

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wed 8 Apr
2009
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
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**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

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

Chair

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

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

Members of the Public

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

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

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

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

The emergency Assembly Area is on the Ringway Car Park.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

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

OR

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

you have a personal interest.

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

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

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

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

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

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



Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Wednesday, 8 April 2009

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

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

1. Apologies and named substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip.
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 16)	To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record. (Minutes to follow) All Wards
4. Actions List (Pages 17 - 20)	To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List. (Report attached) All Wards
5. Call-in and Pre-Scrutiny	To consider whether any Key Decisions of the Executive Committee's most recent meeting(s) should be subject to call-in and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan require pre-scrutiny. (No separate report). All Wards

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<p>6. Task & Finish Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents (Pages 21 - 22)</p>	<p>To consider any scoping documents provided for possible Overview and Scrutiny review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dial-A-Ride review <p>(Reports attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
<p>7. Task and Finish Groups - Progress Reports</p>	<p>To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council Flat Communal Cleaning – Chair, Councillor P Mould;2. Housing Mutual Exchange – Chair, Councillor D Smith;3. National Angling Museum – Chair to be appointed; and4. Neighbourhood Groups – Chair to be appointed. <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
<p>8. Passenger Transport in Redditch</p>	<p>To consider an update from relevant Officers from Worcestershire County Council regarding the bus service network in Redditch.</p> <p>All Wards</p>
<p>9. Third Sector Task and Finish Group - Stage One Monitoring Update (Pages 23 - 46)</p>	<p>To consider the contents of a draft Grants Policy and draft Shopping, Investing and Giving Policy, produced in accordance with the Third Sector Task and Finish Group's recommendations, and to make suggestions regarding the appropriate final content of the policies.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p>

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10. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	<p>To consider the contents of the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09 and to make suggestions regarding the content of the final report.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
11. Referrals	<p>To consider any referrals to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Committee or full Council• Other sources. <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>All Wards</p>
12. Work Programme (Pages 47 - 50)	<p>To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Forward Plan / Committee agendas• External publications• Other sources. <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p>
13. Exclusion of the Press and Public	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".</p> <p>All Wards</p>



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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor D Smith, K Banks, W Hartnett, R King and W Norton

Also Present:

Councillors C Gandy, D Hunt, C MacMillan and B Quinney

Officers:

M Bough, T Kristunas, S Skinner, J Smith and C Wilson

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and H Saunders

184. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Chalk, Mould, Taylor and Thomas.

185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

186. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 25 February be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 18 March 2009

187. ACTIONS LIST

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

a) Fly tipping

Members were informed, under action two on the Actions List that relevant Officers were in the process of developing a three year action plan to tackle fly tipping within the Borough. This action plan was due to be finalised by March 2010. Officers were therefore proposing to report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in 2010 to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the contents of this document prior to consideration at a meeting of the Executive Committee.

b) Emergency Planning Briefing Session

Officers reported that, in relation to action five on the Actions List, Worcestershire County Council was proposing to deliver a basic presentation on the subject of emergency planning for the consideration of the Committee. This presentation could be delivered in April 2009.

c) Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade

Members were informed that, as requested at the previous meeting of the Committee, Councillor Brunner had contacted Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade to enquire about the organisation's rationale for reducing the number of fire fighters and the potential impact that this might have on community safety. She had been informed that this was being treated as a Freedom of Information request. A response to her request was due to be delivered by 2 April 2009. Therefore Members were advised that they should expect to receive further details in relation to this matter in April.

d) Corporate Plan Part II

Officers reported that consideration of the Corporate Plan Part II by the Executive Committee, as well as of the recommendations in relation to this matter that had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their previous meeting, had been postponed until 1 April 2009.

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e) Children's Centres

Members referred to action twelve on the Actions List, relating to the request for clarification as to the reasons for references to Bromsgrove when discussing Children's Centres Services in the Corporate Plan Part II. Officers explained that in Bromsgrove three new Children's Centres would be established and organisations would be invited to submit tenders to deliver the Children's Centre service in each of those venues on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. The Executive Committee was due to consider whether to approve the submission of a bid by Redditch Borough Council to deliver this service. The contract for delivering this service was likely to come into effect from March 2010.

f) Performance Indicator WM05

Members were informed that, as requested at the previous meeting of the Committee, further clarification about Performance Indicator WM05, "percentage of calls answered within twenty seconds", had been requested. Officers explained that the response referred to in this performance indicator related to calls answered by an individual rather than by an automated response machine.

RESOLVED that

- 1) an Emergency Planning Briefing item be scheduled onto the Committee's Work Programme for consideration at a meeting of the Committee on 30 April;**
- 2) all Members be invited to attend the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 April to consider the Emergency Planning presentation; and**
- 3) subject to the comments above, the contents of the Actions List be noted.**

188. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

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

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189. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Committee considered draft terms of reference for three proposed Task and Finish Reviews.

a) National Angling Museum – Proposed by Councillor Hunt

Councillor Hunt presented the scoping document for the proposed review of whether to establish a National Angling Museum in Redditch. He suggested that a National Angling Museum would provide the people of Redditch with a primary focus for promoting one of the key elements of the town's heritage. He also noted that a National Angling Museum could attract more tourists into Redditch, and therefore could have a positive impact on the local economy.

Councillor Hunt proposed that the review would be undertaken in stages. The first stage of the review would focus on establishing the costs involved in developing and maintaining a National Angling Museum and the sources of funding that could be used to deliver this project. The aim of this stage would be to identify the feasibility of the project. Councillor Hunt explained that the second stage of the project, focusing on support within the Borough for a National Angling Museum and the types of information that could be displayed within the museum, would only be launched if, during stage one, Members could demonstrate the feasibility of the project.

