these circumstances they had felt that additional Officer support would be

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

required. However, the Group had been concerned about the financial implications of employing an additional Officer or Officers. The Group had been unable to agree a single recommendation to address this situation. They had therefore proposed a list of four potential recommendations for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee discussed the four different options. A number of Members expressed concern about options A and B, relating to the employment of an additional Officer to manage the grants process, to be funded either using a portion of the grants budget or subject to a successful revenue bid. Members noted that an Officer post would be expensive and would divert a lot of funding from the grants budget which could be allocated to third sector organisations.

The Chair of the Committee informed Members that he was concerned about the ability of the Policy Team, which had responsibility for the grants process, to manage the additional responsibilities that would be created if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations were approved. However, he was also concerned about how any additional Officer post could be funded.

The Chair suggested that the best option would therefore be to endorse Option C, relating to the employment of a clerical support worker. This recommendation would ensure that an employee was in post to assume responsibility for administrative processes, which would enable the more senior Officers could devote their time to more strategic responsibilities. The recommendation would also be cheaper than recommending that an additional Officer post be created to manage the Council's grants process.

The Committee discussed the proposed endorsement of option C further. They agreed that they would prefer for the post to be funded through a revenue bid. However, they noted that in the existing economic climate this option might not be feasible. Under these circumstances they agreed that a second preference should be provided for this recommendation: that the post be funded using a portion of the grants budget.

RESOLVED that

- 1) recommendation 1f be amended to clarify the meaning of the recommendation in accordance with the preamble above;**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

- 2) **the final sentence in the mission statement, as detailed in recommendation 2a, be removed, as detailed in the preamble above;**
- 3) **a sixth recommendation be added stating that, subject to the successful submission and approval of a revenue bid the Council introduce a clerical support post in the policy team to support the grants process / OR subject to funding using a portion of the grants budget the Council introduce a clerical support post in the policy team to support the grants process; and**
- 4) **the Executive Committee be asked to consider the recommendations of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group, as amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and as detailed in the resolutions above.**

130. HOUSING MUTUAL EXCHANGE - REVIEW

The Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Smith, chaired the meeting for this item.

Councillor Smith explained that he had proposed this as an item for scrutiny because he felt that there had been a need to clarify the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange policy and procedures. He proposed that the Committee consider the item in accordance with the order of the questions which he had addressed to Officers on the subject (for a written record of these questions and the answers recorded by Officers please refer to Appendix A).

- 1) How many exchanges have been sanctioned so far in the current year – 2008/2009?

Officers explained that an internal audit of the Council's arrangements for housing mutual exchange had been undertaken during the previous month. This had identified that the Council did not have a system that could log the number of housing mutual exchanges that had taken place in the previous twelve months. However, Officers had been able to identify that twenty-four housing mutual exchanges had occurred in the previous eight months.

Members questioned how tenants could arrange to have a housing mutual exchange. Officers explained that the housing mutual exchange process was complicated. Exchanges could only be made with people inhabiting similar sized properties, in terms of the number of bedrooms within

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

the property. Exchanges could be made if the other property had one more or one fewer bedroom than the tenant's existing property.

Officers explained that housing mutual exchange was often attractive to tenants who wished to increase the size of their housing or to change the location where they lived in a relatively easy manner. Extra points were allocated to people living in properties with a larger number of bedrooms to encourage them to downsize. The housing mutual exchange process was subject to specific legal criteria. Tenants were eligible to apply for a housing mutual exchange unless they were proposing an arrangement that would not comply with this set of legal criteria.

2) What are the costs involved in arranging an exchange including the cost of Officer time?

Officers explained that information about the costs involved in arranging a housing mutual exchange was not available. The details provided in the written response to Members had therefore been estimated figures. However, Officers proposed that they track the costs involved over a period of months and report the results at a later meeting of the Committee.

3) Is there a Monetary Bond that covers the cost of any necessary repairs or damage caused by existing tenants?

Officers explained that the Council's inspectors used a check list when assessing the condition of a property prior to an exchange. Tenants assumed responsibility for the condition of a property when they moved into their new housing.

Members discussed this arrangement and suggested that photographic evidence might be used to provide proof about the condition of a property when a new tenant moved onto the premises. Officers explained that photographic evidence was not currently made available but could be incorporated into the housing mutual exchange process.

Officers explained that the internal audit that had been undertaken had reviewed the physical process of housing mutual exchanges. The internal audit report had not though assessed the suitability of the advertising process for housing mutual exchange. In Redditch the computer system did not contain records of properties available for exchange

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

from areas outside the Borough, despite the fact that some tenants moved to other parts of the country when participating in a housing mutual exchange.

