



# Executive Committee

Thu 19 Dec  
2019  
6.30 pm

Committee Room Two  
Town Hall  
Redditch

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Thursday, 19th December, 2019

6.30 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall  
Redditch

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Matthew Dormer (Chair)	Julian Grubb
	David Thain (Vice- Chair)	Bill Hartnett
	Greg Chance	Mike Rouse
	Brandon Clayton	Craig Warhurst

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interest

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

### 3. Leader's Announcements

### 4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 18)

### 5. Redditch Council Plan (Pages 19 - 30)

This report will be the subject of pre-scrutiny at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be reported in an additional papers pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

### 6. Review of the One Stop Shops (Pages 31 - 64)

This report will be the subject of pre-scrutiny at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be reported in an additional papers pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

### 7. Fees and Charges 2020/21 (Pages 65 - 86)

This report will be the subject of pre-scrutiny at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be reported in an additional papers pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group pre-scrutinised the fees and charges report at a meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. An extract from the notes of that meeting, detailing a recommendation that was made on this subject by the group, has been attached to the agenda for Members' consideration. This recommendation should only be considered

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subject to the group's parent Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, approving the recommendation at a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

- 8. Finance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2019/20** (Pages 87 - 108)
- 9. Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting Report** (Pages 109 - 112)
- 10. Housing / Housing Revenue Account Strategic Improvement Plan Progress Report** (Pages 113 - 146)

This report will be the subject of pre-scrutiny at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Any recommendations arising from this meeting will be reported in an additional papers pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

- 11. Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24 - Update Report** (Pages 147 - 154)

- 12. Overview and Scrutiny Committee** (Pages 155 - 174)

- 13. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.** (Pages 175 - 180)

To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.

At a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December Members proposed a recommendation in respect of the potential for a Member briefing to be provided to all Members on the subject of commercialism in January 2020. This recommendation was endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019. An extract from the notes of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting, which provides more background information in respect of this matter, has been attached for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

- 14. Advisory Panels** - update report

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

- a) Climate change Cross-Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Brandon Clayton
- b) Constitutional Review Working Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer;
- c) Corporate Parenting Steering Group – Council Representative, Councillor Julian Grubb;
- d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer; and
- e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer.



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**15.** To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-

**RESOLVED:** that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Item No.	Paragraph(s)
16	4

**16. Review of One Stop Shops Report - Confidential Appendix 6 (Pages 181 - 182)**

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## Executive Committee

Monday, 11 November 2019

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor David Thain (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett and Mike Rouse

#### Also Present:

Councillor Joe Baker, Jennifer Wheeler, Joanne Beecham, Peter Fleming and Ann Isherwood

#### Officers:

Lyndsey Berry, Kevin Dicks, Chris Forrester, Sue Hanley, Georgina Harris, Amar Hussain and Ostap Paparega

#### Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

#### 57. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Craig Warhurst.

#### 58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 59. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader circulated a written record of his announcements at the meeting.

.....  
Chair

**60. MINUTES****RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**61. BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, Councillor Jenny Wheeler, presented a report outlining the background to two recommendations that had been proposed by the group at a recent meeting.

During 2019 the group had held a number of meetings. At the latest meeting of the group Members had considered information about the Section 24 Notice that had been issued by the external auditors, Grant Thornton, to the Council in July 2019 and the action plan that the Council had developed to address the points raised by the auditors. The group had concluded that scrutiny Members had a key role to play in providing assurance to the Executive Committee in respect of the Council's budget position and any decisions that might have significant budget implications for the Council.

The first recommendation proposed by the group focused on the Council's investments and acquisitions. Since the approval of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy in 2017 the Executive Committee had been invited to consider two proposed investments. Neither of these investments had been subject to budget scrutiny. Councillor Wheeler suggested that at a time when the Council's financial position was challenging the budget Scrutiny Working Group should consider all proposed investments and acquisitions as standard policy at the Council. Members were advised that the group recognised that commercial decisions needed to be taken quickly in order to enable the Council to be competitive and therefore the group was prepared to meet at short notice to consider any proposed investments and acquisitions to avoid holding up the decision-making process.

The second recommendation focused on the information in respect of the financial implications of proposed action that was detailed in reports presented at Committee meetings. The recommendation proposed that more detail needed to be provided about the financial implications of alternative options and the sources of funding for proposed actions as this would help the Executive Committee when making decisions. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 when the report had been

considered Members had suggested that this proposal should apply where appropriate, in recognition that all of this information would not always be required for every report considered at an Executive Committee meeting.

Following the presentation of the report Members thanked the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for their hard work. In response to questions from the Committee Councillor Wheeler confirmed that the recommendations had been approved by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group in October 2019 and that a majority of Members had approved the recommendations at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The evidence basis for the group's proposals was also discussed and Councillor Wheeler explained that the group had considered the content of reports that had been debated by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at meetings in July and September 2019 as well as information about the Council's budget. The recommendations were designed to support the Executive Committee and would enable the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to act as a constructive critical friend.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **business cases for new investment and acquisition opportunities for the Council should all be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group before a decision is taken by the Executive Committee; and**
  - 2) **the financial implications detailed in reports to the Executive Committee should address the following points as a minimum where appropriate:**
    - a) **the financial costs of the proposed action;**
    - b) **the source of funding for the proposed action;**
    - c) **potential alternative options and the financial costs of each alternative option; and**
    - d) **the financial costs to the Council where the proposed action deviates from previous Council policy.**
- 62. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION (COMMUNITY HUB AND RAILWAY QUARTER)**

The Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development presented a report which outlined the outcomes of a master planning exercise for the regeneration of Redditch town centre and the vision for the town moving forward. During the presentation of the report the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

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- The consultants BDP had reviewed options available for the use of a number of sites, including the railway quarter, Church Road and the former covered market area.
- Potential development across the sites had an estimated value of between £200 and 250 million, which could involve development of both residential and commercial properties.
- The community hub had been conceived as a one-stop-shop in terms of public service provision to local residents. The hub could provide integrated services, enable business efficiencies within the public sector and ensure good use of public land.
- Dragongate had held conversations with a number of partner organisations about the potential to introduce a community hub. Initial feedback received from partner agencies had been very positive.
- Partner agencies had overwhelmingly been in favour of building a new property to house the community hub, rather than using an existing building. This would ensure that the varying needs of each organisation could be met through bespoke building design work.
- The next step would be for a tender process to be undertaken to procure an architect-led team to start design work for the community hub.
- Work was still required to clarify the space requirements of each organisation that would take part in the hub as well as operational requirements.
- Officers were focusing on the area encompassing the Redditch library, former covered market area and Redditch Town Hall as the potential location for a future community hub, though the exact site remained to be determined.
- Redditch had been announced as one of 100 towns that would be eligible for funding from the Town's Fund.
- Guidance for the Town's Fund had been published after the publication of the report in respect of the regeneration of Redditch town centre.
- Redditch could potentially receive up to £25 million from the Town's Fund. In order to secure funding from this source public consultation about potential use of the funding would be required and the Council would need to develop a Town Investment Plan and a business case. The government would make a decision about the level of funding that would be awarded to Redditch based on these submissions.

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

- The need for Redditch town centre to be regenerated.
- The hard work of officers to date in respect of the regeneration of Redditch town centre.

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- The length of time that had elapsed since the original plans to regenerate the town centre had been considered by Members in March 2018.
- The state of the area debates, how these had been advertised, the number of people who had attended and whether there was an intention for these to occur in every ward in the Borough. It was suggested that further information about the state of the area debates should be provided for Members' consideration after the meeting.
- The potential future use of the Redditch Town Hall site for housing, retail and as the site for a hotel and the fact that no decisions had yet been taken in respect of this matter.
- The extent to which the Council was likely to secure funding from the Town's Fund for the regeneration of Redditch town centre. Members were advised that the guidance did not specify that there would be a competitive process. However, the Council would need to demonstrate that Redditch should receive funding and it was important therefore to include the right information in the Town Investment Plan. The work that had already been undertaken in respect of the regeneration of Redditch town centre would place the Council at an advantage in this respect.
- The timeline for securing financial support from the Town's Fund. The Committee was informed that the Town Investment Plan would need to be submitted for the consideration of the government by summer 2020 and a decision would then be taken by the government in respect of funding in 2020/21.
- In the meantime, further work was required in respect of technical requirements.
- The £173,000 funding that the Council had already received for the regeneration of Redditch town centre.
- The potential to secure financial support from other organisations, in addition to funding from the Town's Fund, to support the regeneration of Redditch town centre. Officers explained that the Council would not be excluded from applying for funding from other sources alongside the financial support from the Town's Fund and this could include funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP).
- The negative perceptions some people had of Redditch and the positive impact that the regeneration of the town centre would have on civic pride.
- The combination of residential and commercial opportunities within the plans.

During consideration of this item the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Joe Baker, was invited to speak on behalf of the Committee about recommendations that had been

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made by Members following pre-scrutiny of the report at a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019. During this meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had noted their support for plans to regenerate Redditch town centre. Councillor Baker explained that the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to act as a critical friend and as such concerns had been raised by the Committee about the need to learn lessons from past redevelopment exercises. In particular, reference had been made to the redevelopment of Church Hill district centre some years previously and the limited engagement that had been undertaken with ward Councillors. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had concluded that, due to the relevance of the town centre to all Councillors they should all be consulted as part of work on the redevelopment of Redditch town centre and this had featured in the Committee's recommendations on the subject to the Executive Committee. These points were noted.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Council note the BDP Town Centre Sites report and endorses the concept of a comprehensive regeneration scheme for the station quarter, Church Road sites, the Library site and the outdoor market site;**
- 2) the Council agrees the content of the Dragongate Community Hub Business Case and BDP's Redditch Town Centre Development Sites Final Report be used as a basis for submitting a proposal to the Town's Fund;**
- 3) the Council agrees that the content of the Dragongate Community Hub business case and BDP's Redditch Town Centre Development Sites Final Report be used as a basis for submitting a bid to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) Enabling Fund;**

## **and RESOLVED that**

- 4) the findings of the state of the area debate are noted and officers are instructed to produce a future consultation plan related to the town centre regeneration programme;**
- 5) the content of the Dragongate Community Hub business case be noted and the Executive Committee endorse the concept of a community hub within the public sector and culture quarter;**



- 6) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships to commission an architect-led professional team to draw up feasible and deliverable design proposals supported by viability appraisals for a community hub, to include consideration of partners' requirements; and
- 7) subject to the agreement of recommendation 1 above, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships to work with key partners on the wider initiatives.

**63. SECTION 24 - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT**

The Financial Services Manager presented an update in respect of the progress that had been achieved by the Council in addressing the points that had been raised by the external auditors in the Section 24 Notice. The Committee was informed that Officers had been working hard in the second quarter of the financial year and the implications of this work for the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) would be reported for Members' consideration in the Financial Monitoring report in December 2019.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Officers confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 that required consideration.

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be noted.**

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

The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 in respect of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and the regeneration of Redditch town centre were considered under the relevant item on the agenda.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch) confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation in respect of the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy, agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019, had not been made available for consideration at this meeting. This was because the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed that the recommendation should be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in January 2020 alongside the report that was due to be considered on this subject at that time.

**66. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

The following verbal updates were provided in respect of the Executive Advisory Panels:

- a) Climate Change Cross Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Brandon Clayton

Councillor Clayton confirmed that the first meeting of this group was due to take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

- b) Constitutional Review Working Party – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer confirmed that the following meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) was due to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Juliet Brunner

Members were advised that there had been no meetings of the Board since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee. The next meeting of the Board was scheduled to take place on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

- d) Member Support Steering Group - Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the following meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

- e) Planning Advisory Panel - Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer explained that there were no meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel scheduled to take place.

**67. UNIT 17, BROAD GROUND ROAD, REDDITCH AND THE REDDITCH BUSINESS CENTRES**

The Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development presented a report which summarised the findings of a review of the three business centres that were operated by the Council; Greenlands Business Centre, Hemming Road Business Centre and Rubicon Business Centre. During the presentation of the report the following points were highlighted for the consideration of the Committee:

- Management of all three of the business centres matched the Council's strategic purposes.
- GJS Dillon had undertaken a review in 2018 of industrial spaces in Worcestershire, which had been considered on a district by district basis. The findings in that report had helped to inform the review of the business centres.
- Two of the centres, at Hemming Road and the Greenlands Business Centre, generated a financial surplus for the Council whilst Rubicon Business Centre operated at a financial loss.
- Expenditure on the business centres was higher in cases where occupancy rates were lower as the authority then had to take on greater responsibility for business rates commitments.
- Analysis of Rubicon Business Centre had revealed that in order for the Council to break even when managing the centre with a 70 per cent occupancy rate, rents for businesses would need to be increased by a minimum of 66 per cent.
- There was the possibility that existing businesses would be willing to agree a 66 per cent increase in their rent and Members could explore this option further. However, there was also the possibility that this would make the Rubicon Business Centre uncompetitive.
- The Council could take no further action, but this was not considered to be a viable option because of the significant financial losses associated with operating the Rubicon Business Centre.
- Another alternative option could include exiting the Rubicon Business Centre lease, subject to clarifying the legal implications for the Council.

Once the report had been presented Members noted that the original intention of the business centres had been to provide start-up businesses with affordable premises until they became successful. There was a lower level of start-up companies in Redditch compared to other parts of Worcestershire and many small businesses were located in the Borough.

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During consideration of this item an amendment was proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance. The amendment proposed the following:

“Consideration be given to options for improving the viability of the Rubicon Centre, including increasing the rent levels charged for both office and industrial / workshop space.”

In proposing the amendment Councillor Hartnett explained that he was concerned it would be premature to consider exiting Rubicon Business Centre at this stage. He suggested that consultation was needed with affected tenants and all options needed to be considered before the Council vacated the property. There was the possibility that tenants would appreciate the financial difficulties facing the Council and would be willing to increase their rents by a significant amount in order to continue to work with the authority.

In seconding the proposal Councillor Chance commented that all options needed to be explored to ensure that the business centres remained viable. Furthermore, Councillor Chance raised concerns that Members were being asked to make a decision in respect of this subject before consultation had taken place with the tenants who would be affected.

Members discussed the amendment and in so doing noted the significant financial losses to the Council associated with current arrangements for the operation of Rubicon Business Centre. The industry average, in order to break even when managing a business centre, involved a 65 per cent occupancy level. However, it was noted that if the Council increased rents by 66 per cent this occupancy level would be difficult to achieve. The increase in rent would also mean that rents would be well above market value which would potentially impact on the competitiveness of the centre in terms of attracting new businesses. Existing businesses might also struggle with the increase in rent costs. In addition to these points, Members noted that rather than start-up companies, 41 per cent of businesses in the Rubicon Business Centre had rented space for 10 years or more.

On being put to a vote the amendment was lost.

Members noted that the Council would seek to provide support to existing businesses to enable them to secure suitable alternative premises for their business if needed.

A further amendment was subsequently proposed by Councillor Mike Rouse. This amendment was seconded by Councillor David Thain. The amendment proposed that businesses in the Rubicon

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Business Centre should be provided with no less than three months' notice to quit. This amendment was agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) that the review of the business centres is noted including the financial performance of the centres (two make a surplus and one makes a loss); and**
- 2) to exit the Rubicon Centre and that no business be given less than three months' notice to quit.**

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial affairs of any particular body (including the authority holding that information)).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.05 pm

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**Executive**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**COUNCIL PLAN**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr David Thain
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole, Head of Business Transformation
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To agree the structure and content of the Council Plan, including actions relating to the Council's strategic purposes

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **Executive is asked to RECOMMEND to the Council**

**that the Council Plan attached at Appendix 1 be approved.**

**3. KEY ISSUES****Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Finances are already aligned with the current strategic purposes, but following approval of this plan, will reflect the amended strategic purposes and the priorities for 2020-2024, allowing the Council to be more responsive to our customers' needs.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.3 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.5 The Council Plan and the strategic purposes contained within it will help to set the direction for the Council and how it works with its partners. Service areas will be working towards these purposes and the community and organisational priorities, supported by operational purposes and measures, where appropriate, to ensure that everything we do relates to the needs of our customers.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 The strategic purposes set out in the Council Plan are all designed to be from our customers perspective, in order for their needs to be the driver for all that we do. The corporate principles also highlight the importance of understanding and listening to our customers, whilst providing excellent customer care at all times. When approved, the Council Plan will be published on the Council's website and the ORB.
- 3.8 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report; however, the customer focus referred to above is designed to understand the individual needs of our customers and as such empower officers to meet those needs, which would include specific issues relating to equality and diversity.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 By publishing a Council Plan the strategic direction of the Council will be clear to employees and Members and as such will support the management of risks identified around the delivery of the strategic purposes, robust decision making and the accuracy/effectiveness of performance data.

**5. APPENDICES**

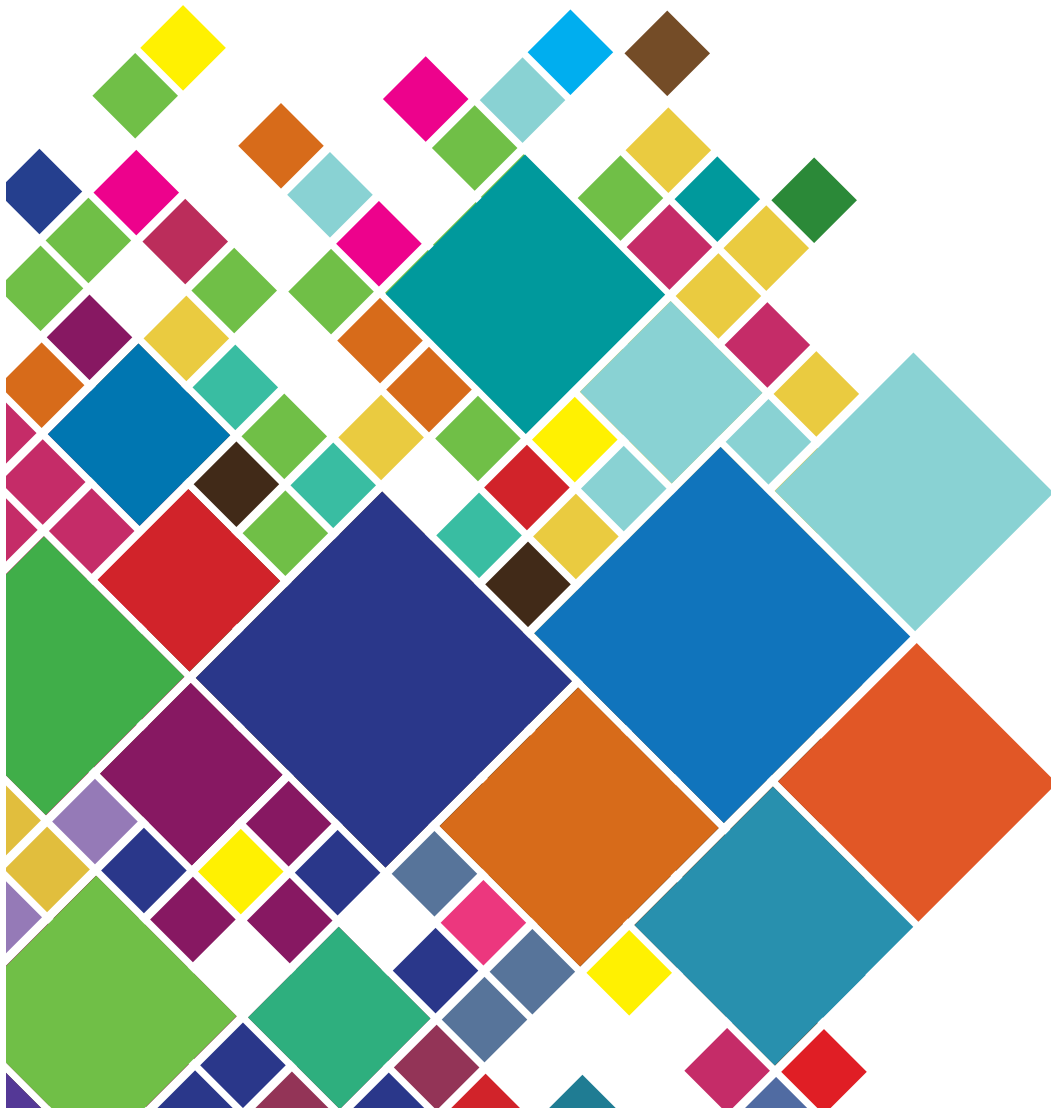
Appendix 1 - Council Plan

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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2020 - 2024

# Redditch Borough Council Plan



**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

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a  
difference*

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)



This Council Plan sets out Redditch Borough Council’s priorities and actions for the next four years, guided by our five strategic purposes. It will help us to focus on the issues that are most important for the Borough and our communities.

Like many Councils, we have had financial challenges to face and going forward we will tackle these challenges head on. We are not afraid to make the difficult decisions required to provide residents with the services they need whilst focusing on robust financial planning for the future.

There is also a ‘green thread’ throughout this Council Plan; we are committed to addressing our environmental and climate impact and making sustainability central to how we work as a Council.

Our vision for Redditch Borough Council is to enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of efficiently run and high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help, support and opportunities. We take great pride in our Borough and the communities that make it what it is. We are determined to deliver on the vision, providing services that have a positive impact for our residents and long-term benefits for the Borough.

**Cllr Matt Dormer,  
Leader of Redditch Borough Council**



Our vision is to enrich the lives and aspirations of our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of efficiently run and high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help, support and opportunities.

## Strategic Purposes

Run & grow a successful business

Finding somewhere to live

Aspiration, work & financial independence

Living independent, active & healthy lives

Communities which are safe, well maintained & green

A **green thread** runs throughout our purposes & priorities

## Community Priorities

### Economic Development & Regeneration

- Supporting businesses to start and grow within the Borough
- Regenerating our Town and District Centres

### Housing Growth

- Supporting the delivery of appropriate housing for the Borough

### Skills

- Supporting young people to gain the skills they need
- Working with businesses to develop skills for the future

### Improved Health & Wellbeing

- Working with partners, including Rubicon Leisure, to increase activity levels in the Borough

### Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour

- Working with partners to reduce crime and target the causes of anti-social behaviour across the Borough

## Organisational Priorities

### Financial Stability

- Produce & deliver sustainable financial plans
- Improved commerciality; maximising every opportunity to generate income, including review of fees & charges
- Undertake effective contract management
- Manage our assets to get the best outcomes for our residents
- Make financially viable strategic acquisitions & investments

### Sustainability

- Review alternative delivery models
- Exploit digital technologies, enabling more automation of services
- Review services to understand how we can adapt to climate change

### High Quality Services

- Enable greater digital access to our services; allowing customers to do things online when they want to, 24/7
- Conduct regular engagement with our communities
- Ensure that all in need get the appropriate help and support



# How will we deliver this plan?

## Our Purposes & Priorities

Redditch Borough Council is committed to providing residents with effective and efficient services that understand and meet their needs. Through considering what really matters to our residents we have developed six strategic purposes, underpinned by five community priorities for the next four years. Working to these purposes will help us to understand the needs of the Borough and how, together with our partners, we can improve the lives of our residents and the prospects for Redditch Borough as a whole.

## Our community priorities:

- Economic development & regeneration
- Skills
- Housing growth
- Improved health & wellbeing
- Community safety & anti-social behaviour

## Our Principles



People are the reason our organisation exists and so are at the centre of everything we do. \*People\* refers to our residents, staff, council members and partners, all of whom have importance in shaping the direction and values of our organisation.

To deliver this plan effectively we need to:

- Utilise and develop the skills of our staff
- Maintain and develop partnership working
- Understand and respond to our performance with a focus on continuous improvement

To ensure we focus on the right things for the organisation, we also have **3 organisational priorities**:

- Financial stability
- Sustainability
- High quality services

## Our Finances

The actions in this plan will inform the annual budget setting agreed by full council, ensuring that available resources (both financial and staffing) are used to deliver the council's strategic purposes and priorities. Progress reports on finance and performance will be provided quarterly to Executive.

A financial summary can be found at the end of this Council Plan.