Officers explained that the Leisure Services Team was already committed to working on a number of projects. This impacted on Officer capacity to support any such review within Leisure Services at the present time.

Members suggested that, if the review was approved, it would be in the Council's interests to book the website domain name for the British National Angling Museum at the earliest possible opportunity.

b) Neighbourhood Groups – Proposed by, Councillor Gandy

Councillor Gandy explained that she had proposed a review of the Council's Neighbourhood Groups at a meeting of the Executive Committee. It was anticipated that this review would involve consultation with local residents. In particular, a Task and Finish Group would be commissioned to investigate current arrangements and how local consultation should be arranged to achieve value for money.

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c) Overview and Scrutiny – Proposed by Councillor R King

Councillor King explained that he felt there were a number of weaknesses in the current Overview and Scrutiny structure and processes at Redditch Borough Council. In particular, Councillor King questioned the ability of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to hold the Executive adequately to account and expressed concerns about the current level of involvement of the full pool of scrutiny Members in the Overview and Scrutiny process. He also noted that more work could be undertaken to identify topics suitable for pre-scrutiny from analysis of the Council's Forward Plan.

The Chair questioned whether a review of the Overview and Scrutiny structure could be undertaken as part of the Member Development process involving all Councillors. Furthermore it was noted that the involvement of the wider pool of Overview and Scrutiny Members in the process received consideration when Members were appointed to new Task and Finish Groups.

Officers suggested that an alternative might be for the Council's Constitutional Review Working Party to undertake any review of Overview and Scrutiny. However, Members noted that a long-term review of Overview and Scrutiny could equally be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group, if that was the Committee's wish.

The Chair commented that there was clearly a finite capacity within the Overview and Scrutiny Team at Redditch Borough Council and that this would impact on the timeframes involved in launching and completing any additional Task and Finish reviews. Members noted that there were other potential Reviews in the pipeline which might impact on the priority attached to the two reviews approved at this meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake the National Angling Museum review;**
- 2) **a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake the Neighbourhood Groups review;**

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- 3) the proposed review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process be rejected as a Task and Finish Group exercise;
- 4) the Chairs of the two agreed reviews be appointed at the following meeting of the Committee; and
- 5) in view of the fact that there were other potential reviews in the pipeline, a decision as to when to launch each of these reviews be made at the following meeting of the Committee.

190. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews.

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

Officers reported that the Group had had to postpone a consultation event which had been designed to provide leaseholders with an opportunity to contribute to the review. This would instead be taking place on either 14 or 15 April 2009.

- b) Housing Mutual Exchange – Chair, Councillor D Smith

The Chair explained that he would be liaising with Officers to organise the first meeting of this Task and Finish Group. He reported that he hoped that this meeting would take place at the beginning of April 2009.

RESOLVED that

the reports be noted.

191. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP (COUNCILLOR CAROLE GANDY)

The Chair welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnership, Councillor Gandy, to the meeting. Councillor Gandy presented her Portfolio Holder Annual Report in accordance with the questions set by the Committee.

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a) What do you wish to achieve for Redditch?

Councillor Gandy noted that when considering this question it was important to distinguish between what she wanted to achieve and what was possible to achieve, (as set out in her answer to question b) below).

Councillor Gandy explained that she wanted Redditch to be a place that people were proud to live and work in. Consequently, reviews of the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre and of Forge Mill Needle Museum had recently been proposed. She informed Members that she aimed to ensure that there were attractive places within the town. The estate enhancements process had therefore been encouraged as a way to ensure that this principle was met within the Borough.

She also explained that she wanted to promote the positive aspects of the town and of living and working in the town to members of the public. The Council's newspaper, Redditch Matters, had been re-introduced to help facilitate this process. Moreover, she wanted to attract more businesses into the town. Consequently, a new Council priority of Sustainable Communities had been introduced.

In addition, Councillor Gandy explained that she wished to ensure that the services delivered by the Council were of a high quality. She was keen to learn about the weaknesses, successes and opportunities for Council services and had recently joined the Council's refuse collectors to observe service delivery at first hand.

Finally, she added that she wanted to ensure that there was a thriving Voluntary and Community Sector within the Borough. She had been pleased with the work of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group and had been impressed by their recommendations.

b) What difficulties, if any, are you encountering in achieving your aims and objectives for Redditch?

Councillor Gandy noted that, when she became Leader of the Council in May 2008, few people could have anticipated the scale that the economic crisis would reach. She informed Members that the economic crisis had impacted on the Council's ability to deliver all of the projects which she had hoped to complete, such as the Abbey Stadium project.

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She informed Members that, in the previous month, the number of new people applying for Job Seekers' Allowance had been the highest in the West Midlands area. She praised the Benefits Services team for their hard work during this time.

Members were informed that unfortunately some members of the public continued to have negative assumptions about Redditch. Councillor Gandy noted that this represented a barrier to creating civic pride in the town. She suggested that all Councillors and Officers could help to alter this view by speaking positively about the Borough.

c) What are your views on partnerships? The future of local government?

Councillor Gandy explained that she felt that partnerships, in large part, represented the future of local government. She noted that the new local authority performance framework, the Comprehensive Area Assessment, would incorporate a review of how local partnerships were working. One of the main challenges of this new performance assessment framework would be to make local partners aware of how important their roles and activities would be in the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

Members were informed that Worcestershire County Council, through negotiation with partners, including local district authorities, had set the Local Area Agreement targets and stretch targets. However, although these targets applied across the County they did not always necessarily correspond with the needs of the Borough.