The Committee was informed that in previous years the Government had maintained a central database of properties that were available across the country for housing mutual exchange but this had been discontinued. A private company, HomeSwapper, also provided a national database of properties. Local authorities could subscribe to accessing and advertising local properties on this database, at a cost of £2,500 per annum. Redditch Borough Council did not currently subscribe to this service.

Members suggested that the Council could reimburse tenants for advertising their properties with HomeSwapper. Officers confirmed that some Councils did reimburse their tenants in this manner.

Members noted that they had spent some time discussing three of the five questions. They agreed that no further consideration of the Officers' responses to these questions would be required during the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the report on housing mutual exchange be noted.

131. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - QUESTIONS

The arrangements for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism's Annual Report were also considered by the Committee. Members agreed a number of questions for the Portfolio Holder to address during his Annual Report (Appendix B).

132. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

133. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers informed Members that there would be an additional meeting of Committee on Monday 26 January from 7.30 in Committee Room Two. This meeting was required to enable the Committee to scrutinise the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 17 December 2008

Members discussed the arrangements for this meeting and noted that the Planning Advisory Panel was also scheduled to meet on the evening of Monday 26 January. They requested that relevant Officers be approached to arrange for the Planning Advisory Panel meeting to start earlier in the evening at 18.30.

Officers explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to receive an update on responses to the Communications Task and Finish Group's recommendations on Wednesday 8 April. However, the Executive Committee would not have made a decision with regards to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations until the 18 February. Members therefore agreed to postpone monitoring the impact of these recommendations until 14 October.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers be asked to reschedule the Planning Advisory Panel meeting to begin at 18.30 on Monday 26 January;**
- 2) the update on responses to the Communications Task and Finish Group's recommendations be postponed until Wednesday 14 October; and**
- 3) subject to the above, the Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.05 pm



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 December 2008

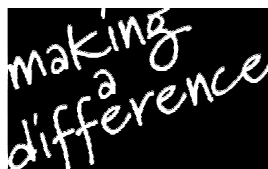
7.00pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS: QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR ANDERSON, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE AND TOURISM.

The following themes have been suggested by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questions relating to these themes will be posed to Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 14 January.

- 1) What have been the developments with the Abbey Stadium?
- 2) What is your view of the usage of the Palace Theatre?
- 3) What has been the level of usage of our outdoor sporting facilities (e.g. football pitches) and how do you feel that this usage could be enhanced?
- 4) What impact has the Land 4 Leisure Scheme had on amenities?
- 5) We are aware that Bromsgrove District Council was considering contracting Wychavon District Council to deliver their leisure services. We understand that this fell through and that Bromsgrove are now considering a proposal for a Leisure Trust to deliver their Leisure Services. Do you feel that this could have been a missed opportunity for Redditch Borough Council in relation to the shared services agenda?
- 6) What impact, if any, is tourism having on Redditch? Do we, as a Council, do anything to encourage tourism?
- 7) Do you have any ideas about how we could diversify the leisure and tourism services in the town in future?



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 December 2008

7.00pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall

ITEM 9 – HOUSING MUTUAL EXCHANGE

The Chair of the exercise, Councillor Smith, stipulated for this meeting that Officers provide the following information in order to begin the review of the Housing Mutual Exchange process:

1) How many exchanges have been sanctioned so far in the current year - 2008/2009?

These are difficult to track due to the current systems in place. We have someone writing us a new report so that I can find out but that won't be available until next week. The total number of new tenancies started this year was 695 but how many of them were mutual exchange is difficult to track at the moment. The numbers can be provided for the meeting.

2) What are the costs involved in arranging an exchange including the cost of officer time?

The costs incurred vary depending on the number of visits undertaken. On average it takes approximately eight hours of officer time from start to finish for a grade six officer. The other costs are the electrical test and transportation costs. I estimate the cost to be in the region of £500 in total (but I will bring some firmer calculations to the meeting).

3) Is there a Monetary Bond that covers the cost of any necessary repairs or damage cause by existing tenants?

No there is no monetary bond. A pre-inspection is carried out and customers are asked to rectify anything that they are responsible for fixing prior to the move taking place. A second inspection takes place to ensure the work is done prior to the work being sanctioned.

4) As a result of the reviewed policy do you feel that any further adjustments that need to be made?