## Our Challenges

- The financial challenge – we need to make £1.2m of savings in the next year –this will mean making some difficult decisions
- Potential further reduction in government funding
- Responding to national issues, such as the implications of Universal Credit or Brexit
- Continuing to safeguard those who are most vulnerable, and manage the increasing costs
- Managing risks
- The affordability of the local housing market
- Supporting businesses to develop and grow in the Borough
- Understanding the different community needs across the Borough
- The need for enhanced digital and physical connectivity

# Run & grow a successful business



## Community Priority: Economic Development & Regeneration

### Supporting businesses to start and grow within the Borough

**We will:**

- Consult businesses to understand current needs and growth plans, working with partners to support business growth

**How we will measure it:**

- Number of businesses engaged through consultation
- Number of existing businesses supported to grow and develop

### Regenerating our Town Centre

**We will:**

- Continue with the regeneration of the Town Centre, including the train station

**How we will measure it:**

- Progression of key town centre development sites

We will	How we will measure progress?
Develop an economic development strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses within the Borough</li> <li>• Number of new business start-ups</li> <li>• Total number of enquiries from inward investors / expanding SMEs</li> <li>• <b>Number of businesses supported to understand &amp; improve upon their environmental impact</b></li> </ul>
Undertake a comprehensive review of all Council owned assets and assess all opportunities for investment privately in land and premises within the Borough with a particular focus on business centre and industrial estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % occupancy at business centres</li> <li>• Number of vacancies on existing employment sites and length of vacancy/turn around (by location/size)</li> </ul>
Support development at the Redditch Eastern Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map the progress of development</li> <li>• Number of businesses located on site (2021/22 onwards)</li> <li>• Number of jobs created (snapshot)</li> </ul>
Strengthen the vibrancy & viability of our town & district centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progression of district centres development sites</li> <li>• Increased engagement with arts &amp; cultural opportunities in our town &amp; district centres, including creative digital activities</li> </ul>



## Community Priority: Housing Growth

- Supporting the delivery of appropriate housing in the Borough

### We will:

- Deliver a Housing Strategy for the Borough to address the housing needs now and in the future
- Use the Local Plan to drive development
- Use the Council’s Housing Growth Programme to increase affordable housing

### How we will measure it:

- Affordability ratio of cost of houses in the Borough compared to income
- Number of house commitments & completions
- Progression of strategic housing sites
- Number of affordable homes (commitments & completions)
- Number of new Council homes (commitments & completions)

We will	How we will measure progress?
Deliver the three year Housing Strategic Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly exception reporting on the actions/ measures in the improvement plan</li> </ul>
Support people to help prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of households accepted under the prevention duty</li> <li>• Number of households prevented from homeless through accessing the private rented sector</li> <li>• Number of households accepted under the relief duty</li> <li>• Number of homeless households accepted under the full housing duty</li> <li>• Number of households living in temporary accommodation</li> </ul>
Work with tenants across sectors to understand their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people assisted by the Private Sector Housing Team</li> <li>• Number of cases assisted through formal enforcement action</li> <li>• Number of tenant involvement activities, including engagement around the tenant’s handbook &amp; the recharge policy</li> </ul>
Work with developers to deliver more homes utilising renewable technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved energy efficiency</li> </ul>



# Aspiration, work & financial independence



## Community Priority: Skills

- Supporting young people to gain the skills they need

### We will:

- Support schools & HOW College to link students to local employers

### How we will measure it:

- Number of people who live & work in the Borough
- Wages for those who live & work in the Borough

- Working with businesses to develop skills for the future

### We will:

- Undertake a skills audit with partners & work together with them to address any gaps
- Develop a Redditch Business Leaders Group to focus on skills development

### How we will measure it:

- Number of businesses engaged through the skills audit

We will	How we will measure progress?
<p>Work with businesses to utilise the apprenticeship levy &amp; increase the number of apprenticeships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of apprenticeships started in the Borough</li> <li>• Number of apprenticeships completed in the Borough</li> <li>• Number of apprentices undertaking courses in the Borough</li> </ul>
<p>Support residents to manage their finances, including working with schools on money management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people supported by Financial Independence Team</li> <li>• Feedback on support from Financial Independence Team</li> <li>• Feedback from students in relation to money management</li> <li>• Reduction in Essential Living Fund payments</li> <li>• <b>Number of people in fuel poverty supported by the Energy Advice Service</b></li> <li>• <b>Number of Redditch Energy Efficiency grants accessed</b></li> </ul>
<p>Ensure people get the benefits they need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of benefits claims processed &amp; accuracy</li> <li>• Number of people helped to access the right benefits by the Financial Independence Team</li> <li>• Reduction in the emergency Essential Living Fund payments</li> <li>• Reduction in the emergency Discretionary Housing payments</li> </ul>

■ = Green thread

# Living independent, active & healthy lives



## Community Priority: Improved health & wellbeing

- Working with partners, including Rubicon Leisure, to increase activity levels in the Borough

### We will:

- Support targeted activities for healthy lifestyles

### How we will measure it:

- Number of people who access targeted activities
- % of physically active adults
- Number of children & young people accessing sports development sessions

We will	How we will measure progress?
Work with partners to enable targeted activities & initiatives to support mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of social prescriptions for mental wellbeing support</li> <li>• Number of staff engaging with 'Time to Talk' events</li> <li>• Depression: recorded prevalence</li> </ul>
Support improved access to services that reduce social isolation (including Lifeline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Lifeline users</li> <li>• Number of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) approved</li> <li>• Number of Dementia Dwelling Grants approved</li> <li>• <b>Number of people using Dial A Ride</b></li> </ul>
Work with partners to address smoking & substance misuse levels in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of smokers in the Borough</li> <li>• Number of alcohol related hospital admissions</li> </ul>
Develop a parks & open spaces strategy (Including increased physical activity & cycling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of activities using parks as a venue</li> <li>• Feedback from events held in parks &amp; open spaces</li> </ul>



# Communities which are safe, well maintained & green



## Community Priority: Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour

- Working with partners to reduce crime and target the causes of anti-social behaviour across the Borough

### We will:

- Ensure the Community Safety Partnership action plan is delivered
- Support targeted initiatives to reduce anti-social behaviour

### How we will measure it:

- Crime rate per 1000 population
- Number of anti-social behaviour reports

We will	How we will measure progress?
<p>Work with partners to address our communities' crime and disorder concerns, ASB issues and the fear of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people assisted by the Community Safety Team</li> <li>• Number of young people engaging in community safety sessions</li> <li>• Monitor use of ASB tools and powers</li> <li>• Monitor use of CCTV in the detection and prevention of crime</li> </ul>
<p>Understand the needs of our local areas in order to keep them clean &amp; tidy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of demand for environmental services in each area</li> <li>• Level of community participation in environmental activities (e.g. adopt an area; litter picks)</li> </ul>
<p>Explore the options to <b>reduce residual waste, increase recycling</b> &amp; maximise the efficiency of waste collection services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total residual waste</li> <li>• <b>Total amount recycled</b></li> <li>• Number of bulky waste collections</li> </ul>

## Financial Information

	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000	2022-23 £000
Departmental Base Budget	9,116	9,173	9,387	9,388
Incremental progression/Inflation on Utilities	132	206	281	483
Unavoidable Pressures	373	287	227	255
Revenue Bids/Revenue Impact of Capital Bids	193	173	165	165
Savings and Additional Income	- 1,127	- 841	- 846	- 816
Reserve Release	- 262	0	0	0
Efficiency Savings Rolled Forwards	1,117	1,271	1,282	1,282
<b>Net Revenue Budget Requirement</b>	<b>9,543</b>	<b>10,269</b>	<b>10,496</b>	<b>10,757</b>
<b>FINANCING</b>				
Contribution to Worcestershire County Business Rate Pool	- 2,855	- 2,899	- 2,941	- 2,986
Council Tax	- 6,241	- 6,524	- 6,857	- 7,178
New Homes Bonus	- 754	- 430	- 231	- 209
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	- 14	0	0	0
Parish Precept	8	8	8	8
Parish Precept Income	- 8	- 8	- 8	- 8
Bad Debt Provision	50	50	50	50
Investment Income	- 661	- 952	- 1,349	- 1,673
MRP (Principal)	1,004	1,159	1,249	1,610
Interest Payable	158	584	1,002	1,237
Recharge to Capital Programme	- 38	- 38	- 38	- 38
Discount on Advanced Pension Payment	- 193	- 50	- 50	- 50
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>- 9,543</b>	<b>- 9,099</b>	<b>- 9,164</b>	<b>- 9,237</b>
<b>Current gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>1,521</b>

## Accessibility statement

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

**Email: [equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)  
or phone: 01527 548284**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

16 December 2019

**ONE STOP SHOP REVIEW**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr David Thain
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	Batchley & Brockhill, Winyates, Greenlands,
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Not at this stage
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report contains a proposal to close One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow in April 2020, This is due to continued falling visitor numbers and improvements made to enable the customer to use alternative opportunities to pay for services. In addition there is a high cost of maintaining the service and the Council currently has financial pressures it has to mitigate.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:**

**Closure of the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow from April 2020 be approved and officers work with the public to enable a smooth transition in relation to payments and other contact requirements.**

**3. KEY ISSUES****3.1 Financial Implications**

The preferred option to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow will deliver £65k pa savings. in addition a potential rental income of approximately £5k in the first year and £7-£7.5k in subsequent years.

**3.2 Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

16 December 2019

**3.3 Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3.1 The Council has a walk in Customer Service Centre at the Town Hall, and 3 satellite offices at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow, formerly referred to as One Stop Shops.
- 3.3.2 Several years ago, due to falling customer demand the opening times of the 3 satellite offices reduced to either 9am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-5pm Monday to Friday.
- 3.3.3 For the size of the population and size of the borough, there are a high number of Customer Service Centres compared with other councils.
- 3.3.4 The Customer Service Centres now mainly provide a cashiering service for residents. A recent survey has shown that 82% of visits are to pay their council bills.
- 3.3.5 Housing (50%) and Council Tax (40%) account for the highest service payments from customers.
- 3.3.6 In a significant recent development, the council has partnered with Allpay – an organisation where customers can pay their rent and council tax at any Paypoint or Post Office outlet.
- 3.3.7 There are Paypoint and/or Post Office locations in Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow Shopping Centres, as well as many others around Redditch Borough.
- 3.3.8 Paypoint and Post Office locations are more readily available and accessible, including weekends and evenings compared to 3.5 hours per day, Monday to Friday at One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow.
- 3.3.9 Officers across a range of services have been involved in the consideration/review and housing services have options to accommodate customer interviews at the localities or the Town Hall where appropriate (Appendix 3).
- 3.3.10 Every customer who presents at the One Stop Shop will have the opportunity to discuss alternative payment and contact options. Any problems that occur during this period can be resolved before closure.

**3.4 Staffing Implications**

Closure of the 3 One Stop Shops will see a reduction in staffing requirements of 2 FTE. This will be met from a combination of deleting vacant posts and

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reviewing all fixed term contract posts. Any associated costs will be met from other savings within the Customer Access & Financial Support service.

**3.5 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

Customers will benefit from an improved access to payment services within their localities, whilst still providing alternate methods to meet customer needs.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on this proposal. The changes recommended will make the main services (to pay bills) more accessible to more of the community in their localities. Other methods of interaction with the council are still available to those who might be more vulnerable or have additional needs subject to service need.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There may be a perception that closure of the One Stop Shops will be seen as a reduction in service however the changes recommended will make the main services (to pay bills) more accessible to more of the community in their localities.

There is also a risk of a short term reduction in income for rent and council tax however this will be mitigated by communication with customers on a face to face basis, as well as wider communications to the residents of Redditch.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - One Stop Shop Business Case  
Appendix 2 – OSS Survey Summary  
Appendix 3 – Housing Opinion  
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment  
Appendix 5 – Communications Plan  
Appendix 6 – Staffing – confidential appendix

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

n/a

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**Five Case Model - Business Case**

**Full Business Case**

**Customer Services**

**Review of One Stop Shop provision at Batchley, Winyates  
and Woodrow**

Author:	Paul Stephenson
Date:	11/12/2019
Release Version:	V6

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**Appendix 1**      OSS Business Case

**Appendix 2**      Survey Results

**Appendix 3**      Housing Opinion

**Appendix 4**      Equality Impact Assessment

**Appendix 5**      Communications & Engagement Plan

## **1. Executive Summary**

Following a review of the One Stop Shops, it is recommended to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow

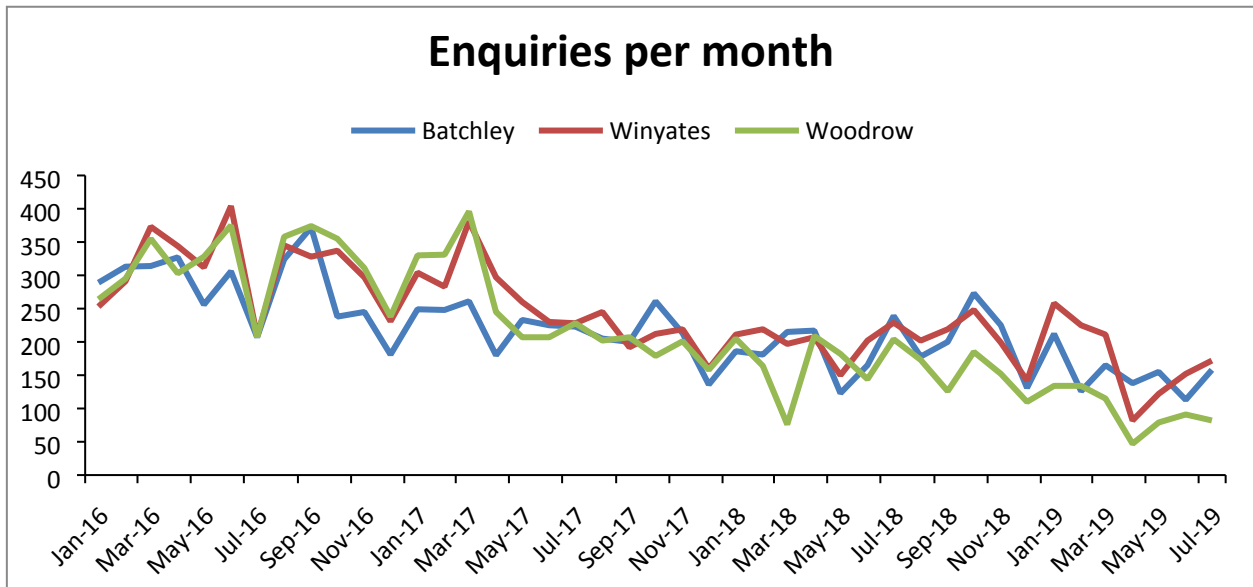
## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Council has a walk in Customer Service Centre at the Town Hall, and 3 satellite offices at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow, formerly referred to as One Stop Shops.
- 2.2. Several years ago, due to falling customer demand, the opening times of the 3 satellite offices reduced to either 9am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-5pm every day.
- 2.3. For the size of the population and size of the borough, there is a high number of Customer Service Centres compared with other councils.
- 2.4. The Customer Service Centres now mainly provide a cashiering service for residents. A recent survey has shown that 82% of visits are to pay their council bills.
- 2.5. Housing (50%) and Council Tax (40%) account for the highest service payments from customers.
- 2.6. In a significant recent development, the council has partnered with Allpay – an organisation where customers can pay their rent and council tax at any Paypoint or Post Office outlet.
- 2.7. There are Paypoint and/or Post Office locations in Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow Shopping Centres, as well as many others around Redditch Borough.
- 2.8. Officers across a range of services have been involved in the consideration/review and housing services have options to accommodate customer interviews at the localities or the Town Hall where appropriate (Appendix 3).

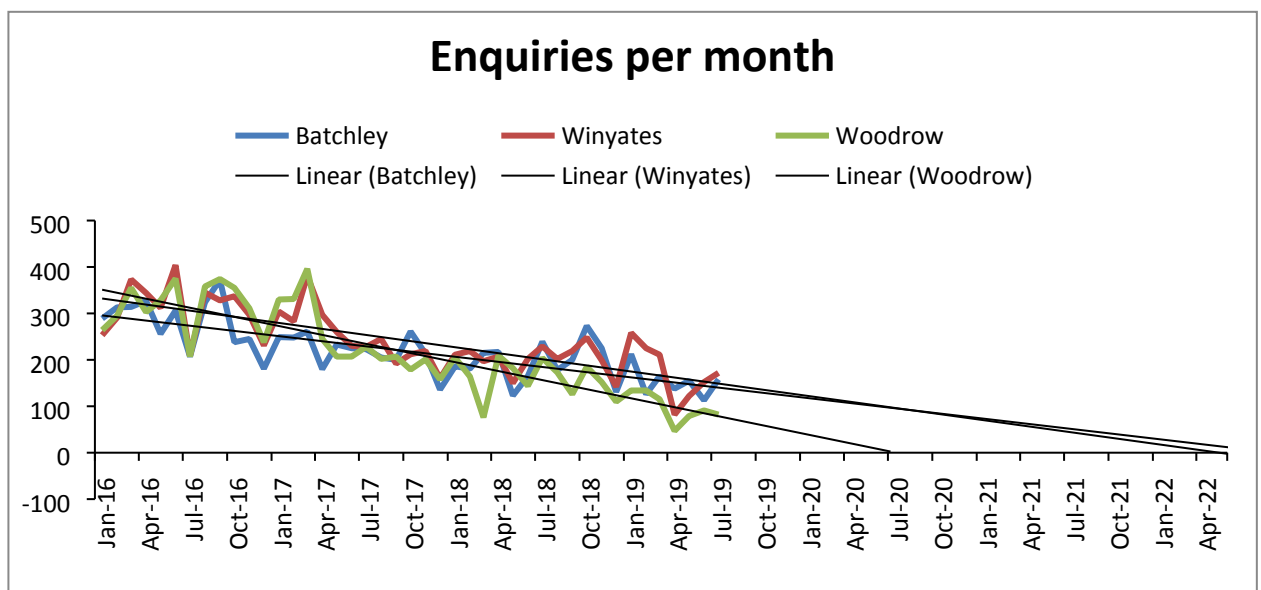
### 3. The Strategic Case

3.1. With significantly reduced demand, and a shift away from face-to-face contact at these centres, the need to provide a high number of walk-in, on-demand centres is now negligible.

3.2. There has been a significant fall in face-to-face enquiries at these centres, as shown on the below graph.

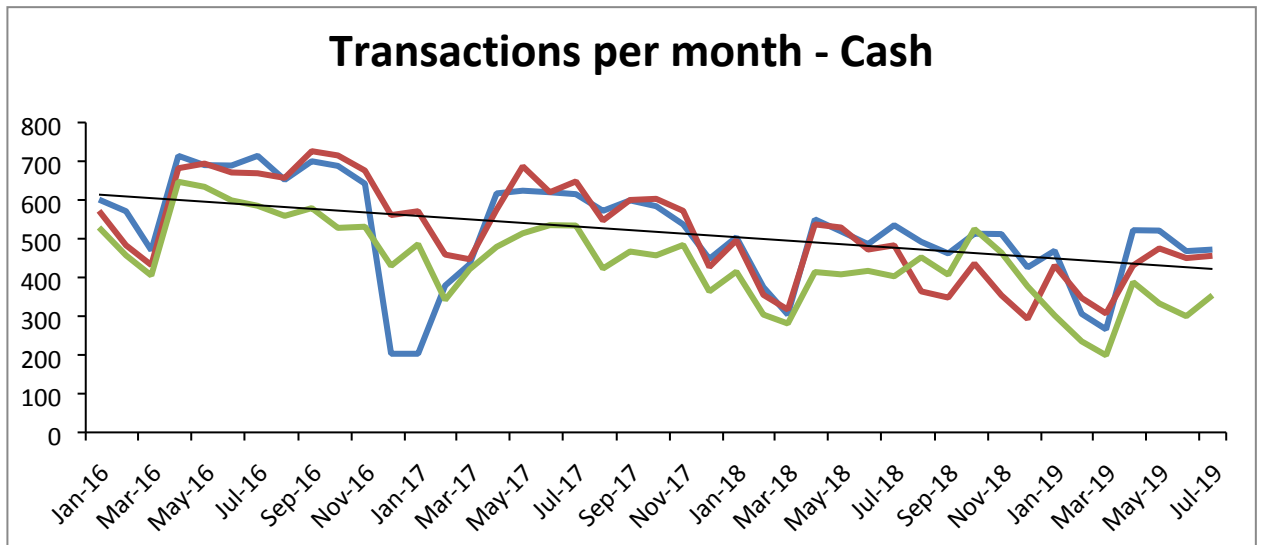


3.3. By applying a trend line to this data above, this shows that the number of enquiries at each centre will be fewer than 10 per month within the next 3 years.

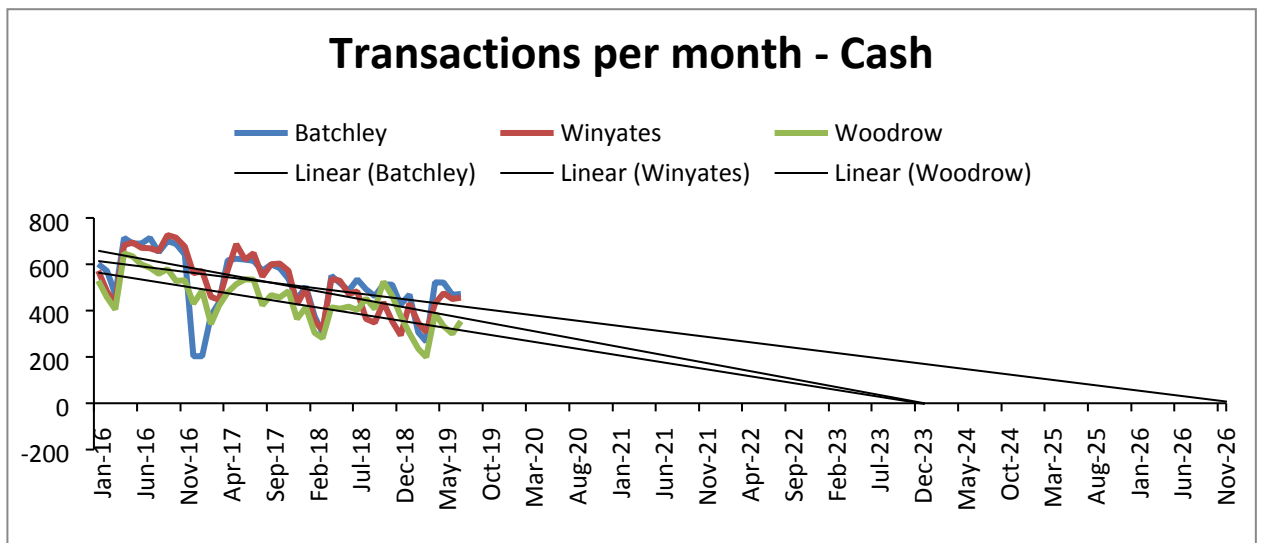


3.4. The UK banking industry report that cash transactions nationally have fallen from 60% of all transactions in 2008 down to 28% in 2018, with an estimated 9% of all transactions by 2028.

3.5. The below graph shows a slight fall in cash transactions at the outer offices, however this is not representative of national figures in 3.4. This data suggests that customers use the One Stop Shops as part of a weekly or monthly routine, which is supported by survey data found later in the survey at Appendix 2.



3.6. By applying a trend line to this data above, this shows that the number of cash transactions at each centre will be fewer than 10 per month within the next 4 years for Winyates and Woodrow, and 7 years for Batchley.



- 3.7. Customer Services support the strategic purpose of 'Help me to be Financially Independent' whilst also providing an enabling service for other areas in the council.
- 3.8. Financial independence has links to digital independence. Customers who solely use cash as a payment method may not be getting the best deals, and will have limited buying power.
- 3.9. By working with those customers, we would be able to signpost them to money management advice, currently provided by CAB, the Financial Inclusion Team at the council, or the locality offices, as well as being able to offer free online courses hosted by Redditch Borough Council in partnership with Worcestershire County Council which would go some way towards their digital and financial independence.
- 3.10. Customers attending the One Stop Shops in June and July 2019 were asked about their reasons for visit and the summary can be found at Appendix 2
- 3.11. The survey findings (Appendix 2) show that the majority of customers visit the One Stop Shops as part of a routine, that the majority pay for other bills by Post Office/Paypoint or direct debit, and that most customers visit the Town Centre at least once per month, and nearly all customers are fully aware of the other payment methods that the council offers, yet choose to pay in cash (60%) or debit card (37%)
- 3.12. When asked 'How do you pay for other (non-council) services:  
52% used Post Office/Paypoint  
35% used Direct Debit  
7% made online payments  
This data suggests that customers are able to pay by other means, yet choose to visit the One Stop Shops and pay by cash or card.
- 3.13. Housing locality have been consulted on the proposals and the response is from locality management is: "From a housing perspective the closure of the One Stop Shops will have some impact on tenants and the teams, I consider there to be 'other' options to eradicate the impact completely by better use of alternative space within the current buildings". The full comments can be found at Appendix 3.

## 4. The Economic Case

### 4.1. Options

<b>Option 1</b>	Do Nothing
<b>Option 2</b>	Reduce opening times further so that each office is open 1 day per week.
<b>Option 3</b>	Close Winyates OSS only
<b>Option 4</b>	Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow

4.2. These Options are considered the most practical options to support the service, and deliver the improved standards required to deliver our Strategic Purpose.

4.3. The key outcomes that have been identified are detailed below, and each one has a maximum score that reflects the importance of that criterion in delivering our Strategic Purpose:

- **Strategic Fit** – 20 - This quantifies how well the proposed option supports the Council Plan and our Strategic Purpose
- **Meets Business Needs** – 20 - Whether the proposed service change will meet both current and predicted business need
- **Meets Customer Needs** – 20 – Whether the proposed service change will meet both current and predicted customer need
- **Capacity to support Increased Income Generation** – 20 - This identifies capacity to help generate extra income for the council (e.g. rental)
- **Affordability** – 20 - This relates to the Council's financial pressures, and whether the proposed option is factored in to the financial planning of the Local Authority.



4.4. **Evaluation Criteria for Appraisal and Analysis for Options**

Evaluation Criteria		Strategic Fit	Meets Business Needs	Meets Customer Needs	Capacity to Support Increased Income Generation	Affordability	
	<b>Weighting for Scoring</b>	20	20	20	20	20	<b>100</b>
Do Nothing	<b>Option 1</b>	No	Part	Part	No	No	
		0	10	10	0	0	<b>20</b>
Reduce opening times further so that each office is open 1 day per week.	<b>Option 2</b>	No	No	No	No	Part	
		0	0	0	0	10	<b>10</b>
Close Winyates OSS only	<b>Option 3</b>	Part	Part	Part	Yes	Part	
		10	10	10	20	10	<b>60</b>
Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow	<b>Option 4</b>	Yes	Yes	Part	Yes	Yes	
		20	20	10	20	20	<b>90</b>

## 4.5. Recommendation:

<b>Option Four</b>	Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow
--------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

**5. The Commercial Case**

- 5.1. In the One Stop Shop survey, it was recognised that some customers would like more convenient locations to pay their rent or council tax, and it is clear that many customers do not want to change their method of payment, with either cash or card in person transactions the most popular. By partnering with Allpay, the council can still ensure that customers have their preferred methods of payment, as well as having a lot greater flexibility for the customer to pay at any location, which could in turn mean the council receives more income for its services.
- 5.2. Using the Winyates One Stop Shop premises and turning it into a commercial let, means an income to the council of approximately £4k in the first year, rising to £7-£7.5k in subsequent years, as well as relinquishing its Business Rates liability and heating and lighting expenditure as well as giving opportunity to local business.
- 5.3. Closure of the One Stop Shops would enable Housing in conjunction with Property Services to review over the next 6 months which may include:

**Batchley**

- Convert the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the building back into 2 x 2 or 3 bedroom housing stock and used as dispersed units or into the general stock.
- Convert ground floor into shop space.
- Review current arrangements with county staff who currently occupy several spaces within Batchley Office.