Members discussed how local services could be delivered so as to achieve value for money for local customers. Councillor Gandy explained that any review of services would be undertaken not with a view to increasing profit margins but rather to identify the most efficient method for delivering services. This could involve the delivery of services currently provided by the Council by a local partner organisation.

Members discussed the level of understanding within the Council and local community of partnerships and the contribution made by partnerships to local service delivery. There was some question as to whether local partnerships were adequately held to account and whether the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could do more to assess the work of those partnerships.

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Officers informed Members that the Local Strategic Partnership had recently been reformed. The priorities for the partnership would be agreed in due course. Moreover, Officers reported that local partnerships within Redditch had made a number of significant achievements such as the introduction of the Smart Water scheme by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

- d) In the current budget basked of service cut options, which would you keep and which would you save?

Councillor Gandy noted that there had only been a limited number of proposals for service cut options. These had included a reduction in the number of Neighbourhood Group meetings during the year; the closure of Pitcher Oak Golf Course; cancellation of the Council fireworks display; and cancellation of the Christmas lights.

She noted that as part of the budget review, a basket of options for further consideration had been identified. These comprised a number of non-mandatory services that were delivered by the Council. For example, the Forge Mill Museum had been identified as a service appropriate for review. Councillor Gandy acknowledged that the museum was an important cultural asset for the town staffed by enthusiastic volunteers. However, she suggested that more needed to be done to promote the museum and that there was a need to assess whether an alternative provider would achieve greater value for money in delivering the service.

Councillor Gandy noted that responsibility for the Matchborough West Community Centre and Batchley Community Centre had been transferred to Worcestershire County Council and the Batchley Support Group respectively. However, she explained that these centres would remain a part of the community.

Councillor Gandy concluded that she ultimately felt the collective view of the budget basket was more important than any one individual's view of the budget options. For this reason the Council had sought views from local residents through consultation. Moreover, Council staff had been encouraged to make proposals about how to address the budget situation. Councillor Gandy hoped that by April 2009 both residents and Officers would feel that they had had an adequate opportunity to contribute to this debate.

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RESOLVED that

subject to the comments above the report be noted.

192. REVIEW OF DITCHES

The Committee received an illustrated presentation regarding ditches in the Borough.

During the presentation, Officers explained the vast amount of legislation governing the management of local ditches and waterways. However, they advised that the majority of ditches and water areas were outside of the control of the Council because sources of flooding could cross local authority boundaries. Under these circumstances compliance with the Enforcement Policy for Worcestershire by local authorities within the County was crucial and the local authorities within Worcestershire were attempting to agree a core set of values. The aim was to introduce a primary list of aims for the County as a whole as well as a secondary list of aims for specific areas within the County.

Members were informed that, under the Council's existing Scheme of Delegation, relevant Officers were only empowered to take action that would require £500 - £1,000 expenditure. More expensive action had to be referred to Councillors for a decision which could lead to delays. Officers noted that often serving notice on a landowner encouraged that landowner to take action to address problems with blocked or flooded ditches. In cases where more expensive action had to be taken the Council was entitled to recoup the losses.

Members questioned the role of Lengthmen in addressing problems with ditches and whether any were employed within the Borough. Officers explained that the Council did not employ a Lengthman. However, Feckenham Parish Council had consulted with Worcestershire County Council about the possibility of a Lengthman undertaking work within the parish. This issue fell within the remit of Worcestershire County Council as Lengthmen tended to address problems with ditches in relation to local highways.

Members discussed the circumstances that had caused flooding of the Batchley ditches in previous years. Officers noted that some local residents had voiced concerns that the construction of the Brockhill estate had had an adverse effect on the state of the ditches within the Ward. However, Officers explained that the state

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of the ditches had been affected by the flow of water from rural areas in Bromsgrove District.

Officers explained that one of the main problems was the impact of adverse weather conditions across local authority borders. This had further been compounded by climate change. In July 2007 the flooding that had originated in Bromsgrove would have been difficult for Bromsgrove District Council to manage, especially as it had resulted from a rare and unpredictable set of circumstances. Moreover, Bromsgrove, though having a similar population to Redditch, was geographically much bigger and had fewer water courses. Officers noted that a significant way to tackle problems was to ensure effective communication, sharing of knowledge and action between local areas. Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council were both committed to doing so.

Officers explained that changes had been proposed to the Reservoir Act. There was some concern amongst Officers about the Hewell Grange Reservoir, particularly due to its location on high land close to Batchley and Brockhill. Officers would be monitoring the implications of any changes to the Reservoir Act for the Hewell Grange Reservoir.

Members were informed that the Council and other neighbouring authorities needed to take appropriate action in preparation for forthcoming pieces of legislation. In particular, the Council would need to assess the current level of resources that were available to manage drainage issues and any further resources that might need to be allocated to this area to meet the additional responsibilities that would be awarded to the authority in the new legislation. Officers also noted that they were working on a draft Land Drainage Policy for the Council. This policy would address the action required to tackle future flooding problems in local drains.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers report an update before the Committee in March 2010 on drainage issues;**
- 2) Officers produce a map to illustrate the Council's land drainage responsibilities;**
- 3) Officers submit the Enforcement Policy for Members' consideration alongside this update before the Committee; and**

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- 4) **subject to the comments contained in the preamble above, the report be noted.**

193. FEES AND CHARGES TASK AND FINISH GROUP - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received updates from Officers and Members in relation to one of the recommendations from the Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group.