Yes. There has been an improvement made to the physical inspection process and paperwork required when a Mutual Exchange takes place. The audit undertaken shows that this side of things is working well. The Audit has highlighted that the process of recording the numbers of mutual exchanges etc could be improved and there are also some other recommendations. We

also feel that the customer instructions and advertisement of Mutual Exchange could be updated to improve access. The information on the website could also be better. In addition our Redditch Home Choice Scheme does not cater for those people who want to move out of the area as we only hold adverts for Redditch on the system.

5) How does the Council advertise potential exchanges? Are there any other ways in which the Council could advertise these?

It is done through the Redditch Home Choice System online and also via books in all the One Stop Shops.

We do not currently operate a scheme that helps customers wishing to move out of the area. There is a national scheme that operates to help customers do this called Homeswapper but there is currently a cost incurred by customers if they want to use this. We could subscribe to the scheme at a cost of approximately £2,500. I suggest we get a computer set up for Wednesday, or a future meeting, so that members can have a look for themselves at how the systems operate now.

Actions requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Action Requested	Action to be Taken	Response
09/07/08 1	Members agreed to postpone further consideration of a potential review of the Borough's fishing tackle heritage, proposed during the WPPA, until the Role of the Mayor and Housing Mutual Exchange reviews had been completed.	The proposer for the item, Councillor Hunt, was informed of this decision on 14/07/08. The Committee's Work Programme has also been adjusted accordingly. (TO BE DONE). Lead Officers, OSSOs, estimated completion date March 2009.
24/09/08 2	Members requested that Environmental Services Officers attend a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide an update oral report regarding fly tipping and the progress of the 'Worth It' campaign.	TO BE DONE. (Lead Officer, Waste Management Manager, estimated completion date not specified).
15/10/08 3	Members requested that an Overview and Scrutiny Training Day be scheduled for Spring 2009.	Scrutiny of Performance training will be delivered on 23 March. DONE.
17/12/08 4	Members requested that the approved Third Sector Task and Finish Group recommendations be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee in an amended form, as specified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	The appropriate changes have been made in accordance with Members' specifications. DONE.
17/12/08 5	Officers were tasked with tracking the costs involved with organising housing mutual exchanges.	Relevant Officers to work over a period of several months and report back before the Committee at a later date. Lead Officer, Head of Housing and Community Services, estimated completion date, to be confirmed.

<p>17/12/08</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Officers explained that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been organised and would be taking place on 26 January 2009 from 7.30. Members noted that this meeting would coincide with a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel. Officers were asked to enquire about the possibility of convening the Planning Advisory Panel at 6.30 to provide an opportunity for members to attend both meetings on 26 January.</p>	<p>The OSSOs made enquiries about the possibility of rescheduling the start time for the Planning Advisory Panel. Unfortunately, due to prior engagements for members of the panel during the 26 January the meeting could not be rescheduled for a different start time. The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been informed accordingly. DONE.</p>
---------------------------------	---	--

Glossary

OSSO - Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

14 January 2009

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS: QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR ANDERSON, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE AND TOURISM

The following themes have been suggested by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questions relating to these themes will be posed to Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Wednesday 14 January 2009.

- 1) What have been the developments with the Abbey Stadium?
- 2) What is your view of the usage of the Palace Theatre?
- 3) What has been the level of usage of our outdoor sporting facilities (e.g. football pitches) and how do you feel that this usage could be enhanced?
- 4) What impact has the Land 4 Leisure Scheme had on amenities?
- 5) We are aware that Bromsgrove District Council was considering contracting Wychavon District Council to deliver their leisure services. We understand that this fell through and that Bromsgrove are now considering a proposal for a Leisure Trust to deliver their Leisure Services. Do you feel that this could have been a missed opportunity for Redditch Borough Council in relation to the shared services agenda?
- 6) What impact, if any, is tourism having on Redditch? Do we, as a Council, do anything to encourage tourism?
- 7) Do you have any ideas about how we could diversify the leisure and tourism services in the town in future?

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

NB Note draft revision /Update – Page 2. S

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL **GUIDE TO / FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Portfolio Holders are appointed annually by the Council (separate sheet refers) and between them cover all areas of the Council's work and responsibility.

"Portfolio" indicates a specified area of responsibility allotted by formal resolution, for the purposes listed below.