**Woodrow**

- Review locality arrangements for staff at Woodrow Office.

**Winyates One Stop Shop**

- Offer property as a commercial let at reduced rent for several months on the basis the tenant completes minor renovations needed
- or
- RBC renovate the premises and offer as a commercial let when complete.

**6. The Financial Case**

6.1. The preferred option to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow can realise £65k pa. The detail of the savings are in the confidential papers.

6.2. By returning Winyates One Stop Shop to a rental, this would yield an income of approximately £5k in the first year, and £7k-£7.5k in subsequent years.

**7. The Management Case**

7.1. It is suggested that closure of the One Stop Shops takes place on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This will allow the existing staff to work with every customer and discuss their alternative options around payment methods and customer contact.

7.2. Allpay for housing is now in place. Any tenant who wishes to pay through Post Office or Paypoint can request a Rent Payment Card (swipe card) on the council website (or by asking a member of staff) and the card will be issued 1<sup>st</sup> class to their home address.

7.3. Allpay for Council Tax will be implemented in January 2020, in readiness for the Annual Billing in March 2020. Customers will be able to take their bill to any Post Office or Paypoint and make a payment using the barcode contained on the bill. As of 20/11/19, the project is on schedule to complete within the timeframe.

7.7 Customer Services continue to work with all council services to improve payment methods, including working with Housing and Council Tax to promote take up of Direct Debit, as well as working with other services in conjunction with communications team to improve the branding and consistency of payment methods available to customers.

7.8 A communications and engagement plan has been devised and is contained in Appendix 5.

Appendix 2 - OSS Survey 2019

**1) What have you used OSS for today?**

- 82% make a payment
- 16% Speak to CSO
- 5% Use phone

**2) Why OSS and not Town Hall?**

- 87% convenient
- 5% parking

**3) How do you pay for Council Services?**

- 60% Cash
- 37% Debit/Credit Card

**4) What alternative methods of payment would you use to pay for council services?**

- 50% None / do not wish to change
- 20% Direct Debit
- 25% Debit Card

**5) How do you pay for other (non-council) services e.g. water/gas/electric?**

- 52% Post Office/Paypoint
- 35% Direct Debit
- 7% online payment

**6) Statement agreement scale**

- 95% of customers are aware that the council offers alternative methods of payment
- 74% go to the centre as part of a weekly/monthly routine
- 27% would like to pay at more convenient times.

**7) How often do you go to the town centre?**

- 77% visit up ranging from daily up to one per month
- 23% visit from between every few months to never

**8) Reasons for visiting town centre?**

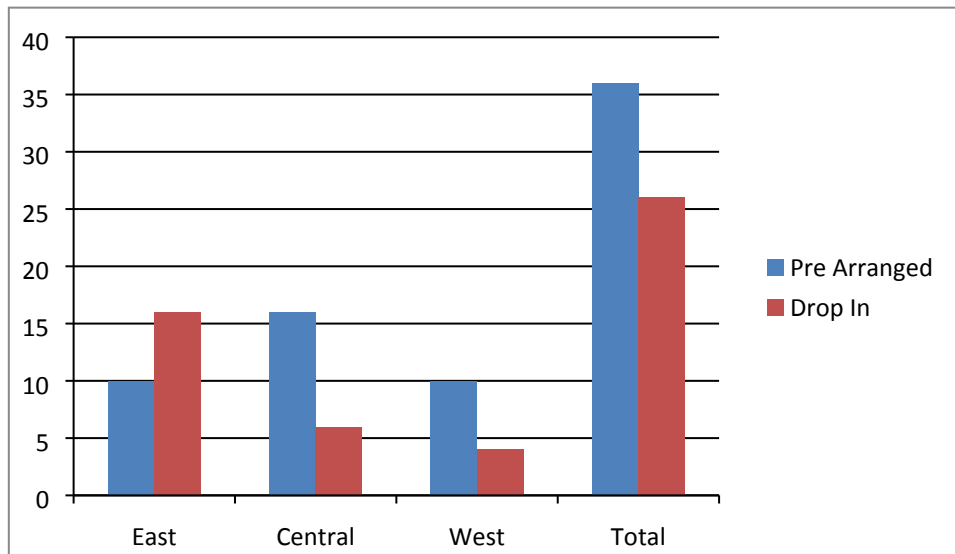
- 88% go to shop, go to the bank, meet friends or for entertainment purposes.

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One Stop Shops – Locality use of Interview Space

Below data from visits during December 2018

	Arranged	Drop In	Total
East - Winyates	10	16	26
Central – Woodrow	16	6	22
West – Batchley	10	4	14
Total	36	26	62



It is considered essential that Housing teams have access to a private interview space to meet with tenants.

Currently Officers use the 3 One Stop Shops for this purpose, throughout the day and not just during opening times. Whilst there are some drop-ins, tenants are usually requested to make a pre planned appointment.

As it is proposed that the One Stop Shops are no longer open to the public, the impact will be minimal to the teams, however, the key things to consider are as follows:

- Winyates is a separate building from the OSS and is only being used when the office is open. Housing staff had an interview space created within the building however during the past months it has been used as access in and out of the building due to health and safety (staff safety and security).
  - An interview space in a different part of the building could be identified eg: first floor, however, this will require a risk assessment to ensure staff safety with the appropriate alarm systems put in place.
- Batchley’s interview space is on the ground floor, however this is not ideal in terms of location as housing staff are on the top floor. The office is used currently when its closed which can be a vulnerability in terms staff safety, however, alarm systems are in place to mitigate any risks.

- Consideration could be given to turning an alternative part of the building eg: first floor into an interview space. Again this requires a risk assessment for staff safety with appropriate alarms and systems put in place.
- Woodrow's interview space is on the ground floor, it is currently used during office closures and to support staff safety, alarm systems are in place to reduce any risks.
  - Consideration could be given to either continue to use this space or an alternative space in the basement. This would need to be risk assessed for staff safety and the appropriate alarm systems put in place.

From a housing perspective the closure of the One Stop Shops will have some limited impacts on tenants and the teams delivering services. It is considered these impacts to tenants can be removed by creating alternative interview space (wherever possible).

Consideration could also be given to allocating interview space within the town hall as many of our tenants visit this building frequently and for some tenants it is the closest building for them to attend. Officers can use 'hot desks' within housing options to ensure ground floor access/ interviews.

Since 2013 the majority of tenants interviews have been by appointment, however, the current one stop shop arrangements allow an opportunity for the tenant to request this.

Closing public offices within the district centres will remove this option and tenants will need to use the alternative methods which will be well publicised and advised.



## Appendix 4 Equality Assessment - Guidance and Recording Form

### 1. Introduction

Redditch Borough Councils is committed to providing equality of access and recognises that discrimination does not need to be intentional for unfair treatment or adverse impact to occur. Our approach to equality recognises that the range of different groups in our society may have different needs and we seek to ensure that our services are fairly and equitably provided to all sections of the community.

We *are* **legally required** (The Equality Duty, The Equality Act 2010) to demonstrate that we have given 'due regard' to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This means that equality considerations need to be evidenced in our decision-making processes and policies. This template will support you to evidence how the Duty has been taken into account. The Equality duty is to meet 'needs', rather than any desires or preferences for a particular treatment or service. Complying with the General Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of an exception or the positive actions provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for a particular group. The General Duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs are different from those of non-disabled people. In considering the requirements to meet the needs of disabled people, public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's disabilities. This might mean making reasonable adjustments for them or treating them better than other people.

### 2. When is Equality Assessment required?

Any potential impact on equality should be considered **before any key decisions are made** and should be integrated into day-to-day policy-making, business planning and other decision-making arrangements. This is particularly relevant when making difficult financial decisions; if we are proposing to **stop, reduce or change a service** then we must have relevant equalities evidence to justify this.

**Due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the General Duty as a part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions we make, when:

- Developing, evaluating and reviewing policy
- Designing, delivering and changing services
- Commissioning and procuring from others

**You must consider what evidence is available and whether any more information is needed. You cannot assume that a policy will benefit all service users without evidence to support that conclusion.** It is not necessary in every instance, to have hard statistical data. We can also use more qualitative sources such as service user feedback or external sources, for example, information available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, local or national representative groups etc. Local, regional or national statistical information and research may also be used if relevant.

### 3. How is the Equality Assessment to be carried out?

To assess a service or policy, consider and use any or all of the following options:

- Walk through the processes as a customer would, or as a member of staff and test it from their point of view - this can be done by the service manager or jointly with the team. Record this experience and make a record of any actions required as a result.
- Set up a customer test with volunteers from community or staff groups. Get them to access the service from start to finish, assess their experience and feedback. Make a record of what was discovered, who the group members were and any actions required as a result.
- Conduct statistical analysis from any service usage information available or customer satisfaction surveys looking for patterns of usage by defined equality groups and obvious gaps in usage.

If further evidence comes to light after the initial completion of this assessment, if possible, go back to the original assessment and update it. Equality Assessment should be seen as a living, on-going process rather than a one off exercise.

### 4. Who carries out the assessment?

The manager of the service is responsible for ensuring that the assessment is carried out and recorded on this form.

A list of every completed Equality Assessment will be published on the relevant Council's website. Any Elected Member or member of the public can ask for copies of the assessment and any information that has been used in the completion of the assessment.

#### **For further information or assistance please contact:**

Policy Team on 01527 548284 or 01527 881616 or [equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

#### **Useful documents:**

[Bromsgrove](#) Equality Strategy

[Redditch](#) Equality Strategy

Quick start guidance to the Equality Duty can be found [here](#)

## Equality Assessment Record

**Please ensure the following:**

- That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents, and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy, but must be complete.
- That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.

Title of service/policy/procedure/spending review being proposed	<b>One Stop Shop Review</b>		
Name of service area	<b>Customer Services</b>		
Name of Officer completing this assessment	<b>Paul Stephenson</b>		
Date assessment completed	<b>14/11/19</b>		
Name of decision maker (in relation to the change)	<b>Executive</b>		
Date decision made			
<b>Sign off on completion</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Lead officer completing assessment	<b>Paul Stephenson</b>		<b>14/11/19</b>
Equalities	<b>Rebecca Green (Policy Manager)</b>		<b>14/11/19</b>

**Overview – Set the context**

Provide a clear overview of the aims of the service/policy/procedure and the proposed changes being made. Will current service users’ needs continue to be met? Why is the change being proposed? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?

The proposal recommends closure of the Customer Service Centres (known as One Stop Shops) at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow. The reasoning behind the case for closure is that over the past 10 years, visitor numbers have fallen significantly due to changes in working practices at the Town Hall, and within each service area. This has resulted in the One Stop Shops mostly being used solely to pay their council bills (mainly Rent and Council Tax), incurring a high cost for the council in regards of staffing and overheads.

Customers who wish to pay their rent in person can now use a rent payment card which is accepted at a Post Office or Paypoint location. This will be a better, more effective alternative as they are open longer hours than the One Stop Shops (OSS are only open for ½ day Monday-Friday). There are at least 1 Paypoint or Post Office within the centres at Winyates, Woodrow and Batchley. Customers who wish to pay their Council Tax in person will shortly be able to pay using their bill at any Post Office or Paypoint location.

Housing appointments will be conducted in the existing locality buildings, in customer homes or at the Town Hall or any other council premise subject to customer need.

The suggested date of closure is April 2020 and the roll-out of barcoded billing is planned for January 2020.

All of the alternative payment methods (direct debit, 24 hrs automated telephone line, bank standing order, postal cheque, online payment) are still available as alternatives.

Customers who need to contact the council for advice can still continue to use alternative methods of contact such as telephone, email, via the internet or visiting the town hall.

Who is the proposal likely to affect?	Yes	No
All residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All Council employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s) of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (identify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Detail-** Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.

Adults with disabilities – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall where disabled parking spaces are provided free of charge or via local buses which are adapted for people with disabilities. In certain circumstances, home visits are also a possibility for customers who would find accessing any other means of contact difficult, at the discretion of the relevant service area.

Adults with young children – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall.

Older people – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall.

The service will now benefit people with disabilities, adults with young children and older people all across the Borough, as there are numerous post offices/Paypoint locations. This will enable the predominant services currently provided by the One Stop Shops (Paying rent & Council Tax) to be accessed by people in their own localities.

**Evidence and data used to inform your equality impact assessment**

What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you.

Equality data is not gathered on service users accessing the One Stop Shops, however a recent survey has shown that 85% of visitors to the centre come to pay for council services, 10% come to ask a question of the Customer Service Advisor and the remaining 5% either use the telephone or attend a pre-arranged appointment.

Results from the 2018 Redditch Community Survey  
43% of people stated their main method of contacting the council was by telephone  
Further 20% said preferred method was website  
Only 6% said their preferred method was face to face

**Engagement and Consultation**

What engagement and consultation have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders? What is important to them regarding the current service? How does (or could) the service meet their needs?

How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)? Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

A survey was conducted with 267 customers of the One Stop Shops in July and August 2019, to ascertain their reasons for using the One Stop Shops.

This showed that 85% of visitors to the centre come to pay for council services, 10% come to ask a question of the Customer Service Advisor and the remaining respondents either use the telephone (13 people) or attend a pre-arranged appointment (4 people).

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard must be given to the three aims of the Equality Duty. This means that you must consciously think about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Consider the current service and any proposed changes, thinking about what issues may arise.

Equality Duty aims	Evidence
<p><b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b> How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic</p>	<p>Evidence shows that 85% of the people using the One Stop Shops come to make a payment. Although the proposal is to close the One Stop Shops, in order to reduce any negative impact, the proposal is that customers can make their payments at other local locations via the Post Office or Paypoint. This has in fact <i>increased</i> the accessibility to this part of the service for everyone, as there are more places across the Borough they can use and opening times are longer.</p> <p>All of the alternative payment methods (direct debit, 24 hrs automated telephone line, bank standing order, postal cheque, online payment, payment in person at Redditch Town Hall) are still available as alternatives.</p> <p>Customers who need to contact the council for advice can still continue to use alternative methods of contact such as telephone, email, via the internet or visiting the Town Hall.</p>
<p><b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b> How does the proposal/service</p>	<p>With customers able to make their payments at other local locations via the Post Office or Paypoint, accessibility to this part of the service has become more accessible for everyone, as there are more places they can use and opening times are longer.</p>

ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	
<b>Foster good relations between different groups</b> Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	n/a

**Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?**

- Does the proposal target or exclude a specific equality group or community?
  - Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently and can this be justified?
  - Is the proposal likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups and communities? If not, can this be justified?
- (It may be useful to consider other groups, not included in the Equality Act, especially if the proposal is specifically for them e.g. lone parents, refugees, unemployed people, carers)

**Impact of proposal-** Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? What are the barriers that might make access difficult or stop different groups or communities accessing the proposal? How great will that impact be on their well-being? Could the proposal promote equality and good relations between different groups? How?

**If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?**

What mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? (Include these in the action plan at the end of the assessment) Equal treatment does not always produce equal outcomes; sometimes you will have to take specific steps for particular groups to address an existing disadvantage or to meet differing needs.

Protected Group	Impact of proposal	Justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified	If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?
Age	High	Mitigating actions being	See actions below

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying or confusing</li> <li>• Older residents might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council</li> </ul>	implemented	
Disability	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying or confusing</li> <li>• Some residents with disabilities (&amp; potentially carers) might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council</li> </ul>	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Transgender	n/a	n/a	n/a
Marriage and Civil	n/a	n/a	n/a



Partnership			
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>High</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying</li> <li>• Some new mothers might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council</li> </ul>	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Race	Medium	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Religion or Belief	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sex (Male/ Female)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sexual Orientation	n/a	n/a	n/a

**How will you monitor any changes identified?**

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered

**The actions required to address these findings are set out below.**

Action Required	By Whom	By When	Completion Date
Rent card implementation	Paul Stephenson	11/11/19	11/11/19
Council Tax barcoded billing	Paul Stephenson	02/12/19	
Communication on changes with One Stop Shop customers	Paul Stephenson	01/01/20-05/04/20	
Wider communication of changes with communities, including targeted messages to community groups/venues and translated materials as required	Paul Stephenson Rebecca Green	01/01/20-05/04/20	

**When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.**

## Glossary

### Direct discrimination

- Treating someone less favourably than someone else in the same circumstances, e.g.:
  - In employment, racist or sexist banter, derogatory comments and innuendo
  - Failure to treat grievances seriously or to investigate effectively

- Unfairly denying access to employment, training or facilities and services

**Indirect discrimination**

- Where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all but has the effect excluding or reducing the access for a particular group and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Even if this effect is unintentional, it can still be unlawful, e.g.:
  - Unnecessary height restrictions for access to employment opportunities
  - Refusing training for promotion to people who work part-time
  - Requiring fluency in a language where this is not necessary
  - Relying on word of mouth to recruit to employment or training opportunities
  - Qualification requirements that are not justified for the level of the job.

**Policy, Practices and Services**

- Refers to any activity the council does, be that a service we provide, an initiative we run, a policy we write or a procedure we observe.
- It may refer to the way we do things which are customary
- It may refer to activities we undertake such as meetings, focus groups or publications we produce.

**Protected Characteristics**

**Age** - consider all age groups although legal protection only applies to people aged 18 or over

**Disability** - consider all types of impairment, physical and mental, sensory, visible and hidden

- |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning disability</li> <li>• Families and carers of disabled children</li> <li>• Mobility impairments</li> <li>• Wheelchair users</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health needs/ disorders and psychological conditions</li> <li>• HIV/ Aids</li> <li>• Sensory impairments such as sight and hearing</li> <li>• Cancer and long term progressive conditions such as MS</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Gender** – refers to the physiological fact of being male or female

- consider whether something has a different impact on men or women - particularly if it's more of an impact on women, consider the impact if they have caring responsibilities whether its childcare or other types of care

**Gender re-assignment** - Transgender (Gender Dysphoria )- or the preferred term, Gender Confirmation

- Consider all stages of re-assignment, before, during and after re-assignment treatment or gender confirmation surgery

**Marriage and Civil Partnerships –**

- It *only* covers those who are married or in a civil partnership (NB single status is not protected in the Equality Act)

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

- Physical state of pregnancy
- On maternity leave or planning maternity leave or returned from maternity leave
- Includes breast feeding

### **Race – this includes race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin and caste (caste through case law, not explicitly referenced)**

- Race is a generic overall term
- Colour refers to the colour of a person's skin
- Nationality applies to internationally recognised nationalities
- National Origin applies where you have changed your nationality in your life time or there is something about you that indicates that your parents or grandparents' origins were in another part of the world – e.g. name, religion
- Ethnic Origin applies where identifiable groups have established a unique and different ethnicity to the rest of the population – this currently applies to Jews, Gypsies, Sikhs Irish and Scottish Travellers
- Caste is the traditional organisation of South Asian, particularly Hindu, society into a hierarchy of hereditary groups.

### **Religion or Belief – all established religions and beliefs (and non-belief) including but not limited to the following:**

- |                |                           |                  |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| • Christianity | • Baha'i                  | • Rastafarianism |
| • Hinduism     | • Buddhism                | • Atheism        |
| • Islam        | • Jainism                 | • Agnosticism    |
| • Judaism      | • Paganism                | • Humanism       |
| • Sikhism      | • Parsi or Zoroastrianism |                  |

### **Sexual orientation**

- Gay – usually refers to men with sexual orientation towards other men although sometime refers to women with sexual orientation towards other women
- Lesbian – refers to women with sexual orientation towards other women
- Bisexual – refers to men and women with sexual orientation to either or both their own gender or the opposite gender
- Heterosexual refers to men and women with sexual orientation towards the opposite gender

**Appendix 5 - Communications & Engagement Plan**

Task	By whom	How	Start	End	Officer Responsible
1-2-1 discussion with customer re: change in payment/contact method	Customer Services	Face to face at OSS	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters re: Allpay Housing at all sites	Customer Services	Posters	01/12/19	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters re: Allpay Council Tax at all sites	Customer Services	Posters	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters in OSS at outer offices and Town Hall	Customer Services	Posters	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Amendment to council tax letter templates	Council Tax		01/01/20	31/01/20	Revenues Asst Manager
Letters to customers who may not present after January due to 10 monthly instalment (Council Tax)	Customer Services	Letter / payment data	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Email notice to housing staff	Customer Services	Email	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Press Release promoting Allpay Housing	Comms Team	Press Release	07/12/19	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Orb Notice to staff (internal) re closure	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Orb Notice to staff to change literature if applicable	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Standard / Advertiser Press Release	Comms Team	Press Release	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Facebook/Twitter Notices	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Website alert re: closure	Web team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Web Team
Update website content	Web team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Web Team
Notice to relevent community Groups	Policy Team	Letter / Email	16/01/20	31/03/20	Policy Manager

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive  
Committee**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**FEES AND CHARGES**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering , Director of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To set out the fees and charges to be levied on services provided by the Council as used as the basis for income targets in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive consider the fees and charges as included at Appendix 1 and;
- 2.1.1 **recommend to Council** the approval of all fees and charges that are included in Appendix 1
- 2.1.2 **approve** discretion on Leisure services and Bereavement Services fees and charges throughout the financial year 2020/21. The discretion is requested to be up to 20% (either increase or decrease) for Leisure services and 25% (either increase or decrease) for Bereavement services against the charges as detailed in the report. However, the fees and charges should still remain within the industry and regional norms for the activities provided.
- 2.1.3 **approve** of all fees and charges that are included in Appendix 1 are charged commencing 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020.

**3. KEY ISSUES****Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan has been prepared on the basis that additional income will be generated from fees and charges. A process

## Executive Committee

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was followed for the review of income to be realised from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019/20. This included an assessment of each fee to identify how it met the Council's strategic purposes and the level of increase that was proposed. Therefore the levels of increase have been based on a robust estimate of the impact of cost increases and demand within the services. CPI 1.7% has been used where a general inflationary increase is proposed.

- 3.2 Fees were to be considered using the following criteria:
- Service to be subsidised by the Council
  - Service to break even
  - Service to make a surplus to offset other overhead costs
- 3.3 Appendix 1 details all of the fees and charges for each area with a commentary against each block.
- 3.4 Due to Leisure Services and Bereavement Services being a customer facing service that operates in a competitive environment alongside private sector operators, and is reliant on suppliers whose costs are not in our control, it would be beneficial if there was a wider discretion allowed for fees and charges. This would allow managers to increase prices in response to an increase in supplier increases or respond directly to competitor price promotions or increases. The flexibility should include an ability to increase or decrease fees and charges throughout the year rather than just the annual review / increase for the new financial year. The discretion is requested to be up to 20% (either increase or decrease) for Leisure services and 25% (either increase or decrease) for Bereavement services but the fees and charges should still remain within the industry and regional norms for the activities provided.

### Legal Implications

- 3.5 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

### Service / Operational Implications

- 3.6 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.