Officers explained that the Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group, a Group convened to review the Council's fees and charges during 2007/08, had recommended that the Council adopt a Charging Policy which would inform the Council's fees and charges setting process. The Charging Policy formulated by the Group had been approved at a meeting of full Council in June 2008. Members were informed that this item provided Members with an opportunity to monitor what impact, if at all, the Charging Policy had had on the Council's fees and charges setting process as well as to identify whether any alterations to the policy might be needed. Councillor MacMillan, former Chair of the Task and Finish Group and Chair of its successor body, the Fees and Charges Sub-Committee, was invited to report on the impact the Charging Policy had had on the fees and charges setting process.

Councillor MacMillan reported that both Members and Officers had learned a lot during the first year involved in applying the Charging Policy. The Executive Sub-Committee had commenced the year by attempting to review fees and charges in detail. During the course of the year, however, it had become apparent to members of the Sub-Committee that it was more appropriate for Members to make more strategic decisions about fees and charges. They had concluded that Officers should have the discretion to set individual fees and charges in accordance with the strategic directions laid down by Members.

Officers explained that this strategic planning contrasted with the previous approach of incremental changes to the fees and charges setting process. Strategic planning encouraged both Members and Officers to focus on meeting the Council's corporate objectives when setting fees and charges.

Members were also informed that a situation had arisen whereby the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the fees and charges setting processes had been running concurrently. Members had concluded that the two processes should be interlinked within the

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Council's business, as this enabled Members to consider costs and income together. Members had therefore addressed fees and charges in the wider context of work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy in 2008/09. Owing, to the timescales involved in local government financial matters it was likely that the two processes would be managed concurrently in following years.

Councillor MacMillan suggested that the Charging Policy still had an important role to play in the fees and charges setting process. He noted that, as required by the policy, the Executive Sub-Committee had considered concessionary charging arrangements where applicable, though they had not considered individual charges. They had also, where applicable, considered subsidies and the implications of those subsidies for service charges. Councillor MacMillan noted that the Charging Policy allowed for flexibility in the fees and charges setting process. Therefore, where necessary, Members and/or Officers could suggest in-year changes to fees and charges.

The Chair thanked Councillor MacMillan for attending the meeting. He suggested that at that stage it was difficult to assess the impact which the Charging Policy had had on the fees and charges setting process. He suggested therefore that the item should be submitted for further consideration by the Committee at a later date.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor the impact of the Charging Policy on the fees and charges setting process in twelve months' time; and**
- 2) subject to the comments recorded in the preamble above, the report be noted.**

194. CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT

Officers presented information about the Capital Programme for Members' consideration. This report contained a position statement and data relating to specific capital schemes.

Members noted that, in previous years, they had been invited on coach tours of the Borough to observe the capital projects. However, Members were informed that, as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment process, Members would need to scrutinise the outcomes of these schemes. No guidance had been provided as to how to assess these. Members were therefore

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asked to provide some direction about the type of information and presentational style that they would prefer to receive when considering these outcomes.

Officers explained that the Council had managed 200 capital schemes in the previous year and advised that it would be difficult to present information in relation to each of these schemes when reporting to the Committee. Members suggested that it might be appropriate to receive quarterly reports, focusing on exceptional capital spending. However, Officers responded that, based on this criterion, Members might not receive any information at all as such exceptions were not common. Moreover, many capital projects could be launched and completed in a month, and so would not be suitable for tracking on a quarterly basis.

Members noted, however, that the 'comments' section of the document would form an important component of the Capital Monitoring report. They agreed that, under these circumstances, a quarterly monitoring process would be appropriate. They requested that in pursuing this approach, Officers clearly indicate where a capital scheme had been completed as a way to report outcomes.

RESOLVED that

subject to the comments above, the report be noted.

195. REFERRALS

Officers reported a referral from the Audit Committee.

Members of the Audit Committee had proposed that an Overview and Scrutiny review of the Dial-a-Ride service should be undertaken. Councillor R King confirmed that, as Chair of the Audit Committee, he had met with Officers to complete a scoping document for this proposed review. The scoping document would be considered at the following meeting of the Committee on 8 April.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 18 March 2009

196. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme, as amended by decisions detailed in Minute 187 above, be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.45 pm

Actions requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Action Requested	Action to be Taken	Response
14/01/09 1	The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism proposed an item for scrutiny.	The OSSOs have consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism regarding this proposal. He has suggested that he would be prepared to postpone submitting a completed scoping document for this item until June 2009 for Member capacity reasons. He also explained that Officers are currently doing some work to address this issue and that it might therefore be prudent to postpone further consideration of this item until Officers have completed this piece of work. (TO BE DONE) Lead Member, Councillor Anderson, estimated completion date, 17/06/09.
04/02/09 2	Members received the final report from the Worcestershire Joint Scrutiny into Flooding Task and Finish Group which contained a number of recommendations. Members recommended that this report should be referred to a Working Group of Officers, including the Operations Manager, Asset Maintenance and the Councillor's Emergency Planning Officer, for further consideration. The Working Group of Officers was tasked with referring the final report and recommendations to the Executive Committee.	(TO BE DONE). Lead Officer, Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Support. Estimated completion date, not specified.