"Portfolio Holder" indicates a member of the Council's Executive Committee who, within the allotted area of responsibility,

CAN	1.	Monitor Council performance informed by documents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strategy • Corporate Plan • Service Plans • Budgets • E.Government statements • BVPI's / Local PI's (separate document available) • Forward Plan 	*
	2.	Monitor the implementation of Council policy and decisions informed, in addition to the above, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reports and Minutes • Personal contact with Officers 	*
	3.	Act as consultee for Members and Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally, in accordance with approved delegations of authority to Officers • Informally for general reference. 	*
	4.	Act as "Spokesperson" for the Council in relation to Press / Media / outside the Council, but not exclusively (other Members may also	

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

		have this shared role) (Council decision – 11th October ??)	
	5.	Act as “Rapporteur” a) to report annually to Overview & Scrutiny on the Services for which the Portfolio Holder has responsibility; and b) to act as a channel for feedback from representatives of outside bodies which fall within the remit of the Portfolio Holder. (Council Annual Meeting 22 nd May 2006)	
	6.	<i>the role of Portfolio Holders be expanded to include a higher level of involvement with the Local Strategic Partnership, and, more specifically, with relevant Sub-Groups of the Redditch Partnership, as and when formed.</i> (Exec January 2007 / Council ...)	
CANNOT		Act with delegated authority in any personal capacity (PFHs cannot therefore commit resources – financial / staffing, without further authority – Exec., Council, or Officer authority)	
			*
MAY	1.	Represent and “sponsor” their allotted Portfolio(s) at meetings of the Executive and the Council, and, <i>where appropriate</i> , at other Council meetings, e.g. O&S.	
	2.	Develop closer working relationship with relevant lead Directors and, via Directors, other relevant Officers.	
	3.	Attend relevant meetings, e.g. relevant O&S meetings, beyond those to which formally appointed by the Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an approved duty where invited to the meeting • Also as an approved duty when present on own initiative. <p style="text-align: right;">in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	
	4.	Seek to trigger reports to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Executive or Council, via normal report / agenda preparation processes 	

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Committees, via normal report / agenda preparation processes • Overview and Scrutiny Committee <p>in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	

G:M&C/Members/Portfolio Holder Guide
& Constitution / Const.documents/revised sms/8.7.6/16.7.7



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

14 January 2009

13. WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	Minutes of previous meeting	Chief Executive
	Consideration of the Forward Plan	Chief Executive
	Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions	Chief Executive
	Call-ins (if any)	Chief Executive
	Pre-scrutiny (if any)	Chief Executive
	Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny Actions List	Chief Executive
	Referrals from Council or Executive Committee, etc. (if any)	Chief Executive
	Task & Finish Groups - feedback	Chief Executive
	Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive
	REGULAR ITEMS	
	Quarterly Performance Report	Chief Executive
	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Chief Executive
	Review of Service Plans 2009 / 12	Relevant Lead Heads of Service

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Oral updates on the progress of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Joint Scrutiny Exercise into Flooding 2. the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group; and 3. the Third Sector Task and Finish Group. 4. the Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group. 	<p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
25 February 2009	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Quarterly Performance Report</p>	Relevant Lead Heads of Service
25 February 2009	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Quarterly Budget Report</p>	Relevant Lead Heads of Service
29 April 2009	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2008/09</p>	Chief Executive
OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED		
14 January 2009	Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism – Annual Report	

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

14 January 2009	Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group – Reporting Updates to Recommendations.	Relevant Lead Head of Service
26 January 2009	Medium Term Financial Strategy - Discussion	Relevant Lead Head of Service
4 February 2009	Joint Scrutiny Exercise on Flooding – Presentation of the Final Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
25 February 2009	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety – Annual Report	
25 February 2009	Review of ditches – discussion	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
25 February 2009	Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group – Update on Response to Recommendations – Charging Policy	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
18 March 2009	Fishing Tackle Heritage – Scoping Document	Relevant Lead Head of Service
18 March 2009	Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnership – Annual Report	
23 March 2009	Scrutiny of Performance Training – Open to all Members	
8 April 2009	Communications Task and Finish Group – Update on response to recommendations	Relevant Lead Head of Service

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

14 January 2009

8 April 2009	Redditch Passenger Transport Area Review – Update report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
8 July 2009	District Centres Task and Finish Group – Update Report on Response to Recommendations	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
2 September 2009	Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group – Update on Response to Recommendations – Planning Charges.	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
14 October 2009	Communications Task and Finish Group – Update on response to recommendations	Relevant Lead Head of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED	Update on fly tipping and the ‘Worth It’ Campaign	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Community Calls for Action – Discussion	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Overview and Scrutiny Member Training on Pre-Scrutiny.	Relevant Lead Head of Service