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Committee**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**7. KEY**

None

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Tel: 01527 881208

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environmental

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019 £	% Change	increase/ decrease £	Proposed charge from 2020 £
<b><u>Bulky Household Waste</u></b>				
The Bulky Service operates based on a standard unit price based on size and weight, with collection from the boundary of the property with the public highway. 1 Unit is equivalent to an under unit appliance, and this measure is multiplied up for multiple or larger items and items that cannot be lifted by two people will need to be quoted separately.				
Bulky collection - per single unit*	8.50	0.00%	0.00	8.50
*Dependant on size, these items charged for as a multiple of units.				
Items that are classed by WCC as non domestic waste	Quotation			Quotation
Items not on the boundary of the property	Quotation			Quotation
Mechanically Sweep Private Road / Car Park - HGV Sweeper per Hour - new charge	0.00	0.00%	50.00	50.00
Garden Waste Collection Service	45.00	0.00%	0.00	45.00
Garden Waste Set up fee	20.00	0.00%	0.00	20.00
Re-issue of service	40.00	0.00%	0.00	40.00
<b><u>MOT</u></b>				
Class 4 (car)	Set by VOSA			Set by VOSA
Class 7 (van)	Set by VOSA			Set by VOSA
Class 5 vl (minibus)	Set by VOSA			Set by VOSA
VOSA have yet to set a revised charge.				
Council have agreed that the workshop can increase fee in line with VOSA charges (rounded down to the nearest whole £) as VOSA change them.				
<b><u>Supplies Service</u></b>				
On cost for cash sales	0.30	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Logs per cubic metre per bag	19.10	0.00%	0.00	0.00

**Comments**

Remove the fee for the sale of logs as this service is no longer provided. Cordwood timber sales are carried out - these are not for a set or quantity, they are infrequent and are completed through price  
 There are no planned increases in bulky waste collection fees for the next financial year as projected income for the current year may not be achieved due to a lack of service take up. It is envisaged that Environmental Services will be creating a Marketing campaign that will allow us to increase awareness of the service we offer and therefore increase potential income  
 Garden waste fees already set for 2020 increase to £46 for 2021 to reflect increasing costs.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019 £	% Change	increase/ decrease £	Proposed charge from 2020 £
<b><u>Crematorium/Cemetery</u></b>				
<b>Interment</b>				
Full earth interment under 1 year (non resident only)	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Full earth interment under 1 year (Redditch resident)	No Charge			No Charge
Interment 1 year to 17 (inc) years (non resident only)	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Interment 1 year to 17 years (inc) (Redditch Resident)	No Charge			No Charge
<b>Interment 18 years and over*</b>				
Single Depth	632.60	2.59%	16.40	649.00
Double Depth	632.60	2.59%	16.40	649.00
Interment of cremated remains *	210.50	2.61%	5.50	216.00
Interment of cremated remains - non resident under 18 years	No Charge			No Charge
Interment of cremated remains (Redditch Resident under 18 years only)	No Charge			No Charge
<b>Scattering cremated remains in grave or in rose/memorial garden (roll back turf)</b>	87.70	2.62%	2.30	90.00
<b><u>Charges for Burials</u></b>				
<b>Exclusive Right of Burial for 75 years</b>				
In adult size grave	1,592.40	2.61%	41.60	1,634.00
In babies grave	273.50	2.74%	7.50	281.00
In child's grave (4 x 2)	291.00	2.75%	8.00	299.00
In ashes grave	608.90	2.64%	16.10	625.00
<b><u>Extending Rights in existing grave for 25 years</u></b>				
In existing full earth grave	454.60	2.51%	11.40	466.00
In child's grave	96.50	2.59%	2.50	99.00
In ashes grave	177.00	2.82%	5.00	182.00
Assignment / Transfer of Exclusive Right	103.20	2.71%	2.80	106.00
Certified copy of entry in Register of Burials	22.50	2.22%	0.50	23.00
Disinterment of Remains - Cremated Remains	553.30	2.66%	14.70	568.00
<b><u>Cemetery Memorials</u></b>				
Memorial application administration fee	103.20	2.71%	2.80	106.00
<b><u>Comments</u></b>				
Fees and Charges have been reviewed and increased in line with cost recovery.				
<b><u>Cremation related fees</u></b>				
Direct Cremation 18+ years	423.10	2.58%	10.90	434.00
Cremation 17 years and under	No Fee			No Fee
Cremation 18+ years 09:00am and 09:30am	552.10	4.51%	24.90	577.00
Cremation 18+ years 09:30am 10:15 am	614.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Cremation 18+ years 10:15am onwards	717.20	4.02%	28.80	746.00
<b>None Resident Cremation Fees</b>				
Cremation 18+ years 9:00 am ans 09:30am	655.30	3.31%	21.70	677.00
Cremation 18+ years 09:30am 10:15 am	717.20	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Cremation 18+ years 10:30am onwards	820.40	3.12%	25.60	846.00
Scattering of ashes from other Crematoria	61.90	3.39%	2.10	64.00
Certified extract from Register of Cremations	22.70	1.32%	0.30	23.00

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
Replacement certificate of cremation	11.90	0.84%	0.10	12.00
Organist's fee	56.80	2.11%	1.20	58.00
Extra Service Time in Chapel	176.50	2.55%	4.50	181.00
Use of chapel for burial service of child 16 or under (not RBC Cemeteries)	244.60	2.62%	6.40	251.00
Use of Chapel for burial service (RBC Cemeteries)	176.50	2.55%	4.50	181.00
Use of Chapel for burial/ memorial service (not RBC Cemetery) 9.00 am and 09:30am	552.10	4.51%	24.90	577.00
Use of Chapel for burial/ memorial service (not RBC Cemetery) 9.30 and 10.15 am - charge to be deleted	614.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Use of Chapel for burial/ memorial service (not RBC Cemetery) 10:15am onwards	717.20	4.02%	28.80	746.00
Use of chapel for burial service of child 16 or under (RBC Cemeteries)	81.50	3.07%	2.50	84.00
Late arrival at Crematorium (only if service runs into next time slot)	176.50	2.55%	4.50	181.00
Cremation of a body part where the original cremation was elsewhere -	161.00	4.35%	7.00	168.00
<b><u>Caskets</u></b>				
Wooden cremated remains casket	115.60	2.94%	3.40	119.00
<b><u>Wesley music additional options</u></b>				
Administration for first visual tribute in a service - new charge	0.00	0.00%	24.00	24.00
Administration for additional visual tributes in same service - new charge	0.00	0.00%	12.00	12.00
Visual tribute cost per photograph - new charge	0.00	0.00%	3.00	3.00
Visual tribute cost per minute of video - new charge	0.00	0.00%	6.00	6.00
Visual tribute(s) only provided on USB - new charge	0.00	0.00%	30.00	30.00
CD of Chapel Service	59.90	1.84%	1.10	61.00
Additional copies of CD of chapel service - new charge	0.00	0.00%	38.00	38.00
DVD of Chapel Service	72.20	2.49%	1.80	74.00
Additional copies of DVD of chapel service - new charge	0.00	0.00%	44.00	44.00
Visual tribute(s) added to DVD / USB recording of service - new charge	0.00	0.00%	24.00	24.00
Webcast of Chapel Service	85.70	2.68%	2.30	88.00
<b><u>Memorials</u></b>				
Book of Remembrance - Name + 1 line	92.00	2.17%	2.00	94.00
Each additional line in the Book	34.50	1.45%	0.50	35.00
Miniature Book of Remembrance - Name + 1 line	80.50	3.11%	2.50	83.00
Remembrance Card - Name + 1 line	40.40	1.49%	0.60	41.00
Additional lines in miniature and cards	28.80	0.69%	0.20	29.00
Crests - Floral depiction	57.50	2.61%	1.50	59.00
- Badge or other	69.00	2.90%	2.00	71.00
Bench with 10 year lease & top rail engraving (max 40 letters) -	857.60	2.61%	22.40	880.00
Bench with 10 year lease & standard silver plaque (max 60 letters) -	815.30	2.66%	21.70	837.00
Bench replacement plaque - £110.00	117.60	2.89%	3.40	121.00
<b><u>Wall Plaques – Internal</u></b>				
Indoor single (12" x 3") - 5 year lease	194.70	2.72%	5.30	200.00
Indoor single (12" x 3") - 10 year lease	309.70	2.68%	8.30	318.00
Indoor single (12" x 3") - 20 year lease	424.70	2.66%	11.30	436.00
Indoor double (12" x 6") - 5 year lease	309.70	2.68%	8.30	318.00
Indoor double (12" x 6") - 10 year lease	424.70	2.66%	11.30	436.00

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
Indoor double (12" x 6") - 20 year lease	539.60	2.67%	14.40	554.00
<b><u>Outdoor Wall Plaques</u></b>				
5 year lease	217.90	2.80%	6.10	224.00
10 year lease	332.80	2.76%	9.20	342.00
20 year lease	447.70	2.52%	11.30	459.00
Photo or motif	183.30	2.56%	4.70	188.00
<b><u>Bird Bath Memorial</u></b>				
<b>5 year lease</b>				
Size 1 - small	207.00	2.42%	5.00	212.00
Size 2	229.90	2.65%	6.10	236.00
Size 3	252.90	2.81%	7.10	260.00
Size 4	275.90	2.57%	7.10	283.00
Size 5 - large	298.90	2.71%	8.10	307.00
<b>10 year lease</b>				
Size 1 - small	322.00	2.48%	8.00	330.00
Size 2	344.90	2.64%	9.10	354.00
Size 3	367.90	2.75%	10.10	378.00
Size 4	390.80	2.61%	10.20	401.00
Size 5 - large	413.80	2.22%	9.20	423.00
<b>20 year lease</b>				
Size 1 - small	436.80	2.56%	11.20	448.00
Size 2	459.90	2.63%	12.10	472.00
Size 3	482.90	2.71%	13.10	496.00
Size 4	505.80	2.61%	13.20	519.00
Size 5 - large	528.80	2.69%	14.20	543.00
<b>Motif</b>	115.00	2.61%	3.00	118.00
<b>Additional inscription on plaque</b>	143.00	2.80%	4.00	147.00
<b><u>Comments</u></b>				
Fees and Charges have been reviewed and increased in line with cost recovery.				
<b><u>Memorial Plaque extension fee 5 years ONLY</u></b>	143.80	2.92%	4.20	148.00
<b>Withdrawn option to extend for 10 and 20 years due to the lack of space and price people will pay</b>				
<b><u>Indoor Memorial Tree</u></b>				
Standard Leaf - 3 year lease - new charge	67.10	2.83%	1.90	69.00
Additional Leaves - new charge	46.40	3.45%	1.60	48.00
<b><u>Memorial Vaults</u></b>				
Double Unit - 20 year lease including first interment and casket	1,290.00	2.64%	34.00	1,324.00
2nd interment of remains including casket	177.50	2.54%	4.50	182.00
Inscribed tablet upto 80 letters	144.50	2.42%	3.50	148.00
Additional Letters (per letter)	4.10	2.44%	0.10	4.20
Standard Motif	103.20	2.71%	2.80	106.00

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
Photo of 1 person	123.80	2.58%	3.20	127.00
Photo of 2 people	196.10	2.50%	4.90	201.00
Photo of 3 people	252.80	2.45%	6.20	259.00
Other items are available but will be quoted individually	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY
<b><u>Memorial Posts</u></b>				
Memorial plaque - 3 year lease	247.70	2.54%	6.30	254.00
Motif	46.40	3.45%	1.60	48.00
Replacement Plaque	123.80	2.58%	3.20	127.00
<b><u>Private Memorial Garden</u></b>				
Including memorial - 20 year lease	1,651.20	2.59%	42.80	1,694.00
<b><u>Purchase of memorial plaque (bronze)</u></b>	185.80	2.80%	5.20	191.00
Road Closures	87.70	0.00%	0.00	87.70
<b><u>Parking Fines PCN's On Street - statutory Set by Statute</u></b>				
Certain Contraventions	70.00	0.00%	0.00	70.00
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	0.00%	0.00	35.00
Other Contraventions	50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00
<b>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</b>				
<b><u>Comments</u></b>				
Fees and Charges have been reviewed and increased in line with cost recovery.				

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Leisure & Cultural Services**

Roundings are to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019 £	% Change	increase/ decrease £	Proposed charge from 2020 £
<b><u>FOOTBALL - ADULT (INC. CHANGING FACILITIES)</u></b>				
<b>Abbey Stadium/Ipsley/Old Forge/Greenlands</b>				
Charge	96.04	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25	72.06	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50	48.02	0.00%	0.00	0.00
<b><u>FOOTBALL - JUNIOR (INC. CHANGING FACILITIES)</u></b>				
<b>Abbey Stadium/Morton Stanley Park/Ipsley/Old Forge/Greenlands/Kingsley</b>				
Charge	48.89	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25	36.70	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50	24.45	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Abbey Stadium/Morton Stanley Park/Ipsley/Old Forge/Greenlands. Without changing facilities.				
Charge	32.54	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25	24.40	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50	16.30	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Small Sided Football				
Charge	16.25	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25	12.20	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50	8.15	0.00%	0.00	0.00
<b>New pricing structure below</b>				
<b><u>FOOTBALL</u></b>				
<b>SENIOR 11 a side with changing</b>				
Match for multiple teams booking together eg a local league	0.00	0.00%	55.00	55.00
Match for a season long booking for a single club	0.00	0.00%	75.00	75.00
Match for a one off booking	0.00	0.00%	100.00	100.00
<b>SENIOR 11 a side without changing</b>				
Match games	0.00	0.00%	40.00	40.00
<b>JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side with changing</b>				
Match games	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00
per season ( x 12 games)	0.00	0.00%	360.00	360.00
<b>JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side without changing</b>				
Match games	0.00	0.00%	22.50	22.50
per season ( x 12 games)	0.00	0.00%	270.00	270.00



Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
<b>MINI FOOTBALL 5 or 7 a side</b>				
Match games	0.00	0.00%	16.50	16.50
per season ( x 12 games)	0.00	0.00%	198.00	198.00
<b>Football pitches and parks are not available for any organised football activity during the period June 1st to July 15th. This is to allow the pitches a rest period and for maintenance work to take place.</b>				
<b>After this date any organised football training must be paid for at a cost of £10 per session for one team and a negotiated price for more than one team. Please contact the Parks Team to book this, pitches will be allocated at our discretion.</b>				
<b><u>DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (SPORTS) CHARGES</u></b>				
Adult fitness Sessions	3.40	2.94%	0.10	3.50
Community exercise class	3.30	6.06%	0.20	3.50
Health & Well Being Sessions	3.30	6.06%	0.20	3.50
Curriculum Cost	25.00	20.00%	5.00	30.00
Schools Hire – lunchtime / after school sessions	23.15	29.59%	6.90	30.00
Inclusive Activities	3.15	4.76%	0.20	3.30
PSI Falls Prevention	3.00	16.67%	0.50	3.50
Activity Referral - now run by Rubicon leisure LTD - delete	17.00	0.00%	0.00	17.00
Junior Sports Sessions	5.90	-32.20%	-1.90	4.00
Couch 2 5k - new charge	0.00	0.00%	1.00	1.00
<b><u>Comments</u></b>				
Football - New pricing structure to reflect the actual requirement needed and in line with the current market.				
Activity Referral is run from the Abbey Stadium (co-ordinated by SD) and therefore Rubicon receive the income. Junior Sports is currently charged at a lower due to being targeted/diversionary youth sessions.				
Schools Hire and Curriculum costs have been increased due to a review of the sustainability of this hourly rate. At the current rate no administration recovery is achieved with the new proposed rate a modest admin recovery is included.				

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
<b>Allotment Charges</b>				
<b>Large (&lt;254m2)</b>				
Water	119.31	0.00%	0.00	0.00
No Water	86.36	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25 Non Water	64.73	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50 Non Water	43.15	0.00%	0.00	0.00
<b>Medium (&gt;177&lt;254m2)</b>				
Water	90.10	0.00%	0.00	0.00
No Water	58.94	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25 Non Water	44.23	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50 Non Water	29.47	0.00%	0.00	0.00
<b>Small (&gt;177m2)</b>				
Water	62.12	0.00%	0.00	0.00
No Water	34.29	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 25 Non Water	25.73	0.00%	0.00	0.00
Concession 50 Non Water	17.17	0.00%	0.00	0.00
<b>New pricing structure below</b>				
<b>Allotment Charges</b>				
<b>Small (&gt;177m2)</b>				
Standard	28.57	2.50%	0.70	29.28
Concession 25%	21.43	2.50%	0.50	21.97
Concession 50%	14.28	2.50%	0.40	14.64
Additional water charge	23.19	2.50%	0.60	23.77
<b>Medium (&gt;177&lt;254m2)</b>				
Standard	49.12	2.50%	1.20	50.35
Concession 25%	36.84	2.50%	0.90	37.76
Concession 50%	24.56	2.50%	0.60	25.17
Additional water charge	25.94	2.50%	0.60	26.59
<b>Large (&lt;254m2)</b>				
Standard	71.94	2.50%	1.80	73.74
Concession 25%	53.95	2.50%	1.30	55.30
Concession 50%	35.97	2.50%	0.90	36.87
Additional water charge	27.47	2.50%	0.70	28.16
Water charge is only applicable where water is present, and billed to Redditch Borough Council.				
<b>Comments</b>				
Allotments : Fees and charges to remain the same and review of the Allotment Service to be carried out in 2020/21				

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
<b><u>Redditch Outdoor Event Hire</u></b>				
<b><u>Outdoor Event Space</u></b>				
<b><u>Small Attendance = 0-100</u></b>				
Commercial Rates	51.50	2.00%	1.00	52.53
Concession 50	25.00	2.00%	0.50	25.50
Concession 75	12.50	2.00%	0.30	12.75
<b><u>Medium 101- 499</u></b>				
Commercial Rates	103.00	2.00%	2.10	105.06
Concession 50	50.00	2.00%	1.00	51.00
Concession 75	25.00	2.00%	0.50	25.50
<b><u>Large 500+</u></b>				
Commercial Rates	154.50	2.00%	3.10	157.59
Concession 50	75.00	2.00%	1.50	76.50
Concession 75	37.50	2.00%	0.80	38.25
<b><u>Outdoor Fitness Session - Commercial</u></b>				
<b><u>Summer Fee (Apr to Sept)</u></b>				
Commercial Rates Per Day	401.85	0.00%	0.00	401.85
Concession 25	301.40	0.00%	0.00	301.40
Concession 50	200.90	0.00%	0.00	200.90
<b><u>Winter Fee (Oct to Mar)</u></b>				
Commercial Rates Per Day	172.00	0.00%	0.00	172.00
Concession 25	129.00	0.00%	0.00	129.00
Concession 50	86.00	0.00%	0.00	86.00
<b><u>Annual Fee</u></b>				
Commercial Rates Per Day	459.05	0.00%	0.00	459.05
Concession 25	344.30	0.00%	0.00	344.30
Concession 50	229.55	0.00%	0.00	229.55
<b><u>Outdoor Fitness Session</u></b>				
<b><u>Commercial Rates (Per Day)</u></b>				
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	420.00	0.00%	0.00	420.00

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	682.50	0.00%	0.00	682.50
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	735.00	0.00%	0.00	735.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	210.00	0.00%	0.00	210.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	420.00	0.00%	0.00	420.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	630.00	0.00%	0.00	630.00
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	546.00	0.00%	0.00	546.00
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	892.50	0.00%	0.00	892.50
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	1,050.00	0.00%	0.00	1,050.00
<b><u>Community Rates (Per Day)</u></b>				
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	210.00	0.00%	0.00	210.00
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	341.25	0.00%	0.00	341.25
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	367.50	0.00%	0.00	367.50
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	105.00	0.00%	0.00	105.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	210.00	0.00%	0.00	210.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	315.00	0.00%	0.00	315.00
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	273.00	0.00%	0.00	273.00
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	446.25	0.00%	0.00	446.25
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	525.00	0.00%	0.00	525.00
<b><u>Charity Rates (Per Day)</u></b>				
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	315.00	0.00%	0.00	315.00
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	511.90	0.00%	0.00	511.90
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	551.25	0.00%	0.00	551.25
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	157.50	0.00%	0.00	157.50
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	315.00	0.00%	0.00	315.00
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	472.50	0.00%	0.00	472.50
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	409.50	0.00%	0.00	409.50
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	669.40	0.00%	0.00	669.40
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	787.50	0.00%	0.00	787.50

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019 £	% Change	increase/ decrease £	Proposed charge from 2020 £
<p><b><u>Bandstand Hire T/centre</u></b> Commercial Rates per day Community Rates per day Charities / Not for Profit Organisations per day</p> <p><b><u>Band Stand</u></b> <b><u>Criteria and eligibility guidance notes attached in events toolkit</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Additional Costs for Outdoor Event Space:</u></b> 1 Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate 2 Any event in excess of 1999 attendees is STN</p> <p><b><u>Additional Costs for Outdoor Fitness Space:</u></b> 1 Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate</p>	<p>Price on application</p> <p>27.60</p> <p>27.60</p>	<p></p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p>	<p></p> <p>0.40</p> <p>0.40</p>	<p>Price on application</p> <p>28.00</p> <p>28.00</p>
<p><b><u>Comments</u></b> Event and Bandstand Hire - increase kept to a minimum of 2% for event and bandstand hire to generate increase usage.</p>				
<p><b><u>CIVIC SUITE COMMERCIAL CHARGES</u></b> <b><u>Committee Room 1:</u></b> 4 hour minimum - Standard Concession 25 Concession 50 Concession 75</p> <p>8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening Concession 25 Concession 50 Concession 75</p> <p><b><u>Committee Room 2/3:</u></b> 4 hour minimum - daytime Concession 25 Concession 50 Concession 75</p>	<p>57.37</p> <p>43.05</p> <p>28.69</p> <p>14.37</p> <p>75.76</p> <p>56.80</p> <p>37.90</p> <p>18.95</p> <p>115.82</p> <p>86.88</p> <p>57.94</p> <p>28.94</p>	<p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p> <p>2.00%</p>	<p>1.20</p> <p>0.90</p> <p>0.60</p> <p>0.30</p> <p>1.50</p> <p>1.10</p> <p>0.80</p> <p>0.40</p> <p>2.30</p> <p>1.70</p> <p>1.20</p> <p>0.60</p>	<p>58.52</p> <p>43.91</p> <p>29.26</p> <p>14.66</p> <p>77.28</p> <p>57.94</p> <p>38.66</p> <p>19.33</p> <p>118.14</p> <p>88.62</p> <p>59.10</p> <p>29.52</p>

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019	% Change	increase/ decrease	Proposed charge from 2020
	£		£	£
8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening	164.34	2.00%	3.30	167.63
Concession 25	123.24	2.00%	2.50	125.70
Concession 50	82.14	2.00%	1.60	83.78
Concession 75	41.10	2.00%	0.80	41.92
<b><u>Council Chamber:</u></b>				
4 hour minimum - daytime	159.55	2.00%	3.20	162.74
Concession 25	119.65	2.00%	2.40	122.04
Concession 50	79.75	2.00%	1.60	81.35
Concession 75	39.90	2.00%	0.80	40.70
8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening	260.65	2.00%	5.20	265.86
Concession 25	195.50	2.00%	3.90	199.41
Concession 50	130.35	2.00%	2.60	132.96
Concession 75	65.15	2.00%	1.30	66.45
<b><u>Full Civic Suite: Monday to Saturday (including servery)</u></b>				
4 hour minimum - daytime	260.65	2.00%	5.20	265.86
Concession 25	195.50	2.00%	3.90	199.41
Concession 50	130.35	2.00%	2.60	132.96
Concession 75				
8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening	473.20	2.00%	9.50	482.66
Concession 25	354.90	2.00%	7.10	362.00
Concession 50	236.60	2.00%	4.70	241.33
Concession 75	118.30	2.00%	2.40	120.67
<b><u>Full Civic Suite: Sunday - exceptional (including servery)</u></b>				
4 hour minimum - daytime	296.30	2.00%	5.90	302.23
Concession 25	222.25	2.00%	4.40	226.70
Concession 50	148.15	2.00%	3.00	151.11
Concession 75	74.10	2.00%	1.50	75.58
8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening	539.10	2.00%	10.80	549.88
Concession 25	404.35	2.00%	8.10	412.44
Concession 50	269.55	2.00%	5.40	274.94
Concession 75	134.80	2.00%	2.70	137.50

**Comments**

A 2% increase across the board for Room hire - whilst we need to increase usage it is difficult with the demand on room for Council Business - we continue to promote the rooms for weekend hire.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2019 £	% Change	increase/ decrease £	Proposed charge from 2020 £
<b><u>CIVIC SUITE COMMERCIAL CHARGES</u></b>				
<b><u>Equipment Hire</u></b>	23.35	2.00%	0.50	23.82
OHP/Screen	23.35	2.00%	0.50	23.82
TV/Video	23.35	2.00%	0.50	23.82
Conferencing Sound System				
Flipchart stand	7.75	2.00%	0.20	7.91
4 hour minimum - daytime	8.85	2.00%	0.20	9.03
8 hour minimum - daytime and/or evening				
<b><u>Other Fees</u></b>				
Security	245.60	2.00%	4.90	250.51
Retainer				
<b><u>CIVIC SUITE - REFRESHMENT CHARGES</u></b>				
Teas and Coffees	1.10	2.00%	0.00	1.12
Commercial - per cup				
<b><u>Comments</u></b>				

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# Budget Scrutiny

Monday, 2 December 2019

## Working Group

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### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Chair), and Councillors Michael Chalk, John Fisher and Yvonne Smith

#### Also Present:

Professor Peter Latchford OBE (Black Radley)

#### Officers:

Chris Forrester and Guy Revans

#### Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

### 5. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - FEES AND CHARGES

Members considered the draft fees and charges report for 2020/21. The Chair explained that the report had been provided for the group's consideration in draft form and at this stage the content should be treated as exempt. It was also noted that the group needed to be objective in scrutinising the content of the report and should remain apolitical, in line with national best practice in terms of the scrutiny process.

During consideration of this item Members discussed recommendation 2.1.2 as detailed in the report. Officers confirmed that the recommendation did not refer to services provided by Rubicon Leisure, as the company would set its own fees and charges. Instead the recommendation referred to Leisure and Cultural Services that continued to be provided by the Council. Concerns were raised about the meaning of the reference to remaining "within the industry and regional norms for the activities provided" and whether this would provide an explicit remit to Officers. There was general consensus that Officers should check the wording prior to publication of the report to ensure that the wording achieved the action intended. There was also general agreement that the relevant lead officers for Bereavement Services

.....  
Chair

# Budget Scrutiny

## Working Group

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Monday, 2 December 2019

and Leisure and Cultural Services should be invited to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> December when the report would be pre-scrutinised so that they could provide some rationale for the proposals in respect of their services.

Reference was also made to the fact that many of the charges included in the report had increased by 0%. In some cases this was confusing as a new charge appeared to have been introduced where there was no charge previously. To provide clarification in respect of this matter Members suggested that “new charge” should be recorded where a new charge had been introduced.

The fees that had been proposed for Dial a Ride were also discussed. Members questioned how these figures compared to the standard fare for a taxi journey. In the report it had been recorded that consultation had been held with customers and the proposed fees had been generally accepted. Further information in respect of this subject was considered useful and Members agreed that the Head of Community Services might be able to help clarify this matter further. However, Officers suggested that it was unlikely that the fees would cover the costs of providing the service or generate income.