<p>04/02/09</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Following discussion of the Joint Scrutiny into Flooding item members requested that there be an Emergency Planning (Briefing/Training) Session for all Councillors.</p>	<p>Members agreed to accept an offer from relevant Officers from Worcestershire County Council to deliver a 30 minute presentation on the subject of emergency planning. Members agreed that this presentation should take place at a meeting of the Committee on 30 April. Members further agreed that this all Members should be invited to attend this meeting. (WILL BE DONE SOON). Lead Officer, the Head of Customer Services and IT, estimated completion date, 30 April 2009.</p>
<p>04/02/09</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Members received a presentation on the Shared Services Board and Joint Working and requested that Overview and Scrutiny be involved throughout the shared services process.</p>	<p>Relevant Officers to report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the shared services process where appropriate. (TO BE DONE) – ONGOING.</p>
<p>18/03/09</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Members were informed that consideration by the Executive Committee of the contents of a draft copy of the Corporate Plan Part II and the recommendations made by the Committee would now take place on 1 April.</p>	<p>Officers to ensure that these recommendations are considered alongside the draft Corporate Plan Part II at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 1 April. (WILL BE DONE SOON). Lead Officers, OSSOs, estimated completion date, 1 April.</p>
<p>18/03/09</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Members approved the National Angling Museum review and the Neighbourhood Groups Review as Task and Finish Groups. However, the Chairs of these Groups were not decided by the Committee.</p>	<p>The Committee agreed to decide on the Chairs for these Task and Finish Groups at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 8 April. (WILL BE DONE SOON). Lead Officers OSSOs and Members of the Committee, estimated completion date 8 April.</p>

18/03/09 7	Members received a report from the Operations regarding ditches in the Borough. Members requested that the Operations Manager return to the Committee in twelve months to provide an update on Council's response to recent legislation regarding ditches and watercourses.	Officers have amended the Committee's Work Programme accordingly. OSSOs (DONE).
18/03/09 8	Members were provided with an update on progress of the implementation of the Charging Policy as part of the monitoring of recommendations proposed by the Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group. Members requested that further information about the implementation of the proposals be given at a meeting of the Committee in twelve months.	Officers have amended the Committee's Work Programme accordingly. OSSOs (DONE).
18/03/09 9	Members considered the Capital Monitoring report. The Committee requested further information regarding the figure for Job C0001: Palace Theatre Refurbishment. Officers were asked to provide further clarification regarding the finance and outcome of the works to the Palace Theatre.	Officers have provided this information which was emailed to Members on Monday 23 March. OSSOs and Leisure Services Officers (DONE).
18/03/09 10	Members requested that the Capital Monitoring Report be made available for the consideration of the Committee on a quarterly basis. This report should include a comments column to provide commentary on the status of projects including dates when projects had been completed.	Officers have been informed of this request and this item has been added to the Committee's Work Programme. Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services, OSSOs (DONE).

<p>18/03/09</p> <p>11</p>	<p>The Committee heard that a proposed scrutiny exercise reviewing the Dial-a-Ride service had been referred to them for consideration by the Audit Committee. It was agreed that a scoping document should be submitted to the Committee for the following meeting.</p>	<p>Officers to meet with the proposer of this scrutiny exercise, Councillor R King, to prepare a scoping document. This document to be submitted to the Committee for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee, due to take place on 8 April. OSSOs and Councillor King (WILL BE DONE SOON).</p>
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Glossary

OSSO - Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Scoping Check List

When scoping a review, the Committee will need to consider the following questions:

1. Is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?
2. Are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?
3. What resources are available and what timetable do you need to comply with?
4. What are the potential risks?
5. Is this issue strategic and significant?
6. Is the scrutiny activity timely?
7. To what extent is this matter important for local people? For stakeholders? For the Electorate?
8. Does this issue correspond with the council's corporate priorities?
9. How long is it since this issue was last the subject of a review?
10. Is there evidence of real, perceived or imminent failure to a service or policy in this area?
11. What are likely to be the benefits to the council and its customers of this review?
12. What do other members think about this issue?
13. Is there media interest in the issue?

Criteria to reject Items for Scrutiny

Items which have been suggested for review can be rejected if:

1. the issue was dealt with less than two years ago;
2. the issue is already being examined elsewhere in the council (e.g. by full council);
3. new legislation relevant to this issue is expected within the year;
4. there is no scope for scrutiny to add value, or to make any real difference to the service; or
5. policy that is being reviewed; and the objective(s) of the review are unlikely to be achieved in the specified timescale.

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

13 January 2009

THIRD SECTOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP PRESENTATION REPORT

(Report of Councillors Shurmer and Thomas)

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this draft report is to inform the Executive Committee of the final recommendations that have been made by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group.

2. **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the Council adopt a written Grants Policy and Procedure;
- 2a) the Council's purpose for funding the third sector should be aligned to the following mission statement "Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community Sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant third sector is vital to our community";
- 2b) the criteria for grants applications be aligned to the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy priorities;
- 3) the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework be adopted for the Council's grants process;
- 4) the Council officially endorse the Worcestershire Compact;
- 5) further work be undertaken into the following issues:
 - a) a review of ways to enhance Voluntary and Community Sector involvement in the Redditch Partnership;
 - b) a review of the Council's provision of non-grant support to the Voluntary and Community Sector;
 - c) a review of how the Council should meet its responsibilities as set out in the Worcestershire Compact agreement;

- d) **a review of how the six equalities strands could be embedded in the working practices of Redditch Borough Council and the Redditch Partnership;**
 - e) **a review of the Council's procurement code; and**
 - f) **a review of how multi-year funding arrangements should be implemented as part of the Council's grants process; and**
- 6) **subject to the successful submission and approval of a revenue bid, the Council introduce a clerical support role in the policy team to support the grants process; or**
- subject to funding using a portion of the grants budget the Council introduce a clerical support role in the policy team to support the grants process.**

3. **Objectives of the Review**

- 3.1 The Third Sector Task and Finish Group was established in July 2008. The Group consisted of six Members: Councillor Thomas who chaired the Group; and Councillors Banks; Cookson; Farooqui; Pearce; and Shurmer. Mrs Ann Sowton, from the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network, (BARN), an infrastructure organisation that supports the third sector, acted as a co-opted member on the Group.
- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group were commissioned to undertake a strategic review of the Council's overarching approach to funding third sector organisations. The Group were specifically tasked with reviewing the Council's arrangements for awarding grants and donations to third sector organisations. They were asked to bring forward proposals that would shape the Council's grants process from 2010/11 onwards.

4. **Methods and Activities**

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group interviewed relevant Officers from Redditch Borough Council to develop an understanding of the existing grants process. They also interviewed the leaders of each of the political party groups represented on the Council to develop an understanding of political perspectives on the grants process. During the course of these interviews the Group sought to identify what both Officers and Members perceived to be the Council's purpose for funding third sector organisations as they felt that the purpose should inform the Council's grants process.

- 4.2 Throughout the course of the review the Group scrutinised the contents of relevant publications published by the Cabinet Office; the Department for Communities and Local Government; the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA); and HM Treasury. From this critical analysis the Group familiarised themselves with the national context.
- 4.3 The Task and Finish Group also interviewed relevant Officers from Gloucester City Council and Worcestershire County Council. These Officers were interviewed because the grants processes at their Councils were identified as examples of best practice by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA). The Group were keen to ensure that they learned from these examples of best practice.
- 4.4 The Group hosted a Voluntary Sector Grants Consultation Event on 21 November which provided an opportunity to engage with local representatives of the third sector. The event was widely advertised and twenty-five representatives from the sector attended. Delegates were consulted through a mixture of information sessions and interactive workshops. The information provided by delegates during the Consultation Event was considered by the Group at subsequent meetings and informed their final recommendations.

5. Recommendations – Further Details

- 5.1 More detailed information about each of the recommendations has been provided in the additional scrutiny report produced by the Task and Finish Group. However, some brief details are also provided in this Executive Summary:
- 1) The Council adopt a written Grants Policy and Procedure.**
- 5.1.1 In the past few years numerous reviews of the Council's grants process have been undertaken. However, these generally resulted in piecemeal solutions that did not improve funding arrangements in a manner considered value for money for either the Council or local third sector organisations. This also had a detrimental effect on the third sector's confidence in the Council and on relations between the Council and Voluntary Sector organisations. The Task and Finish Group feel that a written Policy and Procedures document would enable the Council to address this problem.
- 5.1.2 The Task and Finish Group have identified a number of principles which they feel should be included in this policy and procedure document. The Group intend that these principles should provide guidelines for the Officers who will be asked to produce this written document. These principles include the following:

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- a) the Council should utilise the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework;
 - b) the Council's mission statement, (as recorded in recommendation two above), should be included within the body of the Policy and Procedure document;
 - c) the Executive Committee and full Council should make decisions about what should be bought by the Council when "Shopping" for services;
 - d) Shopping arrangements should be funded using a portion of the grants budget;
 - e) third sector organisations should have opportunities to bid for both Strategic Grants and contracts as part of the Council's Shopping arrangements (the latter option would be subject to the review of the Council's procurement code, as set out in recommendation 5e);
 - f) there should be annual decision making about funding for both the Shopping, Investing and Giving parts of the funding framework;
 - g) the Council's Grants Panel should continue to make decisions about grants awarded as part of the Investing and Giving side of the framework, although this will be subject to members of the Grants Panel receiving training on assessing and making decisions about applications for funding;
 - h) decisions about grants and donations should be made in accordance with assessment of need rather than in accordance with demographic considerations;
 - i) organisations should demonstrate an outcomes focus in applications for funding;
 - j) the Council's funding application forms should be aligned with Worcestershire County Council's application forms;
 - k) monitoring arrangements should be commensurate with the size of the grant provided;
 - l) organisations should be able to secure full cost recovery with all applications for full cost recovery being assessed on a case by case basis; and

m) small grants should be regarded as sums valued at a maximum of £5,000 and large grants should be regarded as grants valued at over £5,000.

2a) The Council's purpose for funding the third sector should be aligned to the following mission statement "Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community Sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community".

5.2.1 The Task and Finish Group were of the opinion that the Council's grants process should be informed by the Council's purpose for funding third sector organisations. During the course of their review members interviewed representatives of both the Council and other organisations to determine what the purpose of funding arrangements was perceived to be. The Group concluded that there was no definitive interpretation of the purpose for providing funds to the third sector at either Redditch Borough Council or many other local authorities. They agreed that this weakened local authority grants processes.

5.2.2 The Group therefore identified a mission statement which they believed should be the Council's purpose for funding third sector organisations. They agreed that this mission statement should reflect recognition of the importance of third sector organisations to the local community and the Council's commitment to working in partnership with the third sector.

2b) The criteria for grants applications be aligned to the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy priorities.

5.2.3 The Group agreed that in the current public sector context the criteria for applications should be aligned to the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. They believe that in the present context this arrangement would enable the Council to ensure that funding is delivered in accordance with the purpose for providing funding to Third Sector organisations (outlined in recommendation 2a).

5.2.4 However, Members are aware that there is no guarantee that the priorities of the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy will remain aligned to the Council's priorities or that the Sustainable Community Strategy document will remain a permanent fixture of local government. Therefore, the Group agreed that this arrangement should be reviewed frequently and should not be recorded in the Council's Policy and Procedure document.