The approach that had been adopted to producing the fees and charges report for 2020/21 was also briefly discussed. Officers advised that this year CMT had requested that Officers should take responsibility for setting the fees and charges for their departments. The Financial Services team had therefore collated the responses and incorporated them into the report.

Members noted that in many cases no changes had been proposed to the Council’s fees and charges in the report. Concerns were raised that this could have a negative impact on income, particularly as costs were likely to rise with inflation. However, it was also noted that in some cases Officers would have opted to retain fees at current levels or to reduce or remove them in order for the Council to remain competitive.

Reference was made to the new fees and charges that had been introduced for the Print Service. Officers explained that the team had identified opportunities to sell their services and this would be subject to a fee. However, Members were asked to note that the Council could not compete with the private sector.

The group also discussed the fees that were proposed for Bereavement Services. Questions were raised about the source of the Wesley Music and it was noted that this could be a specific band or associated with the Methodist Church. Members also noted that some charges, such as that for the DVD of the chapel

# Budget Scrutiny

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Monday, 2 December 2019

service, appeared to have been removed and then reintroduced. Further information to clarify this matter was requested. Members did, however, welcome information that confirmed that the fees for Bereavement Services, like other services in the report, had been rounded up or down to a reasonable figure, rather than including pennies in the price. Members also acknowledged that fees for Bereavement Services had been increased to cover the costs of delivering the service.

During consideration of this item reference was made to the Housing Recharge Policy that had been agreed by Council in November 2019. Members questioned whether tenants would be charged in cases where the damage had been caused accidentally. Officers explained that the policy applied in cases where damage had been caused maliciously and that Officers could use their discretion in applying the policy. However, it was agreed that further clarification would be requested from the relevant lead Officer in respect of this matter.

Reference was also made to the hire products that had been listed under Community Services. It was noted that hire of fire alarms was charged on a weekly basis and Members questioned whether anybody would hire a fire alarm for a couple of weeks. Further information in respect of the rationale for charging on a weekly basis was requested from relevant lead officers.

The group discussed the charges that had been listed for football pitches and facilities. It was noted that there appeared to be new charges replacing an old charging regime, though how these charges related to each other appeared to be unclear. Officers were asked to clarify this further prior to publication of the report.

At the end of the discussions around this item Members noted that they had requested a lot of information. There was general consensus that the group did not have enough information to recommend that the fees and charges contained within the report should be adopted. Members also agreed that the fees and charges report should ideally be drafted in a manner that ensured that the proposed fees and charges were clear, any variances from the previous year were clear and any new charges were clearly stipulated. Members also agreed that it would be helpful in future for the report to be presented in a way that clarified how the old and new fees for a particular service were reconciled and related to one another.

# Budget Scrutiny

Working Group

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Monday, 2 December 2019

## RECOMMENDED that

more detail should be included in the fees and charges reports in the future and there should be greater reconciliation between the old and new fees for a service in the report to help clarify how they relate to each other.

## ACTIONS:

- 1) Officers to check the wording for recommendation 2.1.2 to ensure that it provides the scope to take the action that was intended;
- 2) the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Head of Environmental Services and Bereavement Services Manager to be invited to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December to comment on the rationale for providing flexibility to officers setting fees and charges for Leisure and Cultural Services and Bereavement Services;
- 3) the Head of Community Services to be invited to attend a future meeting of the group to discuss fees and charges within her remit;
- 4) Officers to clarify the origins of the Wesley Music listed for Bereavement Services;
- 5) Officers to explain the reasons why some charges for Bereavement Services appear to have been removed and then reintroduced in the report;
- 6) Officers to clarify whether tenants would be charged, under the Housing Recharge Policy, in cases where damage had been caused to a Council property accidentally;
- 7) Officers to clarify why the Council charges for people to hire fire alarms on a weekly basis; and
- 8) Officers to clarify how the old charges for football pitches and facilities relate to the new charges for these services.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm  
and closed at 8.50 pm

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**Finance Monitoring Quarter 2 2019/20**

<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillor David Thain, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
<b>Relevant Head of Service</b>	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
<b>Non Key Decision</b>	

**1. Purpose and summary**

To report to Executive on the Council's financial position for Revenue and Capital for the General Fund and HRA for the financial period April 2019 – September 2019.

**2. Recommendations**

**The Executive Committee is asked to resolve**

- 2.1 The current financial position in relation to Revenue and Capital for the General Fund and HRA for the financial period April 2019 – September 2019.

**That Executive recommend to Council**

- 2.2 Approval of the re-profiling of the capital programme due to officers completing a full review of the Capital budget for 2019/20 – 2022/23. (Appendix 4)

**3. Revenue budgets**

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial performance of the Council. The purpose of this report is to ensure officers and members have relevant information to consider the overall financial position of the Council. The report reflects the finances across all of the Strategic Purposes to enable Members to be aware of the level of funding attributed to each area and how this compares to budget. The summary at 3.4 shows the financial position for revenue funding for the period April 2019 – September 2019.
- 3.2 Financial reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis. As part of this process a detailed review is undertaken with support from the finance team to ensure that all issues are considered and significant savings or cost pressures are addressed. This report explains the key variances to budget for 2019/20.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019

- 3.3 The £9.804m original General Fund budget as included in the table below is made up of the budget approved in February 2019 of £9.543m, which is then adjusted to reflect the approved transfers from reserves of £262k held in Corporate Financing.

In addition the Latest Budget 2019/20 of £10.346m includes transfers from reserves of £393k which is shown in appendix 2 along with savings virements of £150k.

3.4

**Revenue Budget Summary – Overall Council  
Financial Year 2019/20**

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2019/20	Revised budget 2019/20	Budget to date 2019/20	Actuals to date 2019/20	Variance to date 2019/20	Projected Outturn 2019/20	Projected Variance 2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Keep my place safe and looking good	4,044	4,243	2,425	2,307	-118	4,019	-224
Help me run a successful business	560	592	231	245	14	579	-12
Help me be financially independent	406	437	910	905	-5	435	-2
Help me to live my life independently	134	129	64	58	-7	126	-3
Help me find somewhere to live in my locality	859	839	323	289	-34	834	-5
Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit	576	627	337	331	-6	655	28
Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose)	3,224	3,429	2,942	2,890	-52	3,316	-164
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,804</b>	<b>10,346</b>	<b>7,232</b>	<b>7,025</b>	<b>-207</b>	<b>9,963</b>	<b>-383</b>
<b>Corporate Financing</b>	<b>-9,804</b>	<b>-10,346</b>	<b>-8,322</b>	<b>-8,441</b>	<b>-119</b>	<b>-10,535</b>	<b>-189</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,090</b>	<b>-1,416</b>	<b>-326</b>	<b>-571</b>	<b>-571</b>

**Financial Commentary:**

There are a number of variances across the strategic purposes. The summary above shows the overall 2019/20 revenue position for the Council and the main variations are as a result of:

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**Keep my place safe and looking good (£224k saving)**

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

The variances to report are :

- It is projected that Bereavement services will receive less income than expected from burial fees in 2019/20, therefore showing a year end variance for the service of **£109k**.
- There is a saving within Community safety budgets due to salary vacancies which are being addressed in a service review. The underspend, however, will be offset against the overhead recharge to the HRA (shown in enabling services) due to the service being 100% attributable to the HRA of **£100k**.
- Development Management has received some large applications in the first half the financial year. However, the income trend is not expected to continue at the same rate for the second half of the year and therefore forecast against budget is **£73k** shortfall.
- There is variance within planning policy due to some additional grant being received towards a Town Centre study and underspends in the second quarter on general supplies and services **£48k**.
- There are some salary savings due to vacancies of **£274k** within Core Waste, Environmental Management, Place teams and Trees & woodland management mainly due to a pending services delivery review.

**Help me run a successful business (£12k underspend)**

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

- There are no significant individual variances in quarter 2 to report.

**Help me be financially independent (£2k underspend)**

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

- There are no significant individual variances in quarter 2 to report

**Help me to live my life independently (£3k underspend)**

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

- There are no significant individual variances in quarter 2 to report

**Help me find somewhere to live in my locality (£5k underspend)**

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

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- The variance shown in this strategic purpose is due to some salary savings from reduced hours and also increased income from Houses in Multiple occupation following changes in regulations **£5k**.

**Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit (£28k overspend)**

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

- There is a variance within Business development – Cultural services due to a saving on the Christmas lights budget, some additional income on the civic suite and staff vacancies **£4k**.
- There are further savings within Park & Events to do with temporary salary savings due to the change of service delivery and new staff structure implementation - these posts have now been filled going into 2019/20 **£29k**.
- These savings have been offset against an overspend within Rubicon Client Cultural Events due to delayed property maintenance costs being received **£63k**.

**Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose) (£164k underspent)**

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

- The underspend variance within Asset & Property Management is mainly due to vacant posts – a service review is taking place **£36k**.
- There is a small overspend within central post opening due to increased postage costs which is currently being addressed **£20k**.
- Equalities and Policy have some savings on general supplies and services **£22k**.
- There are further salary savings in Corporate Management Team (CMT), Customer service support and Human Resources due to vacant posts. Some of these are expected to be filled going into the second half of 2019/20 **£160k**.

**Corporate Financing (£189k saving)**

- There is a variance in corporate financing due to borrowing costs not being as much as expected mainly due to the spending profile of the capital programme **£123k**. There has also been a slight improvement on the business rates income **£50k**

**4. Savings Monitoring**

- 4.1 The medium term financial plan included £1,127k of savings identified to be delivered during 2019/20 the breakdown of these savings is attached at appendix 3. £206k of these identified savings is in relation to a vacancy factor and £181k saving is in relation to transformational redesign.



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To quarter 2 £579k of the £1,127k identified savings have been realised against the budgeted April to September savings of £563k

In addition to the above officers have been required to find further savings throughout the financial year 2019/20. At quarter 2 additional savings (above those identified) have been realised of £339k.

**5. Cash Management**

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Position</b>
As at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 (Actual)	6.0	Borrowing
As at 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2019	nil	Borrowing

**5.2 Borrowing**

As at the 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019 there are no short term borrowings and £103.929m in long term borrowing with associated costs in the quarter of £888k. All long term borrowing costs relate to the HRA.

An interest payable budget has been set of £158k for 2019/20 due to expenditure relating to current capital projects.

**5.3 Investments**

At 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019 there were £8m investments held.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**6. Capital Budgets**

<b>Capital Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2019/20</b>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2019/20 £'000	Revised budget 2019/20 £'000	Budget to date 2019/20 £'000	Actuals to date 2019/20 £'000	Variance to date 2019/20 £'000	Projected Outturn 2019/20 £'000	Projected Variance 2019/20 £'000
Keep my place safe and looking good	1,962	3,832	1,916	853	-1,063	1,738	-2,094
Help me run a successful business	0	80	80	0	-80	0	-80
Help me to live my life independently	850	1,623	812	593	-218	1,471	-152
Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit	1,057	1,143	581	33	-548	33	-1,110
Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose)	0	455	227	138	-90	300	-155
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,879</b>	<b>7,133</b>	<b>3,576</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>-1,959</b>	<b>3,542</b>	<b>-3,591</b>

**Financial Commentary:****Keep my place safe and looking good**

The main variances for this strategic purpose relate to the following projects;

- The Vehicle replacement programme, Improved parking scheme, upgrade of fuel equipment along with the Locality capital projects have had a full review by officers and it has been requested that the budgets are re-profiled into future years along with budget release as no longer required. See appendix 4
- The capital budget for the removal of 5 weirs through Arrow Valley Park has also been delayed and it is therefore expected this will not commence until the early part of 2020/21.

**Help me run a successful business**

- The project is currently under review and it is expected not to be spent within 2019/20. It will therefore be requested to move the budget into 2020/22.

**Help me to live my life independently**

- The disabled facilities grant scheme has an underspend to the second quarter but it is projected this will be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019

- There is also an underspend on the Energy & Efficiency Installation project and is projected this will be an ongoing project over the next three years.

**Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit**

- Majority of the projects have all been reviewed in this second quarter and it is expected due to seasonal factors and consultations with stakeholders/contractors that the schemes are now likely to commence in early 2020.

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

- The variance for this strategic purpose relates to the New Finance Enterprise System in Financial services which has now commenced. The project is expected to be completed by September 2020 and a request will be made to re-profile some of the budget into the first quarter of 2020/21.

**7. Housing Revenue Account**

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April 2019 – September 2019.

**8. Earmarked Reserves**

The position as at 30th September 2019/20 is shown in Appendix 2.

**9. General Fund Balances**

The General Fund Balance as at the 31st March 2019 is £1.223m. A balanced budget was approved in February 2019 to include identified savings which have been built into individual budget allocations. This also included a planned use of balances for 2019/20 of £211k. The current level of balances will therefore reduce to £1.012m with recommended level of balances of £750k with the aim to increase to £1.5m over the medium term

**10. Legal Implications**

No Legal implications have been identified.

**11. Service/Operational Implications**

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

**12. Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

No direct implications as a result of this report.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019**13. Risk Management**

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

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – HRA Monitoring April – September 2019/20

Appendix 2 – Earmarked Reserves 2019/20

Appendix 3 – Savings Monitoring 2019/20

Appendix 4 – Capital Re-profiling 2019/20

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)****REVENUE 2019/20 Quarter 2**

	2019/20 Full Year Budget £'000	2019/20 Budget to Date Apr - Sep £'000	2019/20 Actuals Apr - Sep £'000	2019/20 Variance Apr - Sep £'000	2019/20 Projected Outturn £'000	2019/20 Projected Variance £'000
<b>INCOME</b>						
Dwelling Rents	22,857	11,662	11,745	-83	22,900	-43
Non-Dwelling Rents	523	440	450	-10	523	0
Tenants' Charges for Services & Facilities	649	347	290	57	649	0
Contributions towards Expenditure	43	9	12	-3	81	-38
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,072</b>	<b>12,458</b>	<b>12,497</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>24,153</b>	<b>-81</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
Repairs & Maintenance	5,523	2,761	2,836	75	5,975	452
Supervision & Management	8,660	1,746	1,377	-369	8,388	-272
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	144	72	51	-21	147	3
Provision for Bad Debts	273	0	0	0	200	-73
Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets	5,729	0	0	0	5,729	0
Interest Payable & Debt Management Costs	4,179	0	0	0	4,179	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>24,508</b>	<b>4,579</b>	<b>4,264</b>	<b>-315</b>	<b>24,618</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Net cost of Services</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>-7,879</b>	<b>-8,233</b>	<b>-354</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>-7,879</b>	<b>-8,233</b>	<b>-354</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>29</b>
Interest Receivable	-36	0	0	0	-100	-64
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Balances	-400	0	0	-400	-365	35
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit on Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-7,879</b>	<b>-8,233</b>	<b>-754</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Financial Commentary:**

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April - September 2019

**The major variances are due to the following:****- Repairs & Maintenance:**

Repairs and Maintenance is over budget by £75k at quarter two and is forecast to increase to £452k over budget by the year end. Most of the variance relates to the number and value of roofing jobs and the cost of agency staff. Roofing is £123k overspent at quarter two and forecast to increase to £175k at the year end. The reason for this is due to the number of leaking roofs, it should also be noted that scaffolding costs are a large part of this spend as even minor jobs require scaffolding. Agency staff (net of savings from employee budgets) is £108k overspent at quarter two and forecast to increase to £131k overspent at the year end. The agency staff have been covering sickness, vacancies and providing capacity but since November all agency staff have been required to cover vacant posts. This level of overspend cannot be afforded and there is a need for £365k savings to avoid using balances and going below the minimum recommended level. The matter is receiving urgent attention with some planned work scheduled in 2019/20 (e.g. electrical testing) is now being scheduled into 2020/21 and limiting the spend for the rest of the financial year on responsive repairs and roofing. There is a need to bring down repairs and maintenance expenditure in future years mainly through increased productivity of the in house team and improved control of contract spend.

**- Supervision & Management:**

Supervision and Management is £206k under budget at quarter two and is forecast to increase to £272k under budget by the year end. At quarter two £126k of the under spend relates to employee savings by holding vacant posts pending the ongoing review of the housing function and the employee savings are forecast to increase (broadly double) to £254k under budget by the year end. Other savings as at quarter two for electricity (£16k), gas (£15k) and cleaning supplies (£23k) are predicted to be on budget by the year end meaning the majority of the year end savings in supervision and management relate to employee budgets.

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

**HRA CAPITAL 2019/20 Quarter 2****Strategic Purpose****Help Me to Find Somewhere to Live in my Locality**

	<b>2019/20 Full Year Budget £'000</b>	<b>2019/20 Budget to Date Apr - Sep £'000</b>	<b>2019/20 Actuals Apr - Sep £'000</b>	<b>2019/20 Variance YTD £'000</b>
1-4-1 Housing Replacement	4,277	2,139	1,329	-810
Catch Up Rep-Bath Replacements	100	50	36	-14
Catch Up Rep-Kitchen Upgrades	100	50	50	0
Asbestos General	1,000	500	110	-390
Structural Repairs	60	30	28	-2
General Roofing	50	25	0	-25
Electrical Upgrades	400	200	197	-3
Upgrade Of Central Heating Systems	400	200	136	-64
Window Replacements	100	50	4	-46
Equipment & Adaptations	696	348	244	-104
External Cladding & Wall Hanging	0	0	4	4
Drainage	0	0	5	5
Water Supply	50	25	1	-24
Environmental Enhancements	375	188	7	-181
Kitchen voids	0	0	2	2
FRA Works	500	250	283	33
Stock Condition Survey	150	75	179	104
Fencing Renewals	90	45	0	-45
Housing System	537	269	70	-199
Design & Supervision	350	175	0	-175
	<b>9,235</b>	<b>4,618</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>-1,933</b>

**Financial Commentary:**

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

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

1-4-1 Housing Replacement: properties built or purchased using 1-4-1 capital receipts generated from Right to Buy sales

Description	Balance b/fwd 1/4/2019	Budgeted Release 2019/20	Revised Balance b/fwd 1/4/2019	Transfers in existing reserve 2019/20	Transfers out existing reserve 2019/20	New Reserve 2019/20	C/fwd 31/3/2020	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>GF Earmarked Reserves</b>								
Business Rates Grants	(7)	7	0	0	0	0	0	Small Business Rate Relief - Ringfenced grant
Commercialism	(29)	0	(29)	0	15	0	(13)	To help fund costs in relation to commercialism projects
Community Development	(4)	2	(2)	0	0	0	(2)	To support the costs associated with community projects
Community Safety	(225)	0	(225)	0	225	0	0	External grant funding to be released over a number of years on Community Safety Projects ongoing
Corporate Services	(150)	150	0	0	0	0	0	Funding for Locality Enhancements
Customer Services	(12)	12	0	0	0	0	0	Contribution to WCC for an open portal
Electoral Services	(41)	19	(22)	(14)	0	0	(35)	To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government
Equalities	(11)	11	0	0	0	0	0	To fund licence fees
Equipment Replacement	(73)	0	(73)	0	0	0	(73)	ICT equipment reserve
Financial Services	(72)	0	(72)	0	0	0	(72)	Brexit reserve and also funds to support the new enterprise system
Corporate Financing	(3,246)	0	(3,246)	0	0	0	(3,246)	The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.
Housing Benefits Implementation	(199)	0	(199)	0	0	0	(199)	Specific welfare reform grant received
Housing Support	(725)	50	(675)	0	47	0	(628)	Government Specific Grant - annual funding
Land charges	(9)	0	(9)	0	0	0	(9)	To fund potential litigation in relation to Land Charges
Land Drainage	(141)	0	(141)	0	0	0	(141)	To support costs associated with health and safety issues within the environment
Parks and Open spaces	(23)	10	(13)	0	13	0	0	To fund a review of the local allotments.
Planning	(30)	0	(30)	0	0	0	(30)	Custom build grant to provide support to the council towards expenditure lawfully incurred in relation to the provision and maintenance of a self-build register.
Public Donations	(6)	0	(6)	0	0	0	(6)	Accumulated donations for designated projects.
Sports Development	(63)	0	(63)	0	63	0	0	Ringfenced grants for a number of sports development activities to improve Health and Wellbeing in the Borough
Town Centre	(45)	0	(45)	0	43	0	(2)	To support improvements in the Town Centre High Street
Warmer Homes	(12)	0	(12)	0	0	0	(12)	To support the costs associated with community projects (repair)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(5,125)</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>(4,863)</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,470)</b>	
<b>HRA Capital Reserve</b>								
Capital Reserve-HRA	(18,236)	0	(18,236)	0	0	0	(18,236)	Reserve to enable the debt repayment on HRA, and future repairs and maintenance along with support for the Housing Growth Programme.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(18,236)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(18,236)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(18,236)</b>	

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Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2019-20 £'000	April - Sept 19/20	Quarter 2			
					On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Community Services	Help me live my life independently	Lifeline - Additional Income from Cannock Chase contract	-90	-45	Y			
Community Services	Help me live my life independently	Lifeline - Additional Income from Cannock Chase contract - SLA	-30	-15	Y			
Community Services	Help me live my life independently	Reduction in budget following changes to the Grants to Voluntary Bodies scheme	-20	-10	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Print contract	-54	-27	Y	-10		
Corporate Services	Enabling	Savings realised on supplies and services	-2	-1	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Savings realised on supplies and services	-1	-1	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Savings realised on supplies and services	-1	-1	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	10 year pension liability from 2008 restructure	-84	-42	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Vacancy management	-206	-103	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Transformational service redesign	-181	-91	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Enabling	NNDR budget	-13	-7	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Help me be financially independent	Benefits - HRA Recharge for service	-40	-20	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Help me run a successful business	Property - Additional rental income	-58	-29	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Help me be financially independent	Audit budgets	-4	-2	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Help me be financially independent	Audit budgets	-3	-2	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Help me be financially independent	Audit budgets	-14	-7	Y			
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Additional Income from increased cremation fees	-32	-16	N		Y	10
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	Budgets not required	-10	-5	Y			
Legal and Democratic	Help me find somewhere to live in my locality	Land charges	-1	-1	Y			
Legal and Democratic	Enabling	Additional Income	-5	-3	Y			
Leisure and Cultural Services	enabling	Reduction in forecast for ongoing systems implementation	-38	-19	Y			
Regulatory Client	Help me run a successful business	Additional Income	-3	-2	Y			
Regulatory Client	Help me run a successful business	Additional Income	-10	-5	Y			
Parenting & Family Support	help me live my life independently (incl health & activity)	Additional Income	-16	-8	Y	-16		
Housing General Fund	Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality	Accumulation of minor reductions in various budget lines	-5	-3	Y			
Housing General Fund	Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality	Reduction in crash pad costs	-11	-6	Y			
Housing General Fund	Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality	Flexible Homelessness Support Grant awarded for 2019/20	-193	-97	Y			
Housing General Fund	Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality	Public liability insurance budget removed as not applicable	-2	-1	Y			
			-1,127	-563		-26		10

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**RBC Capital Programme 2019/20 - 2022/23**

appendix 4

Description	Department	Strategic purpose	Funding	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2019/20 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2020/21 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2021/22 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2022/23 Total
				£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Vehicle replacement	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	-1,125,058	190,500	331,600	743,600	-1,611,500	315,500	671,000	2,258,000
Wheelie Bin purchase	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	-36,000	115,073		85,000		85,000		85,000
Improved Parking Scheme ( includes locality funding)	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	-240,000	0	-352,000	0		400,000		400,000
Improved Parking Scheme - Coupass Cottages - Feckenham	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	25,000	25,000		0		0		0
Improved Parking Scheme - Lingen and Mordiford Close, Winyates	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	40,000	40,000		0		0		0
Improved Parking Scheme - Ashton Close, Headless Close	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	100,000	100,000		0		0		0
Improved Parking Scheme - Patch Lane, Oakenshaw	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	75,000	75,000		0		0		0
Locality Capital Projects	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	-325,000	0		0		0		0
Locality Capital Projects - Batchley Infrastructure Improvements	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	200,000	200,000		0		0		0
Locality Capital Projects - Woodrow Footpath Work	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	75,000	75,000		0		0		0
Locality Capital Projects - Capital Landscape Improvement	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000		0		0
Replacing 3 fuel pumps and upgrading tank monitoring equipment	Environmental Services	Keep my place safe and looking good	borrowing/capital receipts	-25,000	0	25,000	25,000		0		0
<b>Total current Capital programme</b>				<b>-1,186,058</b>	<b>5,561,410</b>	<b>429,600</b>	<b>1,774,850</b>	<b>-1,611,500</b>	<b>1,206,002</b>	<b>671,000</b>	<b>3,148,502</b>

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Revenue Budget Reconciliation 2019/20							Appendix 6
Service Area	Full year original budget 19-20	Revised Full year budget 19-20	Difference	Reserves	Qtr 1 Identified Savings	Virements / budget realignment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Business Transformation	1,630,441	1,557,556	-72,885		-43,667		-72,885
Community Services	1,214,282	1,422,968	208,686	224,807	-16,664		208,686
Corporate Services	-2,246,499	-1,822,495	424,005	15,462	408,293		424,005
Customer Access & Financial Support	1,925,214	1,945,306	20,092	47,100	-36,099		20,092
Early Help - General Fund	-16,000	-16,000	0				0
Environmental Services	2,585,172	2,563,776	-21,395		-35,024		-21,395
Finance & Resources	642,407	630,378	-12,029		-13,581		-12,029
Housing Services - General Fund	668,300	656,041	-12,259		-12,259		-12,259
Legal Equalities & Democratic Services	972,791	946,844	-25,947	-13,866	-13,235		-25,947
Leisure & Cultural Services	845,935	852,365	6,430	79,527	-37,158	-37,500	6,430
Planning & Regeneration	614,950	609,799	-5,151	40,000	-46,589		-5,151
RBC Reg Client	341,077	341,077	0				0
RBC Rubicon Client	624,692	658,176	33,484		-4,016	37,500	33,484
Corporate Financing	-9,802,761	-10,345,790	-543,029	-393,030	-150,000		-543,030
<b>Total RBC</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-0</b>

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Keep my place safe and looking good.

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Bereavement Services	-1,097	-293	-236	57	-19%	-987	109	-10%	Fewer deaths year to date compared to last financial year.
Building Control	-3	-31	-30	1	0%	-3	-0	0%	
Car Parks/Civil Enforcement Parking	28	12	9	-3	0%	24	-5	0%	
Community Safety	761	493	437	-56	-11%	661	-100	-13%	This is recharged to HRA (ASB) team and there is an opposite variance within corporate
Core Environmental Operations	294	147	151	4	0%	301	7	2%	
Core waste Operations	1,124	562	508	-54	-10%	1,051	-73	-7%	Salary savings due to vacant posts
Development Management	93	47	47	1	0%	167	73	78%	Forecast shortfall in planning applications income to budget
Engineering	308	164	164	1	0%	309	0	0%	
Environmental Health	550	271	279	8	3%	564	14	3%	
Environmental Mgmt	418	206	188	-18	-9%	384	-35	-8%	Salary savings due to vacant posts
Place Teams	1,230	561	527	-34	-6%	1,153	-77	-6%	Salary savings due to vacant posts
Planning Policy	274	157	156	-0	0%	225	-48	-18%	Additional clean up grant received and underspends in the first quarter on general supplies and services.
Supplies And Transport	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	
Trees & Woodland Management	262	131	105	-25	-19%	172	-90	-34%	Temporary salary savings pending service delivery review
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>4,243</b>	<b>2,425</b>	<b>2,307</b>	<b>-118</b>		<b>4,019</b>	<b>-224</b>		

**Help me run a successful business**

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Asset & Property Management - Comm	-336	-224	-223	2	0%	-337	-1	0%	
Business Development - Business	47	24	32	8	35%	58	11	24%	
Community Services - Grants to Vol bod	246	123	119	-4	0%	244	-2	0%	
Economic Development	192	96	105	9	10%	199	7	4%	
Licensing	-208	-113	-116	-3	0%	-225	-17	8%	
Rubicon Client Business Development	652	326	328	2	0%	640	-12	-2%	Costs associated with the set up of Rubicon Leisure Ltd
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>579</b>	<b>-12</b>		

**Help me to be financially independent (including education & skills)**

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Benefits	695	362	351	-12	-3%	729	34	5%	
Benefits Subsidy	-793	280	271	-10	-3%	-813	-20	3%	
Revenues	536	268	284	16	6%	520	-16	-3%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>-5</b>		<b>435</b>	<b>-2</b>		

**Help me to live my life independently (including health & activity)**

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Community - Lifeline	-85	-43	-48	-5	13%	-82	3	0%	
Community Transport	230	115	113	-1	0%	240	10	4%	Shopmobility not achieving income budget following closure of several high street shops - new manager reviewing service to make it viable moving forward.
Early Help - General Fund	-16	-8	-8	-0	0%	-32	-16	100%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>-7</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>-3</b>		



**Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality**

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Housing General Fund	656	232	215	-17	-7%	670	14	2%	saving on staff reduced hours - given up as saving plus additional HMO licence income 5k
Housing Strategy & Enabling	218	109	97	-12	-11%	200	-18	-8%	
Land charges	-36	-18	-23	-5	0%	-37	-1	0%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>-34</b>		<b>834</b>	<b>-5</b>		

**Provide good things for me to do, see and visit**

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Business Development - Cultural	26	13	11	-2	0%	22	-4	0%	savings given up on christmas lights budget, additional civic suite income and staff vacancies
Cultural Services	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	
Facilities Management - Public Conveni	-0	-0	0	0	0%	-0	0	0%	savings due to vacant posts which have now been filled and spending restricted to essential spend only
Parks & Events	389	186	138	-48	-26%	360	-29	-7%	
Parks & Green Spaces	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	Delayed property maintenance at the Rubicon sites to be absorbed by RBC
Rubicon Client Cultural Services	0	0	49	49	0%	63	63	0%	
Rubicon Client Parks & Events	6	3	4	1	0%	5	-1	0%	savings due to vacant posts which have now been filled
Rubicon Client Sports Services	0	0	3	3	0%	3	3	0%	
Sports & Arts Development	207	135	125	-10	-7%	202	-5	0%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>-6</b>		<b>655</b>	<b>28</b>		

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

Department	2019-20 Annual budget £'000	2019-20 Budget to date £'000	2019-20 Actuals £'000	2019-20 Variance £'000	% variance	2019-20 Projected Outturn at Qtr 2 £'000	2019-20 Projected Outturn Variance at Qtr 2 £'000	% Variance Projected Outturn	Financial Commentary
Asset & Property Management	1,352	837	831	-6	-1%	1,316	-36	-3%	Property team transferred back from PPL. Vacant posts within, restructure taking place.
Audit Services	91	45	45	-0	0%	91	0	0%	
Business Development	52	26	24	-2	0%	49	-2	0%	
Central Post Opening	78	39	51	11	29%	97	20	25%	There is an increase in postage costs which is currently being reviewed.
CMT	212	106	97	-9	-8%	183	-29	-14%	Vacant posts pending a service review.
Communications & Print	172	84	92	8	9%	180	7	4%	
Corporate Services	-2,267	-62	-65	-4	0%	-2,265	2	0%	
Customer Support Services	492	209	173	-36	-17%	405	-87	-18%	Vacant posts pending a full service review.
Democratic Services	363	181	187	6	3%	375	12	3%	
Depot	-1	-0	-0	-0	0%	0	1	0%	
Elections	254	136	139	3	0%	254	0	0%	
Facilities Management	78	39	38	-1	0%	81	3	0%	
Equalities & Policy	77	39	29	-9	-24%	55	-22	-29%	Underspends on general supplies and services budgets.
Financial Services	540	270	275	5	2%	547	8	1%	
Human Resources	489	244	214	-30	-12%	444	-45	-9%	Salary savings due to vacant posts.
ICT	890	445	467	22	5%	884	-6	-1%	
Legal Services	365	182	172	-10	-6%	369	5	0%	
P A & Directorate Support	141	70	74	4	0%	147	6	4%	
Partnerships	54	27	30	3	0%	61	8	14%	
Procurement	1	0	0	-0	0%	0	-1	0%	
Transformation	48	24	18	-6	-25%	41	-7	-15%	Salary savings due to vacant posts.
Transport	-1	-0	-0	0	0%	0	1	0%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>3,479</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>2,890</b>	<b>-52</b>		<b>3,316</b>	<b>-164</b>		

<b>Total service strategic purposes</b>	<b>10,346</b>	<b>7,232</b>	<b>7,025</b>	<b>-207</b>		<b>9,963</b>	<b>-383</b>		
<b>Corporate Expenditure</b>	<b>-10,346</b>	<b>-8,322</b>	<b>-8,441</b>	<b>-119</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-10,535</b>	<b>-189</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Use of balances</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,090</b>	<b>-1,416</b>	<b>-326</b>		<b>-571</b>	<b>-571</b>	<b>-0</b>	

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

19th December 2020

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT SETTING 2020/21**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Director Finance & Resources Judith Willis, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To present Members with the proposed dwelling rent increase for 2020/21.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that**

**the actual average rent increase for 2020/21 be set as September 2019 CPI, 1.7%, plus 1% resulting in an increase of 2.7%**

**3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications

- 3.1 The rent increase above is in line with Government guidance on rent increases. It is set as September 2019 CPI, 1.7%, plus 1% resulting in an increase of 2.7%.
- 3.2 As members are aware the system of housing revenue account subsidy ceased on the 31st March 2012 and was replaced with a devolved system of council housing finance called self-financing. The proposal in the form of a financial settlement meant a redistribution of the 'national' housing debt. This resulted in the Council borrowing £98.9 million from the Public Works Loan Board.
- 3.3 Self-financing placed a limit (Debt Cap) on borrowing for housing purposes at the closing position for 2011/12 at £122.2 million, however it has been announced that this debt cap has now been removed.

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**19<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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- 3.4 The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 set out that rents within the social housing sector were to decrease by 1% each year for 4 years commencing on 1st April 2016. This has now come to an end, and the Council is able to increase rents again.

2020/21

- 3.5 For 2020/21, based on the legislative changes, the actual average rent increase will be 2.7%. The average rent on a 52 week basis will be £79.28 for 52 weeks or £85.89 on a 48 week basis. This compares to the average for 2019/20 on a 52 week basis of £77.02 and £83.44 on a 48 week basis.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 Section 21 of the Welfare and Reform Act 2016 required 'In relation to each relevant year, registered providers of social housing must secure that the amount of rent payable in respect of that relevant year by a tenant of their social housing in England is at least 1% less than the amount of rent that was payable by the tenant in respect of the preceding 12 months.' This has now come to an end, and on 4 October 2017, DCLG announced that "increases to social housing rents will be limited to CPI plus 1% for 5 years from 2020."
- 3.7 Consultation on a new rent direction took place between September and November 2018. The response to the consultation was published on 26 February 2019 with the Government confirming the October 2017 announcement.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.8 The Council needs to approve the rents in a timely manner in order to allow officer time to notify the tenants of the annual rent. Tenants must have 28 calendar days' notice of any change to their rent charge.

Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 The rent increase will be applied by the same percentage regardless of property size. The equality and diversity implications of the changes will be evaluated and considered as part of the decision making process.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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- 4.1 There is a risk to that rents are not approved in sufficient time to allow for notification of tenants of the increase. This will be monitored throughout the process.

**5. APPENDICES**

None

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> December 2019****HOUSING STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Craig Warhurst
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive
Wards Affected	<b>All</b>
Non-Key Decision - Yes	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report to Executive Committee provides a further progress report detailing the actions taken to deliver the Housing Strategic Improvement Plan which was originally endorsed in September 2018.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Committee are asked to resolve:-

- 2.1 Executive consider the content of the report and endorse the progress reports for each of the items detailed.**

**3. KEY ISSUES****3.1 Financial Implications**

- 3.1.1 There are no new financial implications as a result of this report and the relevant financial updates are contained within section 2 of the Improvement Plan.

- 3.1.2 The Medium Term Financial Plan for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2020/21 to 2023/24 will be presented to Executive Committee in January 2020.

**3.2 Legal Implications**

- 3.2.1 The Council in operating as a social landlord is required to comply with corporate policies, financial regulations, contract procedure rules, statutory returns and regulatory standards set by the Government.

**EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> December 2019****3.3 Background Information**

3.3.1 Members of the Executive Committee were originally presented with a Strategic Improvement/Action Plan in September 2018.

3.3.2 This report and updated plan provides Members with a detailed overview of our progress to date in the delivery of change, improvements and agreed reviews across the whole of Housing Services.

**3.4 Section 1: Corporate**

3.4.1 All of the corporate actions are being progressed with an update/progress report provided for each action.

The cultural change programme within housing and across all our organisation(s) has been launched initially by the means of staff briefings. During 2020 and onwards there will be a whole host of service based team meetings held to develop localised action plans in support of the improvement plan(s) and change programme.

3.4.2 Progress on the two senior management reviews in housing is reported as follows:-

- (a) Housing & Community Services Management Team – Completed subject to one manager vacancy.
- (b) Housing Capital/Property/Compliance team(s) – Currently in consultation with Trade Unions and staff with a planned implementation date from 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

**3.5 Section 2: Staffing/Service Reviews**

3.5.1 The following service reviews have been completed:-

- Housing Options & Advisory Team (Manager post currently vacant)
- St David's House

The next phase of service reviews to be undertaken during 2020 include:-

- Home Support Service
- Housing Management Services/Locality
- Performance Management Team
- Repairs and Maintenance (including gas services).

3.5.2 These service reviews will be led by the Senior Service Managers recruited to as a result of the recent management reviews undertaken.



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3.5.3 To support the wholesale review of all our Repairs and Maintenance service(s) Ridge Consultancy have been commissioned to provide and support the more detailed work required, alongside our business improvement team. This work to a clearly defined brief includes:-

- Data gathering, verification and industry best practice advice (including work force skills audit)
- Overview of current performance, including challenges and opportunities
- Service delivery options.

3.5.4 Early consideration will be given to the report recommendations and proposals alongside consideration of future gas services as a whole review rather than a review of discrete services.

**3.6 Section 5: Compliance and Capital Works**

3.6.1 It was reported at the last update to Members that completion of the survey work for a comprehensive stock condition survey was expected by the end of November 2019. It is now anticipated that the survey will be completed by the end of January 2020. Thereafter a five year capital programme will be proposed, however the survey detail to date has provided sufficient information to start to populate a programme.

3.6.2 Regular compliance reports, measures reporting and updates are provided to the Portfolio Holders and Executive Members in the following areas:-

- Fire Safety Order/arrangements
- Control of Asbestos
- Electricity at Work
- Gas Servicing and Maintenance

3.6.3 Ensuring compliance with Health, Safety and Welfare and all relevant regulatory requirements remains of the utmost priority. Significant resource and investment has been made throughout the period of the Improvement Plan and this will continue to be the case in the future.

**3.7 Section 9: Housing Management IT System**

3.7.1 Details of the current project team and key implementation actions are included in the Improvement Plan. We have procured the Civica CX housing management system with the implementation phase commencing in November 2019. It is anticipated that full delivery of all the procured modules will be implemented prior to December 2021.

**EXECUTIVE****19<sup>th</sup> December 2019****3.8 Overview**

- 3.8.1 All of the identified areas within the Improvement Plan are being developed, managed and regularly reported.
- 3.8.2 Whilst the Plan(s) remain prioritised and focused on priority areas to ensure that the necessary change and improvements are delivered, they do require a degree of flexibility given the length and extent of the proposals.
- 3.8.3 Heads of Service, Managers and all staff are working hard to ensure the plans and actions are undertaken in a joined up integrated way whilst remaining tenant and community focused.
- 3.8.4 Members will undoubtedly recognise the significant achievements and developments which have been made over the last fifteen months, however also acknowledge that the change and improvement programme whilst progressive is also challenging to deliver.

**3.9 Human Resources & Staffing Implications**

- 3.9.1 All of the management and service reviews currently ongoing and those detailed over the next twelve months will be undertaken fully in accordance with our agreed Human Resources policies. Full consultation will be undertaken with the Trade Unions and all staff impacted by any review proposal(s).

**3.10 Customer/Equalities & Diversity Implications**

- 3.10.1 A wide range of people, groups of people and our communities are affected by current and future actions. Specifically tenants, future tenants, leaseholders, residents of the Borough and those seeking support and advice in all housing matters.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Risk logs are maintained and regularly reviewed at both corporate and service levels.
- 4.2 The following risks remain categorised as high risk areas for these service(s).
- Failure to effectively manage housing repairs and maintenance.
  - Failure to deliver on compliance, regulatory and health and safety.
  - Financial risks – Housing Revenue Account and General Fund – long term financial sustainability.

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**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Strategic Improvement /Action Plan – November/  
December 2019

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Housing/Housing Revenue Account – Improvement Plan – 11<sup>th</sup>  
September 2018

**7. AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

1. CORPORATE

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
1.1	Capital Procurement & Contracts	Jayne Pickering/ Claire Felton	October 2018	Comprehensive assurance/ audit report to Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	Initial report completion October 2018. Last assurance report to Audit, Governance & Standards October 2019. Further update report to Audit, Governance & Standards January 2020.
1.2	Delivery to Strategic Purpose	Sue Hanley	Throughout recovery plan	Delivery of actions to plan:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member &amp; Portfolio Holder briefings</li> <li>• Staff briefings</li> <li>• Team briefings</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Corporate Plan Priorities March 2019</li> </ul>	Monitoring/progress reports considered by Executive Committee 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2019, 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2019, 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2019.  All Member and staff briefings undertaken – ongoing.  Completed – report to Executive & Council January 2020.

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
1.2 contd		Deb Poole	Revised date February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership/ Management Development Programme</li> </ul>	Report/proposals in preparation for consideration by Corporate Management Team December 2019. Subject to provider confirmation, launch anticipated from February 2020.
1.3	Cultural change	Sue Hanley/ CMT	August 2018 ↓ August 2021	<p>Team/individual purpose plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manager/team identification of improvement plan(s)</li> <li>Whole programme of change via Staff Survey Programme Board</li> </ul>	<p>Launch of Vision and Principles throughout the organisation Sept 2019.</p> <p>Launch of Cultural Change Programme throughout organisation November 2019.</p> <p>Next steps – development of team programmes/ action plans by January 2020.</p>

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
1.4	Senior Leadership Team - appraisals	Kevin Dicks Annual CX appraisal to be undertaken by Leader/ Deputy Leader	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all appraisals/ supervision is undertaken throughout organisation top to bottom</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Appraisal completed April 2019
	Directors/HoS/All Managers – Appraisals	Kevin Dicks/ Sue Hanley/ Jayne Pickering /HoS	March 2019		Appraisals for Heads of Service responsible for Housing Services completed in March 2019. Further appraisals by May 2020.
	Performance Management Arrangements	Sue Hanley Judith Willis Guy Revans	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Management arrangements for all housing services teams</li> </ul>	Completed. HOS have performance management arrangements in place.
1.5	Leadership & Management Arrangements	Kevin Dicks	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Management Team Review</li> </ul>	To be considered by Executive Committee in January 2020.
			Sept 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise arrangements for lead HoS arrangements post consultation</li> </ul>	Completed October 2018.
1.6	Review of Housing & Community Services Management Team	Judith Willis	January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Review Proposals</li> <li>Consultation Staff/TUs</li> <li>Implement Management Team</li> </ul>	Service review completed and implemented. One management post to be reviewed/ recruited to.

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
1.7	Review of Housing Capital/ Property/Compliance Team(s)	Guy Revans	December 2018  July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Review Proposals</li> <li>• Consultation Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement Management Team</li> </ul>	Following dialogue with consultants assisting with the gas business case in addition to the revised budget position, it was considered that the 'whole business case' required a further review. This has now been undertaken and Trade Union and staff consultation commenced on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2019. Subject to any changes/ provision the review will be implemented week commencing the 16 <sup>th</sup> December.



STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

2. FINANCE

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
2.1	HRA Viability Plan	Jayne Pickering/ Chris Forrester	Completed	Short to medium term budget created incorporating feedback from CMT, removing budgets no longer required. Option exists to start using affordable rents given the primary focus is revenue as the capital programme has been scaled pending outcomes from the stock condition survey. Future modelling around repairs & maintenance will also then be undertaken. Once the new build programme is understood, capital modelling will be more useful and carried out.	Full budget review has been undertaken and unrequired budgets have been removed. New build programme is progressing, with costings being developed by Baily Garner. These will be modelled when received.  Rent setting and budget report to be presented to Members in January 2020.
2.2	30 Year Business Plan	Sue Hanley/ Jayne Pickering/ Chris Forrester	Spreadsheets in place ready to be populated	Requires information from stock condition survey	Review during financial year 2020/21.
2.3	Medium Term Financial Plan	Sue Hanley/ Jayne Pickering/ Chris Forrester	March 2019	As per viability plan	Agreed that a four year budget will be presented for approval in January 2020. This is in line with the General Fund and as part of the rent setting report.

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
2.4	Housing Growth Plan	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Chris Forrester	September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop working model(s) to develop a build programme.</li> </ul>	<p>Report submitted to Executive Committee in October 2018. <b>Action completed</b></p>
		Matthew Bough/ Derek Allen	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report to Executive – October 2018 – land/site disposals (HRA land/sites).</li> </ul>	<p>Public consultation has taken place for Edgeworth Close and final scheme designs and associated planning requirements are being finalised ready for submission w/c 25 November 2019.</p> <p>A redesign is being undertaken for Loxley Close due to the results of the flood risk survey modelling and there being no availability to mitigate the risks identified.</p>

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
2.4 contd					A total of 28 new properties have been brought back into the HRA since Jan 2019 and no monies have had to be returned to Central Government from the 1-4-1 receipts.
2.5	Income Growth	Guy Revans/ Judith Willis	March 2019  March 2019  Dec 2018  November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review &amp; update recharges</li> <li>• Review &amp; update service charges</li> <li>• Consider affordable rents and seek member view</li> <li>• Review &amp; update fees and charges</li> </ul>	<p>The Recharges Policy was endorsed by Executive Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Revised fees and charges for repairs and maintenance works was agreed.</p> <p>Officers will put in place charging methods and payment collection processes and procedures.</p> <p>A communications plan is being developed to ensure all tenants are aware of the introduction of the new rechargeable repairs policy.</p>

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
2.5 contd					<p>Work has started on a review of service charges.</p> <p>Work is also being undertaken to produce cost forecasts on fees and expenditure, in the review of all potential charges. Housing Benefit Regulations to be considered in respect of criteria for eligible and ineligible service charges.</p>
2.6	Review of Revenue Spending by all service areas	Guy Revans/ Judith Willis	<p>Feb 2019 (for budget planning)</p> <p>April 2019 to Nov 2019 for 2020/21.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Contracts</li> <li>• Materials</li> <li>• Support and administration</li> </ul>	In year savings of £500K required from the Repairs & Maintenance budget 2019/2020.

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
2.6 contd					<p>Internal work and work sent to contractors is currently restricted to essential spend only. New contracts are providing better values/ efficiencies. Vehicle numbers are being reduced, agency spend has been reduced and a number of staff have had their requests for Voluntary Redundancy accepted.</p> <p>All actions being undertaken in respect of the Authority’s Section 24 Notice which is being overviewed by Audit, Governance &amp; Standards, Executive Committee &amp; Council.</p> <p>Monthly budget meetings being held with Senior Officers and the Portfolio Holder.</p>

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

**3. STAFFING/SERVICE REVIEWS**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
3.1	Review of Housing Options & Advisory Team	Judith Willis	Proposals January 2019  Revised timescale February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Review Proposals</li> <li>• Consultation Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement Management Team</li> </ul>	Recruitment to the Housing Options Manager post was not successful. The post will now be reviewed by the Housing Tenancy and Advisory Manager.
3.2	Housing Older Peoples Accommodations Review including St. David's House Category A Schemes	Judith Willis	Revised date July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review funding allocation from WCC, currently being negotiated</li> <li>• Review Older Persons Strategy</li> <li>• Gather demand data</li> <li>• Understand the flow</li> <li>• Identify waste</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Links to allocation policy review</li> </ul>	<p>The Service Review of the Extra Care Scheme has been undertaken and a new structure implemented in October 2019.</p> <p>Recruitment is currently ongoing to a vacant post. A decision was taken to prioritise this part of the wider review following a CQC Inspection. The review of the Home Support Service will commence in January 2020.</p>

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
3.3	Gas Services Business Case	Guy Revans	Present to Executive in October 2019  Revised date for Executive consideration to be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste &amp; efficiencies</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Prepare business case</li> <li>• Review &amp; draft staffing structures</li> <li>• Consult with Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement new structure</li> </ul>	Ridge Consultants were appointed to produce the gas business case. A first draft report has been received and Officers are working with Ridge to prepare a final draft.
3.4	Review of Housing Management Services	Judith Willis	March 2019 ↓ Dec 2019  (Revised timescales proposed) October 2019 ↓ May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste &amp; efficiencies</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Tenant involvement</li> <li>• Prepare business case</li> <li>• Review &amp; draft staffing structures</li> <li>• Consult with Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement new structure</li> </ul>	The new senior service manager starts at the end of November. The wider service reviews will commence in early 2020.
3.5	Review of Performance Management Team	Judith Willis	March 2019 ↓ Dec 2019  (Revised timescales proposed) October 2019 ↓ May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Tenant involvement</li> <li>• Review &amp; draft staffing structures</li> <li>• Prepare business case</li> <li>• Consult with Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement new structure</li> </ul>	See update in 3.4

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
3.6	Review of All Repairs & Maintenance Teams	Guy Revans/ Ian Roberts	Commence review October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Tenant involvement</li> <li>• Review &amp; draft staffing structures</li> <li>• Prepare business case</li> <li>• Consult with Staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement new structure</li> </ul>	<p>Work has started with the improvements team to understand and prioritise the areas that will require change.</p> <p>Ridge Consultancy have been commissioned to undertake work relating to skills assessments, comparison of the services with high performing providers and to offer specialist support with defined service improvements.</p>



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**4. VOIDS**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
4.1	Review process end to end	Helen Keightley	30 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste &amp; efficiencies</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Links to allocations &amp; policy review</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Weekly voids meetings are now in place to ensure the smoother running of the voids process. This includes all key officers from Housing Property and the Locality Teams.</p> <p>Improved turnaround of voids by the in house team has been achieved.</p>
4.2	Redesign voids process	Helen Keightley	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant involvement</li> <li>• Clarify roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<p>This work will commence once the new Housing Tenancy and Advisory Manager is in post.</p>
4.3	Agree voids standard	Helen Keightley	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2018	End to end	<p>This will be finalised as part of the review of the operational teams and work taking place to introduce the new IT system.</p>

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
4.4	Agree measures	Judith Willis Guy Revans	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss at DMT &amp; with Portfolio Holder(s)</li> <li>• Consider good practice elsewhere</li> <li>• Draft &amp; trial measures</li> <li>• Refine &amp; implement</li> </ul>	Completed  Endorsed by Executive Committee February 2019.
4.5	Restructure service delivery and workforce	Judith Willis Guy Revans	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019  Revised timescale June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review &amp; draft staffing structures</li> <li>• Prepare business case</li> <li>• Consult with staff/TUs</li> <li>• Implement new structure</li> </ul>	This will be undertaken in conjunction with the revised management and service reviews alongside implementation of the new IT system.