3) The Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework be adopted for the Council's grants process.

- 5.3.1 During the course of this research Members analysed the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework. This funding framework has been increasingly promoted by central government as an example of best practice for managing funding relations with external organisations, including third sector bodies.
- 5.3.2 Worcestershire County Council operates a model of Shopping, Investing and Giving. This funding framework had been implemented successfully by that Council, thereby demonstrating that the model can be utilised in the local area. Consequently many local third sector organisations should already be familiar with the requirements from applicant organisations that arise in accordance with this model. The Group believed that this, together with aligning the two Councils' application forms, should help to clarify application processes to the benefit of both applicants; local residents receiving services delivered by third sector organisations; and the Council.
- 5.3.3 Shopping, Investing and Giving is a suitable framework for implementing the stated purpose for providing grants and donations to third sector organisations.

4) The Council officially endorse the Worcestershire Compact.

- 5.4.1 The Worcestershire Compact agreement is an agreement between the Statutory Sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The agreement sets out how organisations from both sectors can work together to deliver the best services possible to people within Worcestershire.
- 5.4.2 During the course of the review it became apparent that this document had never been officially endorsed by full Council. The Group believed that this situation was unacceptable. They believed that the Worcestershire Compact agreement represented best practice. The Group therefore agreed that Members should officially endorse the agreement.

5) Further work should be undertaken to address recommendations 5 a-f (listed above).

- 5.5.1 The Group identified a number of relevant issues during the course of their review which they believe needed to be addressed in order to improve the Council's working relations with the third sector. Members did not scrutinise these issues further during the course of

their exercise because the subject areas were outside the scope of their review. They have therefore recommended that further work be undertaken, by appropriate working bodies, to address these issues.

5.5.2 The Group agreed that a review of how the six equalities strands could be embedded in the working practices of Redditch Borough Council and the Redditch Partnership should be undertaken. These six equalities strands consist of: age; disability; gender; race, religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

5.5.3 Members also recommended that further work be undertaken to review the possible introduction of multi-year funding arrangements. The Group did undertake an initial investigation of multi-year funding arrangements. Moreover, responses provided by delegates during the Consultation Event indicated widespread support for multi-year funding arrangements within the third sector. However, the Group felt that this was a complex issue that required further time to scrutinise than had been provided for their Task and Finish Review. For this reason recommendation 5 f was proposed by the Group.

6) subject to the successful submission and approval of a revenue bid, the Council introduce a clerical support role in the policy team to support the grants process; or

subject to funding using a portion of the grants budget the Council introduce a clerical support role in the policy team to support the grants process.

5.6.1 During the Course of the review the Group scrutinised the issue of Officer support for the grants process. The Group recognised that collectively the recommendations they proposed, if approved, would create more work for Officers. Members believed that under these circumstances additional Officer support would be appropriate.

5.6.2 Members were aware that there were various options available that could enable the Council to fund the post. They were also aware, though, that for each of these options there would be financial implications for the Council. The Group recognised that this might not be appropriate in the current economic climate for the Council.

5.6.3 However, the Group were concerned about the consequences that might arise if no further resources could be appointed to co-ordinate the grants process. Under these circumstances the Group were of the opinion that either part of the recommended grants process could not be implemented or duties that are currently undertaken by existing Officers could no longer be delivered. Moreover, during the

- Consultation Event delegates expressed their approval for the provision of appropriate Officer support for the grants process.
- 5.6.4 The Group were unable to agree a final recommendation in relation to Officer support. They therefore asked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a number of options and to agree an appropriate recommendation for the consideration of the Executive Committee.
- 5.6.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a clerical support role should be introduced to support the Council's policy team, which currently has responsibility for managing the grants process. The costs involved in funding this clerical support role are outlined in Appendix A.
- 5.6.6 The Committee had a preferred option for financing this role: using funds obtained as a result of a successful revenue bid. This would ensure that funding was not diverted from the Council's grants budget.
- 5.6.7 The use of a portion of the grants budget to finance the clerical support post, as outlined in the second option for this recommendation, would ensure that funding would not need to be obtained from additional Council budgets. However, both the Third Sector Task and Finish Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were concerned that this option would involve the Council diverting funds that could have been distributed to third sector organisations. Furthermore, during the Consultation Event the delegates clearly indicated that they would not be in favour of using a portion of the grants budget to finance an Officer role at the Council.
- 5.6.8 Therefore, the Executive Committee is urged to only consider this second option for funding an Officer support role if the revenue bid arrangement receives no support.

6. Conclusion

The Group have undertaken a thorough piece of scrutiny over the past six months. They believe that the recommendations that they have proposed should enable the Council's grants process to become fit for purpose from 2010/11 onwards. They therefore urge the Executive Committee to approve these recommendations.

7. Background Papers

The Third Sector Task and Finish Group Report. A full Bibliography of the sources that were scrutinised by the Group during the course of the review have been provided in this document.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 There has been extensive consultation with representatives of external bodies.
- 8.2 This occurred in the form of interviews with Officers from Gloucester City Council and Worcestershire County Council.
- 8.3 The Task and Finish Group also engaged representatives of local third sector organisations in the review during the Voluntary Sector Grants Consultation Event on 21 November. During the Consultation Event delegates proposed three key statements on behalf of the third sector for the consideration of the Council (Appendix B).

9. Author of Report

The authors of this report are the Chair of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group, Councillor Diane Thomas, and a member of the Group, Councillor Mark Shurmer. Further information about this report can be obtained from Jess Bayley, (Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer) who can be contacted on extension 3268 or e.mail: jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk .