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
4.6	Look at how we prevent damage to properties that leads to large scale refurbishment projects	Jas Sidhu Ian Roberts Jayne Baylis	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a risk based inspection programme</li> <li>Review enforcement procedures &amp; how this is communicated to tenants</li> </ul>	Additional training of staff through the Housing Quality Network (HQN). The revised Tenancy Agreement and the new Tenants Handbook and Fees and Charges Policy will all contribute to improvements and cost reductions.
4.7	Look at recharges and enforcement policy and procedures – draft policy.	Ian Roberts	March 2019		Forms part of the recharges policy that was approved by Executive Committee on 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2019.

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5. COMPLIANCE/CAPITAL WORKS

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
5.1	Undertake Stock Condition Survey and analyse results	Jas Sidhu/ Guy Revans	Revised timescale January 2020	Commission Stock Condition Survey and appropriate software to gather and analyse data. Draft indicative results December 2018 and full analysis by March 2019	<p>There have been some delays in completing the stock condition survey. Phase 2 of the project was due to be completed by the end of November, however due to the numbers of 'no access' attempts made by the surveyors, the survey will now be completed by the end of January 2020.</p> <p>Current survey numbers achieved:-</p> <p>Blocks – 599/595 (99.3%)                      Bungalows – 725/388 (53.5%)                      Flats/Bedsits – 2052/620 (30.2%)                      Houses - 2866/1451 (50.6%)                      Maisonettes – 64/21 – (32.8%)                      Garages 0/2027 (0%)</p>

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
5.1 contd					<p>The survey detail obtained to date has provided sufficient information to start to populate the future capital programme proposals.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> There is currently an issue with the recording of garages on the Saffron system preventing us uploading data on to the new Asprey system. Officers are currently working to resolve this issue.</p>
5.2	Agree resource framework for capital works	Jas Sidhu/ Guy Revans/ Finance	December 2018	Set indicative capital budget for 2019/20	<p>A reduced capital budget forms part of the HRA budget for 2019/20.</p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>
5.3	Develop and agree 5 year programme of works	Jas Sidhu/ Guy Revans	March 2020	Consult with members and tenants on priorities and programme timetable	<p>A capital programme for 2020 / 21 has been drafted/ proposed. The future 4 years will be finalised with Finance during February / March 2020.</p>

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
5.4	Review and agree procurement framework for major works programme	Jas Sidhu/ Guy Revans	March 2020	Programme to be drawn up with prioritised works/programme	A formalised procurement framework has been completed with key contracts already being procured.
5.5	Develop Asset Management Strategy	Jas Sidhu/ Guy Revans	March 2020	Prepare draft strategy	<p>The strategy will be produced once the stock condition survey has been completed. Work on drafting the strategy will commence by February 2020.</p> <p>Strategy content will include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Context</li> <li>• Context for Demand</li> <li>• About our Homes</li> <li>• Property Analysis</li> <li>• Planning for Delivery</li> <li>• Growth Agenda</li> <li>• Asset Management Action Plan</li> </ul>

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REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
5.6	Embed Stock Condition Survey (SCS) into new housing management IT systems, if appropriate	Jas Sidhu/ IT Project team	2019/20	Build into the Housing Project Board Work Plan	<p>The decision has been taken to use the Asprey system for asset management with integration to Civica CX.</p> <p>This forms a work stream within the overall project plan and governance structure.</p>

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**6. POLICY/PROCEDURES**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
6.1	Review of Allocations Policy	Judith Willis/ Amanda Delahunty	October/ November 2018 ↓ April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to Executive/ Council</li> <li>• Undertake required consultations</li> <li>• Finalise policy</li> <li>• Implement with required IT system</li> <li>• Train staff on new policy</li> <li>• Ongoing review and update</li> </ul>	Completed and agreed via Executive/Council. Note: Awaiting IT system to enable implementation.
6.2	Review of Tenancy Agreement and Handbook	Judith Willis Jayne Baylis	March 2019  Revised date for completion (see update)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain feedback on current agreement</li> <li>• Consult with tenants</li> <li>• Draft new Agreement &amp; handbook</li> <li>• Seek approval via Executive Committee</li> <li>• Make available on-line</li> </ul>	The new Tenancy Agreement was approved by Executive Committee on 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2019. Notices of Variation to advise tenants of the changes will take place in early 2020. The Tenants' Handbook has been drafted and will also be published in 2020.



STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
6.3	Review Tenant Engagement Arrangements with tenant involvement in all service reform/policy review	Sue Hanley Guy Revans Judith Willis	Sept 2018 ↓ 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant consultation on all review of policy/procedures</li> <li>• Programme of reviews to be agreed</li> <li>• Wider place/locality based engagement to be considered</li> </ul>	We will be reviewing our tenant engagement approach in line with the 'Consumer Standards' in particular that which relates to tenant involvement and empowerment. These are regulatory standards set by the Government which registered providers of social housing must meet.

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

**7. REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
7.1	Review of R&M service and processes end to end (including repairs & maintenance, voids, aids & adaptations)	Ian Roberts	Revised date to commence October 2019 ↓ May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the work flows</li> <li>• Identify waste &amp; efficiencies</li> <li>• Identify legal requirements</li> <li>• Links to voids and aids and adaptations</li> </ul>	See update at 3.6
7.2	Redesign R&M processes	Ian Roberts	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020  Revised to May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant involvement</li> <li>• Clarify roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Risk based inspection regime</li> <li>• Agree what work to be undertaken in-house and that commissioned externally</li> </ul>	See update at 3.6
7.3	Agree Schedule of Rates service and quality standards, including performance and productivity arrangements (workforce & external provision)	Ian Roberts	Phase 1 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2019  Phase 2 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team and individual performance plans</li> </ul>	To fully implement the new systems and processes we are dependent on the introduction of the new Housing IT system in full. In the meantime work has started with the in-house electricians' team using the Nat Federation rates and standard minutes for estimating job times. This has resulted in an improvement of productivity on voids works.

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
7.3 contd					<p>Interim solutions for other sections of the work force are currently being worked on.</p> <p>We are currently working with our internal Improvements Team to identify critical work flow, with the aim of reducing 'waste' and improving productivity.</p> <p>Work will start on the introduction of Schedule of Rates/ Standard Minute Values, based on Nat Fed rates and modern methods of performance management.</p>

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
7.4	Agree measures	Guy Revans Ian Roberts	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019	Consider revised measures	Completed. These will be reviewed again as part of the Repairs and Maintenance review to ensure the measures reflect new working practices.
7.5	Consider Recharges, Enforcement policy and procedures	Ian Roberts	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft policy and procedures</li> <li>• Tenant/Member involvement</li> </ul>	See comments in section 4.7

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

**8. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE/MEASURES**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
8.1	Provide progress reports to Executive Committee on delivery of Recovery/ Action Plan	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans/	Quarterly commencing January 2019 April 2019 December 2019	Progress and Exception Report  Revised Forward Plan dates for Executive and Overview & Scrutiny	Executive consideration of progress reports as proposed/ agreed. Latest December 2019.
8.2	Review the performance measures for landlord services (in the context of government expectations/ housing sector scorecard)	Jayne Baylis/ Ian Roberts/ Emma Cartwright/ Paul Calland	Sept 2018 ↓ Dec 2018	Report to CMT/ Housing Portfolio/ Members	Review completed
8.3	Review the performance of non-landlord services (in the context of government expectations/ housing sector scorecard)	Brenda Holden/ Derek Allen/ Judith Willis/ Paul Calland	Sept 2018 ↓ Dec 2018	Report to CMT/Housing Portfolio Members	Review completed
8.4	Agree revised set of standards/ measures for housing services	Judith Willis/ Guy Revans/ Paul Calland	December 2018	To coincide with budget framework and revised structure for Housing Services and consult with Members	Endorsed by Executive Committee February 2019.
8.5	Review the scrutiny arrangements for landlord services	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	March 2019	Consultation with Members and tenants	Improvement Plan subject to Overview & Scrutiny prior to Executive Committee consideration

## STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

**9. HOUSING MANAGEMENT IT SYSTEM**

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
9.1	Recruitment of Project Team	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	Dec 2018	Subject to endorsement by Executive/ Council (Sept 2018)	Project Manager & 2 Project Support Officers in post. Recruitment underway for Project Support Assistant.
9.2	Detailed specification	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	February 2019	Links to other systems	High level specification completed and will be used within implementation phase.
9.3	Procurement	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	March 2019		Procurement of the Core Housing Management System completed.  Asprey will continue to be utilised and developed further for Asset Management and compliance with integration into Civica CX.  Work continues in relation to procurement Housing Jigsaw to replace Abrisas.

STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT/ACTION PLAN – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

REF	ISSUE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	TIMESCALE(S)	KEY ACTIONS/ TASKS	UPDATE/ PROGRESS REPORT
9.4	Selection of supplier	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	May 2019		Direct Award to Civica for CX system September 2019
9.5	Implementation	Sue Hanley/ Judith Willis/ Guy Revans	April 2020		Implementation phase for CX starts November 2019. Initial workshops booked which will allow development of full Project Plan with timescales.

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

19<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 – 2023/24

<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillor David Thain Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
<b>Relevant Head of Service</b>	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
<b>Non-Key Decision</b>	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 At Executive on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 a recommendation will be made to Full Council on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21- 2023/24 and the Council tax will be set for 2020/21. This report outlines the issues faced by the council and delegates to officers to investigate ways to achieve a balanced budget for Executive to consider.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Executive is asked to note the current medium term financial plan gap and to request officers continue to review the position to enable a balanced budget to be presented to Council on the 24<sup>h</sup> February.

**3. KEY ISSUES****Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made. For 2020/21 a 4 year plan is proposed to 2023/24. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are :

- Finding somewhere to live
- Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
- Living independent, active & healthy lives
- Run & Grow a successful business
- Aspiration, work and financial independence
- Communities which are safe, well maintained and green

- 3.2 The Council must be mindful of the recent Section 24 Notice when setting the 4 year plan to ensure that savings are robust and deliverable and that the longer term financial sustainability of the Council is considered. It is accepted that there are many uncertainties in relation to Local Government

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funding over the next 4 years but the aim of the Council must be to increase balances and demonstrate a willingness to manage within its funding levels whilst understanding future changes may impact on the financial position.

- 3.3 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 4 years.
- 3.4 Over the last 12 months the Finance and Budget working group, as established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met on a regular basis to review costs, fees and charges and the capital programme and have made a number of recommendations to Executive.
- 3.5 Officers have factored in a number of assumptions into the Medium Term Financial Plan to update it in line with revised calculations and information from officers and Government. The current position is based on the provisional Financial Settlement and it is assumed this will not change when it is finalised in January.
- 3.6 The table below demonstrates the changes in the financial projections and budget gap for 2020/21 based on the original estimation of a £1.2m gap as presented in February 2019. Following the table there are explanations of the reasons for the changes resulting in the current gap of £161k for 2020/21. Officers are continuing to assess the position to enable a balanced budget to be presented in February.

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	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000
<b>Starting Gap at 19/20 budget round</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>1,731</b>
Incremental Progression (Salaries)	213	235	259	410
Inflation on Utilities	25	51	88	128
Unavoidable Pressures - Departments	31	32	39	46
Remove unidentified savings	181	181	181	181
Revenue Bids/Revenue impact of capital bids - Departments	45	45	45	45
Savings and Additional income - Departments	-368	-468	-578	-631
Rubicon Centre	-92	-95	-96	-97
<b>Net Revenue Budget Requirement</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>1,812</b>
Reserves to be released	-100	0	0	0
MRP, interest and investment income	-423	-424	-579	-394
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	-478	0	0	0
Council Tax Base & reduction to 2% in 20/21	92	158	206	-54
Collection Fund surplus	-76	0	0	0
Discount on advanced pension payment	-60	-171	-281	0
<b>Funding position</b>	<b>-1,045</b>	<b>-436</b>	<b>-654</b>	<b>-448</b>
<b>Remaining Gap to find</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>1,364</b>

**Changes from original assumptions re 2020/21****3.7 Additional pay and inflation on utilities £238k**

This reflects the additional costs of the pay inflation at 2% above that initially estimated of 1% (£213k). In addition there is a cost included for additional utility charges of £25k.

**3.8 Unavoidable Costs £31k**

When proposing the budget officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2019/20 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process.

**3.9 Bids and Revenue Implications of Capital Projects £45k**

In addition to the unavoidable pressures revenue bids have been identified. Bids relate to new funding requests made by officers to improve service

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delivery or to realise future efficiencies. The current bids for 2020/21 of £45k relate to additional maintenance costs for systems.

**3.10 Remove un-identified savings & offset with Savings/ additional income -£187k**

In 2020/21 savings were estimated of £181k in relation to a management restructure, reductions in enabling services and other transformation savings. Therefore £181k has been offset against the identified savings and additional income proposed for 2020/21 as this reflects the savings now identified for the future. This generates net savings of £187k to date. Officers will continue to review expenditure and income to ensure all savings and additional income is estimated and included in the budget projections. The savings to date relate to service delivery and therefore do not represent any changes to service delivery.

**3.11 Rubicon Centre -£92k**

In November the Executive resolved that the Council would exit from its arrangement within the Rubicon Centre with savings of £92k being realised. This will reduce the overall cost to the Council of its asset portfolio.

**3.12 MRP, interest and investment income (-£423k)**

A full review of all capital projects and investment opportunities has been undertaken with a significant saving realised for future years. This has no impact on the capital programme delivery for the future and the detailed programme will be presented to Members in February 2020.

**3.13 New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£-478k)**

It was assumed that New Homes Bonus would not continue into 2020/21. The provisional settlement received by the Council stated that NHB would be payable for 2020/21 but only for one year and with no legacy payments. The £478k is therefore a significant improvement to the budget position.

**3.14 Council Tax £92k**

It was assumed that the Council would be allowed to increase Council Tax by up to 2.99% without the need for a referendum. This has been revised to 2% by Government and therefore a cost to the Council of £92k.

**3.15 CT Surplus -£76k**

This is the estimated surplus based on the latest 2019/20 collection fund information

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**3.16 Discount on advanced pension payment -£60k**

By paying the pension fund payments in advance a saving can be made of £60k to the Council.

**3.17 Future Years**

Assumptions have been made in the financial plan for the following years including :

- No further New Homes Bonus payments to be made. As Members will be aware this is a significant income stream to the Council
- Additional costs of borrowing for the capital programme
- Awaiting final actuary figures to enable the pension fund basis to be finalised

3.18 The current 4 year shortfall is £3.2m compared with £5.5m at the beginning of the financial year. It is clear that significant savings and reductions in expenditure need to be identified for the medium term financial plan to be delivered within the current funding levels. Officers are working with colleagues to ensure the impact of the fair funding review and other changes to Government financial distribution are included and updated for the final report.

**3.19 General Fund**

3.19.1 The level of the general fund balance is £1.2m with planned release of £200k in 2019/20. It is assumed that the release will not be required due to the current level of savings at quarter 2 and projected for the financial year 2019/20 as reported separately to this meeting. The minimum level of balances recommended is £750k however within the recently agreed Financial Framework it was approved that the aim would be to increase this to £1.5m.

**3.20 Capital Programme**

3.20.1 The Capital Programme has been fully reviewed and significant changes have been made to reduce the level of spending whilst ensuring schemes are provided to the Council. The revised programme will be considered in February when setting the Council Tax.

**4 Legal Implications**

4.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to address the recommendations included in the Section 24 Notice as presented by the External Auditors. Officers have been in regular liaison with the Auditors and they are comfortable with the approach the Council is taking on managing the

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sustainability over the next 4 years. They will consider the final budget in February when the Council Tax is set and review their Section 24 as part of the final accounts process in September 2020.

- 4.2 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level. These will be included in the report to Cabinet and Council in February.

**5 Service / Operational Implications**

- 5.1 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained and, where achievable, improvements to the community.

**6 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 Any impact on the customer of savings over the 4 years period will be managed via impact assessments and in discussion and consultation with the customer as to the most effective and supportive way of managing reductions in funding and potentially service delivery.

**7 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 To mitigate the risks associated with the financial pressures facing the Authority regular monitoring reports are presented to both officers and Members to enable proactive action being undertaken to address any areas of concern. Risks include:

- Reductions in government funding leading to a reduction in the level of services delivered to the public
- Reductions in business rates income as a result of appeals or reduction in the rateable value leading to a lower level of income for the Council.
- Identification of sufficient and ongoing revenue savings to deliver a balanced budget.
- Allocation of sufficient resources to meet the needs of service delivery and the Councils priorities.
- Maintain adequate revenue and capital balances as identified in the MTFP to ensure financial stability.

The regular financial monitoring by Officers and Executive will provide a framework to mitigate the above risks.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 7th November, 2019

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Nyear Nazir, Yvonne Smith and Jennifer Wheeler

### Also Present:

Councillor David Thain (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management)

### Officers:

Matthew Austin, Lyndsey Berry, Chris Forrester, Sue Hanley, Ostap Paparega, Guy Revans and Judith Willis

### Senior Democratic Services Officer:

J Bayley

### 43. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joanne Beecham and Mark Shurmer and it was confirmed that Councillors Nyear Nazir and Yvonne Smith were attending as their substitutes respectively.

### 44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

### 45. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be held as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### 46. PUBLIC SPEAKING

.....  
Chair

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The Committee welcomed six public speakers to the meeting, who were invited to speak to the Committee in turn. In some cases a written record of the individual's speech was also provided for Council records. The speeches as delivered during the meeting, which lasted for a maximum of three minutes each and might therefore, not reflect the full length of the points residents had recorded in advance of the meeting, are recreated below.

a) Mr Ray Groves – RYCE

“It has often been said that the best decisions are made when you have the clearest and best-informed information possible. Unfortunately, tonight you have got the worst. This report is devoid of any suggestion as to the inevitable costs to Redditch Borough Council that will far exceed these so called savings. There are no risk analyses; what happens if the Batchley Support Group closes? What impact will that have on the area? Will the schools provide meals during the summer break or will the Council have to step in and provide staff and facilities or will you let hungry children wander the streets looking for food? Likewise, if the Boxing Academy closes what happens to the individuals who currently use the facilities?”

On the 16<sup>th</sup> October in the houses of Parliament Rachel Maclean said, as reported by Hansard: “I was delighted to see the focus on youth services because as I have said, anti-social behaviour often happens because there is nowhere for young people to go. We need to focus on those services in our local communities so that there is somewhere constructive for people to go. We have some fantastic services in Redditch. We have a wonderful Boxing Academy that takes young people off the streets and teaches them fun, useful and constructive skills. That is a great initiative but we need more like it across town.”

With over 100 individuals left to wander the streets how many more police will be needed to patrol the area? I could go on and talk about The Space, the shops run by Oasis Church. What happens if these units close? The retail sector is in trouble as has been highlighted by Bon Marche, Maplins and Mothercare; it is very doubtful if they can be let on a strictly commercial basis, meaning even more derelict units will invade our shopping areas.

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Why is there nothing in this report about the money that the voluntary groups save the Council? Why isn't the £28k set against this saving? Surely the Council could have looked at the Social Return on Investments – SROI is an internationally accepted way of showing how much worth the voluntary sector provides, that ultimately saves public money.”

b) Ms Liz Williams – Fighting for Survival Group

“For those of you that don't know me I'm Liz Williams, and I am speaking on behalf of the Fighting for Survival Group. Firstly can I just say thank you to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for listening.

We welcome the decision of the Executive Committee to delay consideration of the Concessionary Rents Policy until their meeting in January 2020, the offer made to talk to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) about the affect this will have on the sector and to try and reach a resolution.

However, having read the Public Document Pack from the Executive Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and future papers for the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019, we believe that the creation of the report has not followed due process and should be withdrawn completely and be brought forward after the negotiations with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) have been completed and alternative funding methods have been fully examined and implications and costings fully detailed.

Across the documents I have referenced above there appear:

- 1 x Cross Party Working Group
- 1 x detailed budget framework document
- 2 x reviews
- 4 x Advisory Panels
- 3 x fully costed and 1 partially costed financial implications.
- 6 x fully evidenced legal implications
- 1 x fully detailed service / operational implications
- 5 x sufficient customer / equalities implications
- 1 x full consultation with those affected
- 1 x equality impact assessment, although it is not appended to the report.
- 1 x Action Plan
- 1 x detailed appraisal of costs generated by Council decisions

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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- 2 x scrutiny groups
- 2 x Task Groups
- 5 x sufficient risk management implications
- 2 x consultants' reports

In the Concessionary Rents report.

And further:

- 1) Ward Councillors were not consulted about this report. Surely something that has the potential to affect so many residents should have been at least talked about with ward Councillors. In particular, focussing on those representing Matchborough, Winyates and Greenlands, where we think six of the nine groups affected are based.
  - 2) The Executive Summary contains no reference to why this report was written.
  - 3) The recommendations contain no other options to the proposal made.
  - 4) There is no financial information about how the shortfall figure was arrived at.
  - 5) There is no reference to the Council's strategic purposes when obviously the VCS in Redditch contributes heavily towards the achievement of these.
  - 6) There appears to have been no discussion with partner agencies or the Redditch Partnership by Redditch Borough Council, considering this will also impact heavily on them as well.
  - 7) There is no detail about how the transitional arrangement in the appendix is arrived at.
  - 8) How many properties are actually affected and where are they?
  - 9) How many leases have expired? How can expired leases be changed as the occupants of these properties are tenants at will.
  - 10) No letters were ever received advising us that changes to the policy will be made in the near future. This therefore denied the VCS any opportunity to discuss with the Council what this would actually mean?
  - 11) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted. Where is it?"
- c) Reverend Robin Baker – Acts of Kindness and Oasis Christian Centre

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“I am Reverend Robin Baker. I believe that many of you know who I am but for those of you who don't, I set up the charity Acts of Kindness that runs the Redditch Foodbank and I am the Church Minister of Oasis Christian Centre. The church is currently operating two charity shops – one in Winyates that we have had for nearly nine years and one in Woodrow for nearly six years.

I am obviously wanting to talk about the removal of the concessionary rents that affects the three shop units that we use – one for the foodbank and two for our charity shops.

These charity shops are vital to the community. Amongst many benefits for the community, they offer:

- 1) Low-cost retail to people on very low incomes.
- 2) Employment for five people.
- 3) Volunteer opportunities for over 30 people, some of whom have special needs and have not been able to get opportunities elsewhere in Redditch as other support groups have closed down. We also offer many opportunities for work experience students; again some have not been able to get placements elsewhere.
- 4) Meeting places for many people who suffer from social isolation and find it very difficult to engage elsewhere: We have spent years building up their trust and confidence. We offer a lifeline for them. Many of them suffer from mental health issues and have very few other places to go to or feel able to. There are a number of people who have attempted suicide who use our shops. It is impossible to second guess what will happen to them if our shops close, but it will certainly be another major blow for them.
- 5) A core community hub: Many people travel from all over Redditch to benefit from the services provided by the shops.
- 6) A place free of charge for groups to meet for social interaction. Some examples include PACT and knitting groups.
- 7) Low cost tea, coffee and cakes for those people who cannot afford to go to more expensive cafes and coffee shops.
- 8) Partnership with a number of agencies who often ask us to provide clothes, bedding and kitchen items to people who are being rehoused free of charge.

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- 9) Reduction to landfill by recycling clothes and bric-a-brac. This helps save the environment.
- 10) Fully finance other projects: One such example is a weekly feeding programme where up to 50 addicts or lonely people have a warm and friendly place to socialise and eat. For a number of them this is the only hot meal they get a week. We also help fund young people's activities, subsidising activities that would otherwise not be affordable.
- 11) Funding for a youth community worker who has worked with children who struggle with school, and also with mental health issues. Some of the children have attempted suicide. The youth worker has also worked with children who have special needs in schools by running one-to-one sessions on the school premises.

It is important to make you all aware that 100 per cent of all the income generated from these shops comes back into Redditch, for the people of Redditch."

d) Mr Tom Rossiter – Redditch Boxing Academy

"I'm here for Redditch Boxing Academy. I've been a coach for five months and realised how important it is. Over 300 people come a week. We cover areas such as self-defence, raising awareness of how to oppose violence and aggression, and different types of boxing.

I have personally experienced the difference it can make. Last year I was over 18 stone and depressed. I found that the only way to address my mental health issues was to lose weight. I went to the boxing club where I wasn't judged but made to feel better about myself. I lost over 7 stone and my self-esteem improved. A lot of people are in similar situations. If this place closed down who knows where they'd be. It would leave a void that for me was filled by Redditch Boxing Academy.

Young people, if they're out and about with nothing to do, can get involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. By getting involved with Redditch Boxing Academy it's given me an opportunity to be a youth coach."

e) Ms Maureen Hayden – What's Your Point

"I'm representing the people of Woodrow. We work with people in a high area of deprivation. Their voice often isn't

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heard. When we have to reorganise we have to think of those in communities with the biggest difficulties. We offer people a first port of call and we save the Council a lot of money.

There's high risk mental health issues and lots of self-harm. Mental health services are very limited. Children are falling through the cracks and families are struggling. We need to be mindful of this."

f) Mr Jordan Cooke – Your Ideas

"I'm a Project Manager for Your Ideas. I have been running the project for 11 years. This will directly impact us at a cost of £14,000 per annum. I'd welcome anyone to see the work we do. I'm keen to showcase our story and to talk through our challenges in the building.

I'm disappointed that we did not find out about the proposals directly from Redditch Borough Council but rather from Liz in a campaign email. We have been commissioned by Redditch Borough Council on a number of occasions to provide youth services in the community. Despite these links there was no communication and we never received the letters.

We support over 300 children per week and provide lots of services. For example we provide youth services supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and we work with people on the autistic spectrum. Since the news reached the public domain we have had a number of parents and autistic people with anxiety. Parents are worried about losing one of the few organisations they trust.

We'd like to work with Redditch Borough Council."

## 47. CONCESSIONARY RENTS - DISCUSSION

The Head of Community Services presented a position statement in respect of the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy. Members were advised that the item had been withdrawn from the Executive Committee's agenda for the meeting of the Committee that took place on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Officers were proposing to meet with representatives of the VCS. This meeting had not yet been arranged but would provide an opportunity for discussions to take place. A report in respect of the Council's Concessionary Rents

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Policy would subsequently be considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee due to take place on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor David Thain, who was the Portfolio Holder with lead responsibility for the Concessionary Rents Policy, was also in attendance at the meeting for this item. He confirmed the points raised by Officers and advised all those present that the Executive Committee was listening and would continue to listen to information provided by VCS groups in respect of this matter.

Following the presentation of the position statement for the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy a number of points were discussed by Members:

- The reasons why a report had not been submitted for the consideration of the Committee in respect of this matter. Officers explained, that as discussed at the previous meeting of the Committee, it was not possible to provide a report at this stage as the matter was not due to be considered by the Executive Committee until January 2020.
- The Council's approach to communicating with affected representatives of the VCS prior to the publication of the report that had been withdrawn from the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and the reasons why many VCS organisations had reported that they had not received any correspondence. Officers explained that they had understood that letters had been issued to groups and apologised for any cases where letters had not been received.
- The potential for representatives of VCS groups to raise concerns about any potential changes to the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy by speaking at that meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The value of compassion in making decisions that would impact on VCS groups and the people they served.
- The people who had spoken at the meeting in respect of the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy. Members thanked those who had spoken at the meeting for doing so.

At the end of the debate about this item Members proposed a recommendation. To ensure that the recommendation was considered at the appropriate time Members agreed that this recommendation should be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee alongside the Concessionary Rents Policy report in January 2020.



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## **RECOMMENDED that**

**the Executive Committee abolish the idea of removing concessionary rent relief for Voluntary and Community Sector groups and instead looks at alternative methods of funding the shortfall in the Council's budget.**

(At the end of this item there was a brief adjournment, which lasted from 7.15 pm to 7.23 pm).

### **48. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION (COMMUNITY HUB AND RAILWAY QUARTER) - TO FOLLOW**

The Head of the North Worcestershire Economic Development Service presented a report in respect of the regeneration of Redditch town centre. During the presentation of this item the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The report captured the outcomes of a master planning exercise and the key points of a business case for a public sector community hub. The reports produced by the consultants Dragongate and BDP had been provided in appendices to the report for Members' consideration.
- BDP had focused on a number of site options that might be appropriate and financially viable.
- The documents provided indicative reviews and high level appraisals in order to enable an understanding of the nature and scale of the opportunities available for the regeneration of the town centre.
- The viability of establishing a community hub as a one-stop-shop had been assessed and there had been three key objectives to this review; to deliver a better, user focused public service, provide business efficiencies and to make better use of public land.
- The Council had held conversations with a number of partners in the public sector, including the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Worcestershire County Council and representatives of the NHS trust.
- The initial feedback that had been received from partners about the potential to work together to introduce a public sector hub had been very encouraging.
- The government had announced that Redditch would be eligible to bid for up to £25 million in funding from the Towns Fund.
- The prospectus for the Towns Fund had been published after the report before Members. This prospectus clarified that the

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Council would need to prepare an Investment Plan to access funding from the Towns Fund.

- The Council would undertake consultation with the public, in accordance with the requirements of the Towns Fund, in order to establish what residents felt the funding should be allocated to.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in detail:

- The work that had been undertaken in respect of this matter since the One Public Estate report was considered by Members in March 2018 and the reasons why time was needed to progress with the project. The committee was informed that the process was progressing well and at a speed in line with standard practice.
- The options appraisal that had been undertaken by the consultants and why those particular options had been considered. Officers explained that both officers and the consultants were required to consider all viable options in line with professional standards.
- The State of the Area debates that had been undertaken and whether all wards had been consulted. Officers advised that there had been a two-day event held in May 2019 in the Town Hall, which had been attended by senior Officers and 70 members of the public. Officers had also attended a meeting of the Redditch Community Forum to consult about the plans.
- The extent to which small businesses had been consulted about the proposals for the regeneration of the town centre. Members were advised that further consultation had not yet been undertaken as the plans were only at an indicative stage. When specific proposals were brought forward these would be subject to consultation.
- The potential for the Council to secure funding from the Towns Fund and the amount of funding that might be available. Officers explained that up to £25 million was available to Redditch and the Council would need to submit an Investment Plan to secure this funding.
- The requirements for applications for funding from the Towns Fund. Members were advised that the guidance for the fund did not stipulate that organisations would have to apply for funding on a competitive bidding basis. There was the potential that this might be a requirement set out in future guidance.
- The additional funding that was available from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

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(GBSLEP). Members were informed that the LEP could provide funding from the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) Enabling Fund to support feasibility studies for the next stage of the development. A call for applications was expected to be launched in the following weeks.

- The inclusion of the Smallwood House site in the plans for regenerating the town centre and the potential for social housing to be provided either in that building or immediately behind the property. The Committee was advised that any decisions about social housing would be determined in accordance with the Council's planning policy rules.
- The extent to which partner organisations were likely to join the Council in a public sector community hub. Officers advised that conversations had been held with partner organisations and would continue to take place.
- The potential for the town centre regeneration project to be delivered according to budget. Officers explained that the preliminary work that was being undertaken was designed to enable the Council to manage risks and identify constraints. This would help the Council to more accurately assess likely costs when any work commenced.
- The need for Redditch town centre to be regenerated and the benefits that this might have in respect of the impact on the local economy and the community.
- The initial plans to introduce a covered walkway between the railway station and the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and the reasons why this had not been progressed. The Committee noted that this proposal had not been considered financially viable. Furthermore, by not acting on this idea alternative schemes that encouraged people to both visit the shopping centre and other parts of the town centre could be explored.
- The financial assumptions in the report and the extent to which the changes to interest rates announced by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) impacted on this. Officers explained that the figures had been reviewed since the Dragongate report was published to ensure that the projections were based on realistic expectations that reflected current market arrangements. Further assessment of the figures would be required over time in response to any later changes.
- The potential for funding to be provided by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to support the project.
- The need for developers to invest in the project as part of the regeneration works.
- The hard work that had already been undertaken by Officers. Members thanked officers for their work.

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During consideration of this matter reference was made to the redevelopment of Church Hill district centre some years previously and the outcomes of this project. Concerns were raised that ward Councillors had not been consulted as part of this process and that this would have benefited the redevelopment of the centre. It was therefore proposed that the relevant ward Councillors should be consulted as the redevelopment of the town centre progressed. However, in discussing this proposal Members noted that the regeneration of Redditch town centre would be significant to all Councillors, regardless of the ward that they represented, due to the importance of the town centre to all residents. Members also noted that there was the possibility that all Councillors would be consulted as the plans progressed. At the end of the debate Members agreed that the fourth proposal in the report should be amended to require consultation with all Councillors

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the Council note the BDP Town Centre Sites report and endorses the concept of a comprehensive regeneration scheme for the station quarter, Church Road sites, the Library site and the outdoor market site;**
- 2) **the Council agrees the content of the Dragongate Community Hub Business Case and BDP's Redditch Town Centre Development Sites Final Report be used as a basis for submitting a proposal to the Towns Fund; and**
- 3) **the Council agrees that the content of the Dragongate Community Hub Business Case and BDP's Redditch Town Centre Development Sites Final Report be used as a basis for submitting a bid to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) Enabling Fund.**
- 4) **the findings of the state of the area debate are noted, officers are instructed to produce a future consultation plan related to the town centre regeneration programme and that all Councillors are consulted;**
- 5) **the content of the Dragongate Community Hub business case (appendix 2) be noted and the Executive Committee endorse the concept of a Community Hub within the Public Sector and Culture quarter;**

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- 6) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships to commission an architect-led professional team to draw up feasible and deliverable design proposals supported by viability appraisals for a Community Hub, to include consideration of partners' requirements; and
- 7) subject to the agreement of recommendation 1 above, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships to work with key partners on the wider initiatives.

## 49. RENT ARREARS - BRIEFING NOTE

The Head of Community Services presented a briefing note in respect of rent arrears for Council properties. This briefing note had been drafted for Members' consideration following a request for further information on the subject that had been made at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2019.

The Council gathered year-end figures for the consideration of the government. The figures indicated that the Council was in the average quartile compared to other local authorities with their own housing stock in terms of rent arrear levels. The rent collection rate was 99.5 per cent at the Council, which was also in line with the national average. At the Council the trend was downwards in terms of rent arrears and this was monitored by a measure on the authority's dashboard.

Members noted that in the last 18 months significant progress had been made in reducing the time spent on processing void properties for new tenants which had had a positive impact on income. Officers were anticipating that these faster times for processing void properties would continue as standard practice for the Council.

During consideration of this item reference was made to the fact that tenants were required to pay rent over a 48 week period rather than for the full 52 weeks of the year and the potential to extend the timescales was briefly debated. However, Members were advised that research undertaken by the Council had discovered that the 48 week rent payment period was useful as it provided tenants with an opportunity to catch up with their rent payments.

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Reference was also made to the decision that had been taken some years previously to require local authorities to reduce rent for Council tenants by 1 per cent per annum over a four year period. Officers confirmed that 2019/20 was the last year in which this requirement applied and the Council would therefore have the ability to increase rents in future years.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**50. WASTE SERVICES - PRESENTATION**

The Head of Environmental Services and the Environmental Services Manager delivered a brief presentation in respect of waste management. During the delivery of this presentation the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The presentation that had been included in the agenda for the meeting had been presented for the consideration of the Leaders and relevant Portfolios Holders for Herefordshire and Worcestershire Councils earlier in the year.
- Historically there had been good partnership working across Herefordshire and Worcestershire in respect of waste management.
- Waste prevention was at the heart of the approach to waste management adopted by the local authorities in both counties.
- Prevention was the main priority of the Council, followed by reuse. Disposal of waste at landfill was a last resort.
- The amount of waste disposed of per household in Redditch was slightly higher than the national average.
- The level of recycling per household was slightly lower in Redditch than the national average but levels of dry recycling were slightly higher.
- All of the district Councils in Worcestershire had a system of fortnightly waste collections and a chargeable garden waste service as of 2019.
- Kerbside recycling was delivered to EnviroSort in Norton, Worcestershire where materials were mechanically sorted. Garden waste was delivered to Pershore in Worcestershire.
- The cost of waste collection services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire each year was £61 million.
- The government was in the process of consulting on a new national waste strategy.

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- Earlier in the year the government had consulted on a waste responsibility scheme.
- As part of this process the government was considering requiring all responsible local authorities to collect the same items for recycling so that there would be a consistent approach across the country.
- The government had also consulted on the potential to introduce weekly food waste collections.
- A further consultation had been held in respect of the potential to introduce a plastic tax on packaging and to introduce a requirement for all packaging to be recyclable.
- The Council had responded to the majority of consultation processes, except for that in relation to packaging which was less relevant to the work of the local authority.
- The consultation outcomes had been published.
- In the published results it had been revealed that there was overwhelming support across the country for the introduction of a core collection service as this would help to provide clarity to the public in respect of the materials that should be recycled. This had also featured in the Environment Bill that had been progressing through legislative stages until the general election had been called.
- In total 80 per cent of people had thought that a free garden waste collection service would be helpful but only 20 per cent of Councils had welcomed the idea of a free garden waste collection service. The government had announced that this would be reviewed further.
- In respect of weekly food collections, 80 per cent of people had supported the idea, as had 68 per cent of Councils, though 46 per cent of local authorities already provided this service. The Councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire had responded to the consultation by suggesting that it would be better to prevent the food waste. The Environment Bill that had been progressing through parliament prior to the announcement of the general election was going to legislate for a weekly food waste collection service.

Once the presentation had been delivered Members discussed the following matters in detail:

- The Envirosort centre and the potential for Members to visit this facility in order to learn more about the Council's waste management service.
- The possible financial costs to the Council arising from providing a weekly food collection service and how this would be funded. Officers explained that the government had

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announced that it would cover the net costs of this service but it was uncertain how this would be arranged or how long that funding would be available for in the future. It was anticipated that a weekly food waste collection service in Redditch would cost between £600,000 and £1 million to deliver.

- The levels of reuse in Redditch and how this compared to recycling levels. Members were advised that there were 120 tonnes of waste that was reused each year.
- The history in terms of fortnightly recycling and waste collection services in Redditch.
- The potential for a weekly food waste collection service to encourage waste. The Committee was advised that there were 50,000 tonnes of food waste generated in the area every year.
- The benefits of encouraging residents to reduce the amount of waste generated by each household and the value of taking preventative action. Officers explained that the Council contributed to events arranged by Worcestershire County Council where residents were encouraged to reduce waste. There was also a website that was promoted by the Council entitled "Lets Weigh Less".
- The extent to which food waste collection services had been successfully trialled by other councils. Members were advised that Wychavon District Council had had a food waste collection service some years ago but there had been low take up and this had ceased to be provided.

At the end of the debate the Committee

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

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

The Committee discussed the content of the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme and identified the following items for pre-decision scrutiny:

- Fees and Charges 2020/21
- Housing / Housing Revenue Account Strategic Improvement Plan Progress Report
- Concessionary Rents Policy



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- Members' ICT Policy. The Committee noted that this item was also due to be considered by the Member Support Steering Group and outlined requirements in respect of elected Councillors' ICT provision.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be noted; and**
- 2) **the items identified from the Executive Committee's Work Programme, as detailed in the preamble above, be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.**

## **52. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Officers advised that the items that had been identified for pre-scrutiny earlier in the meeting would be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

It was confirmed that an extra meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been booked to take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019. This would provide Members with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise reports that were due to be considered by the Executive Committee on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019. There was also a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee due to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019. As there were a number of items scheduled for consideration on this date Members agreed that this meeting should take place.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## **53. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS**

Officers confirmed that there were no draft scoping documents for consideration on this occasion.

## **54. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS**

The following updates were provided in respect of the work of scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups:

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a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler

Councillor Wheeler explained that the group had held a number of meetings since the last meeting of the Committee. During these meetings the group had considered information about the Section 24 Notice. Members had concluded that at a challenging time financially for the Council the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had an important role to play in terms of providing assurance to the Executive Committee and scrutinising any plans that might have significant financial implications for the Council.

Redditch Borough Council had an Investment and Acquisition Strategy. Under the terms of this strategy it had been agreed that the Executive Committee should have delegated powers to approve any proposed investments and acquisitions, to ensure that decisions could be taken swiftly in a competitive commercial environment. So far two investments had been approved by the Executive Committee but neither of these had been subject to budget scrutiny. The PWLB had increased borrowing costs and the Council was in a challenging financial position. Councillor Wheeler suggested that in this context the Budget Scrutiny Working Group could add value by scrutinising proposed investments to ensure that the financial projections for each option were sound.

The group had also noted that, following the publication of the Section 24 Notice, difficult decisions would need to be made in order to balance the Council's budget. To enable Members to make financially viable decisions the group was proposing that additional information needed to be provided in the financial implications of reports to Committee. Officers noted that it would be helpful for this additional information to be required where appropriate and this suggestion was endorsed.

b) Parking Enforcement Task Group – Chair, Councillor Mark Shurmer

Officers explained that it was unlikely that any further meetings of the group would take place until after the general election had occurred on 12th December 2019. The Chair had therefore requested that the deadline for completion of the review be moved back to 2020.

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- c) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Andrew Fry

Councillor Fry advised that there had been no meeting of the group since the previous meeting of the Committee.

- d) Suicide Prevention Task Group – Chair, Councillor Debbie Chance

Councillor Chance explained that there were two meetings of the group due to take place in November. It was unlikely that the group would hold any meetings in December. Therefore, the review was likely to be completed in early 2020.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **business cases for new investment and acquisition opportunities for the Council should all be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group before a decision is taken by the Executive Committee;**
- 2) **the financial implications detailed in reports to the Executive Committee should address the following points as a minimum where appropriate:**
  - a) **the financial costs of the proposed action;**
  - b) **the source of funding for the proposed action;**
  - c) **potential alternative options and the financial costs of each alternative option; and**
  - d) **the financial costs to the Council where the proposed action deviates from previous Council policy; and**

## **RESOLVED that**

- 3) **the deadline for completion of the Parking Enforcement Task Group be postponed to early 2020.**

## **55. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS**

Members noted that Councillor Chalk had provided a written update in respect of the latest meeting of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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There had been no meetings of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) since the previous meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.19 pm



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### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Chair), and Councillors Michael Chalk, John Fisher and Yvonne Smith

#### Also Present:

Professor Peter Latchford OBE (Black Radley)

#### Officers:

Chris Forrester and Guy Revans

#### Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

#### 4. INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR PETER LATCHFORD OBE (BLACK RADLEY)

Members welcomed Professor Peter Latchford OBE from Black Radley to the meeting. During the meeting Professor Latchford delivered a presentation in respect of commercialism and Black Radley's work to enable the Council to operate in a more commercial manner.

The following matters were highlighted in this presentation for Members' consideration:

- Black Radley had been working with the authority since September 2018.
- The Council had sought help in a challenging financial context and at a time when the Section 24 Notice had been issued to the authority which had demonstrated that action was needed.
- Black Radley had adopted a whole systems approach to advising businesses, including the Council.
- Members were informed that Black Radley had been established 20 years' previously and specialised in enterprise and governance. The company had experience of working with organisations in both the public and private sectors.

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Chair

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- The focus of the work of Black Radley was not on making money but rather on helping the Council to deliver quality services more efficiently.
- A key role of Black Radley would be to help senior officers and Members to think about the services the Council was providing and any tensions that the authority faced.
- A balance needed to be secured between meeting the needs of the local community, taking into account the socio-economic structure of the local community, and working in a commercial manner, which could involve generating income for the authority.
- Staff could struggle with working commercially as frequently local authority employees reported that they had opted to work for a Council in order to serve their community and not to generate income.
- However, there wasn't necessarily a conflict for staff and frequently some of the most innovative ideas were generated by people working in the public sector.
- Civic enterprise could be financially astute and staff needed to be enabled to recognise that a social enterprise that generated income could help to cover the Council's overall costs.
- In the private sector some of the most successful entrepreneurs were often passionate about solving a problem and it was this, rather than generating profits, that was the focus of their work.
- Local authorities were typically quite risk averse. However, in order to become more enterprising the Council needed to adopt a more risk oriented environment as this would enable the authority to operate in a more commercial manner.
- There was a need to plan when embarking on a commercial enterprise but the Council needed to be prepared for failure as business activities often failed. The Council could learn from failure but needed to take the time to consider the lessons that had been learned.
- There was significant complexity within the public sector which was interconnected; in particular the financial, political and operational elements. Sometimes one of these elements was not taken into account when staff worked on a particular project and this could impact on the success of that project.
- J. P. Kotter, an academic specialising in management theory, had written 'Accelerate' about management structures. In the twentieth century he had reported that this tended to be bureaucratic and was an ideal system for providing cheaper standardised products. However, in the twenty-first century organisations needed to be responsive to a constantly changing environment and a new network style approach had been developed. This built on working relationships but didn't necessarily result in an increase in productivity. A balance therefore needed to be struck between the two approaches.

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- This had highlighted the importance not just of physical assets, such as buildings, but soft assets, like working relationships, in operating an efficient business.
- The Council's assets needed to be aligned with the wants of the customer. This was essential to ensure that assets were used in a way that would meet the requirements of customers. Sometimes what the customer wanted would not necessarily correspond with what they needed.
- The Council would not secure innovation without investment. There needed to be a budget for innovation and the payback for any commercial activities could take two to three years. Therefore Members were asked to note that it was unlikely that the Council would secure a financial return from commercial enterprises arising from the work with Black Radley in 2019/20 or 2020/21.
- Staff had been encouraged to approach Black Radley to discuss their ideas and a number had taken up this opportunity. There were many good ideas that had already been brought forward through this process and the role of Black Radley was to coach the staff to enable them to progress with their ideas.
- Some staff would need a lot of encouragement to enable them to have the confidence to take their ideas forward.
- A key issue that had been identified at Redditch Borough Council was with the strategy that had historically been set by Members. Members tended to be keen to continue to deliver a lot of services despite the fact that the Council no longer had the budget to support all of these services.
- At a difficult financial time for the Council Members needed to allocate funding to address key priority areas in line with Council strategy.
- Issues had also been identified with some managers' financial management and motivational skills, which was impacting on their ability to take their staff with them when attempting to change service delivery. Managers needed to take more responsibility.
- New training opportunities were in the process of being offered to existing managers to enable them to develop the skills needed to address these weaknesses.
- There was also the possibility that over time the Council would identify that the skills of particular staff were not being used and that they might perform better in a different department.
- Culture change was one of the biggest challenges facing the Council. A lot of work had already been undertaken at the Council in respect of this matter. A key area that remained to be addressed was to clarify what was expected of staff.
- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had identified a number of areas where action could be taken in the short-term which would have a positive impact on productivity.

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- These big ticket items included housing, particularly in respect of meeting local housing needs.
- Use of Council properties was another priority area, considering how the Council acquired and exploited its property assets in a commercial way.
- There was more that could be achieved in respect of the work of Rubicon Leisure and the Council's objectives needed to be clarified.
- Contracts was another priority area. A lot of work had already been undertaken over the preceding 18 months in respect of contracts. A balance needed to be achieved between the Procurement team ensuring compliance with procurement rules and over policing procurement arrangements in a way that removed any flexibility.
- Governance was an important consideration for Members in respect of commercialism. It was important to ensure that Members did not attempt to micro-manage Officers. The Officers were appointed to manage the operational element of service delivery and needed flexibility to do this effectively.
- More work needed to be undertaken to hold people to account where mistakes were made but without having a blame culture. Lessons could be learned from failure and if blame or bullying emerged staff would not feel confident about raising their ideas.

Following the delivery of the presentation Members discussed a number of points in detail.

- The stage at which an optimum point would be reached in terms of the Council's service delivery meeting demand in an efficient and cost effective manner. Members were advised that no public sector organisation had reached an optimum point though progress was being made.
- The potential for Members to provide senior Officers with more delegated powers to enable them to innovate and the extent to which this was desirable.
- The potential to raise living standards, including the quality of housing, for some of the most deprived communities in Redditch and the extent to which this objective was compatible with a commercial approach to service delivery. It was noted that Housing Associations served a similar demographic and yet managed to operate in a more commercial manner than the Council. The Council could therefore learn lessons from housing associations.
- The action that would need to be taken in practice to apply commercial approaches to work at the Council and the need to ensure that the Council's strategy was to align expenditure with the Council's priorities moving forward.



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- The Council's work in respect of commercialism and how this linked to previous initiatives such as service transformation. Officers advised that commercialism was a natural extension to business transformation and both focused on operating the Council as a business.
- The likelihood that the Council would want to continue to subsidise some services, particularly in cases where a service matched the Council's strategic priorities.
- The issues with housing and action that could have been taken to date to enable the service to operate more commercially. It was noted that the Council could have taken a more proactive approach to building new Council houses. Furthermore, it was suggested that when the 1% rent reduction had first been announced over the previous four-year period the Council should have produced a business case focusing on which parts of the service would remain sustainable during that period.
- The extent to which milestone points had been built into the Council's contract with Black Radley. Members were advised that there were no key milestones. However, specific senior officers had taken responsibility for working on the main opportunities that had been identified by CMT and they would need to meet deadlines.
- The arrangements for receiving progress reports in respect of the work initiated by Black Radley. The group was advised that progress reports would focus on the big ticket areas.
- The necessity for action to be taken to address the concerns raised by the external auditors in the Section 24 Notice and the extent to which staff and Members recognised the seriousness of the situation.
- The extent to which Black Radley had met with elected Members to date. Members were advised that Black Radley attended meetings of CMT on a monthly basis and meetings had been held with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council but no further meetings with Councillors had taken place to date.

At the end of the discussions around this item Members concluded that the presentation had been both interesting and revealing. There was general consensus that all Members would benefit from an opportunity to meet with representatives of Black Radley and to learn about commercialism. This could result in the Councillors identifying potential commercial opportunities for the Council as well as enabling Members to make some of the difficult decisions that were required in order to balance the authority's budget. In this context Members agreed that a briefing should be provided to all Members in respect of commercialism by Black Radley.

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The timing of this briefing was briefly discussed. Officers noted that previously the group had suggested a briefing in respect of the new enterprise finance system but as this had taken place in March 2019 only six Members had attended as the others had been campaigning in the local elections. It was therefore agreed that the briefing would need to take place early in the New Year to avoid a similar outcome with the briefing in respect of commercialism. In addition, Officers explained that should the Council fail to identify actions that could be taken to balance the budget early in the New Year the Section 151 Officer might need to issue a Section 114 Notice which would result in serious action in respect of the Council's budget. There was general consensus that this situation needed to be avoided and therefore the group agreed that if the Executive Committee was minded to approve an all Member briefing in respect of commercialism this should take place in January 2020.

### **RECOMMENDED that**

**there should be an all Member briefing from Black Radley in respect of commercialism in January 2020.**

**ACTION: Members of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to persuade other Councillors in their political groups to attend the all Member briefing in respect of commercialism, should this be approved by the Executive Committee.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm  
and closed at 8.50 pm

By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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