Executive Committee

Appendix A

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The costs involved in supporting the clerical support role, as detailed in recommendation six, are outlined below.

The costs detailed below represent estimated salary costs and do not include operational budgets.

Staff	Grade	Salary bottom of grade (excluding oncosts)	Salary top of grade (excluding oncosts)	Salary bottom of grade (including oncosts)	Salary Top of grade (including oncosts)
Admin Post	Scale 3	£15,520	£16,610	£19,923	£21,358

Three Key Statements from the Voluntary and Community Sector

During the Voluntary Sector Grants Consultation Event delegates proposed three key statements on behalf of the Third Sector for consideration of the Council. These are detailed below:

- 1) Redditch Borough Council should ensure that the needs of the Borough are considered when making decisions. In the absence of this awareness some needs within the Borough may fail to be addressed.
- 2) Redditch Borough Council should ensure that some basic expectations inform decisions about distributing funding to third sector organisations. Funding should be fairly distributed across different communities and organisations within the Borough. The Council should seek to fund organisations that serve a range of communities as well as to award funding to a mix of small, medium and large organisations.
- 3) Redditch Borough Council needs to needs to develop more proactive communications arrangements. The Council should do more to publicise local events and opportunities, including opportunities for third sector organisations to apply for funding. The achievements of, and activities delivered by, third sector organisations using Council sources of funding should also be publicised. Relevant articles in a Council newspaper could help to address this issue. The Council could invite representatives of local third sector to contribute relevant articles to a Council newspaper.



**POLICY FOR AWARD OF GRANTS BY REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community. The Council is committed to supporting organisations that deliver projects and activities which have a beneficial impact on the local community.
- 1.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in their opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 1.3 There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 1.4 This policy is written in conjunction with the “Let’s Do It Smarter – Worcestershire Compact: Funding and Procurement Code of Good Practice”. The Compact is a commitment to improve relationships between public and voluntary and community sector organisations, with a mutual objective of ‘delivering high quality, good value services and support to the local community’.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies only to the allocation of grants to voluntary and community sector organisations. It does not apply to any other means of financial support from the Council that may be available under other schemes.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all grant funding from Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations. This includes grants made available from individual departments.

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3. Funding Framework

- 3.1 The Council uses the ***Shopping, Investing and Giving*** funding framework
- 3.2 ***Shopping*** refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide. The Council is committed to extending the opportunities available to voluntary and community sector organisations to be involved in the delivery of services. However, this policy does not apply to those arrangements which will be managed using a contract.
- 3.3 ***Investing*** refers to the Council providing funding to develop the capacity of the voluntary and community sector. This may include making funding contributions to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services, or making funding available for training or business development activities within organisations.
- 3.4 ***Giving*** refers to the Council providing funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to support work that contributes to the Council's aims, but which the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide.
- 3.5 This policy applies to grants made to support the ***Investing*** and ***Giving*** elements of the Council's funding framework. For the purposes of this policy, a **grant** is a financial contribution to an activity designed and delivered by a voluntary and community sector organisation which the Council has chosen to support because it is broadly aligned with the Council's own objectives. A grant can be given either to contribute towards organisational costs, or to wholly or partly fund a specific piece of work. A grant is a financial contribution with an expectation of mutually agreed, clearly defined outcomes. These outcomes are specified in a grant funding letter or agreement, and monitoring arrangements are commensurate with the value of grant given.
- 3.6 Small Grants are regarded as sums valued up to a maximum of £5,000, and Large Grants are regarded as sums value at over £5,000. These limits will affect risk assessment (section 7), grant assessment criteria (section 9) and monitoring requirements (section 11).

4. Purpose of Grant Funding

- 4.1 The Council provides grants to assist the development of a vibrant voluntary and community sector that delivers projects and activities of value to the local community.

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- 4.2 Funding will only be provided where it can be demonstrated that a defined impact will be made. Organisations should demonstrate an outcomes focus in applications for funding.
- 4.3 The Council will require that all grant awards will support Council objectives. The specific objectives to be supported will be made clear in all publicity relating to each grant opportunity. Demonstrating support of Council objectives may include:
- a) linking grant awards to an approved list of Council priorities, such as the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy; or
 - b) the Council choosing one or more specific outcomes in advance that will be achieved with the grant award. This will be particularly appropriate for individual departments wishing to make grants available to support the delivery of a particular service aim.

5. Which Organisations are eligible to apply for a Grant?

- 5.1 In order to be eligible to apply for a grant, an organisation must be able to prove that:
- a) it is voluntarily run, non-profit making and operated with no undue restrictions or limitations on membership;
 - b) it has a democratic structure and can demonstrate effective management of the organisation's business;
 - c) it has a bank account that requires the signature of at least two people who are unrelated to each other to withdraw money;
 - d) it operates in the Borough of Redditch on behalf of Borough residents;
 - e) it can demonstrate the need for financial assistance;
 - f) it can demonstrate the service it is providing by giving details of its activities and the number of people it is in contact with;
 - g) it meets all applicable legal requirements;
 - h) it actively promotes equality issues within its structure and operations; and
 - i) all previous grants received from Redditch Borough Council have been spent in accordance with the grant award conditions attached to them.
- 5.2 The Council will not make grants to any organisation that it deems to be a political party, has the nature of a political party, or is engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.

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5.3 The Council will not provide funds for the furtherance or propagation of a faith promoted by any organisation which is, or is deemed by the Council to be, of a religious nature. This will not preclude religious organisations applying for assistance to provide social or welfare work connected with their organisation and which do not directly promote a religious aspect.

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

6.1 Grant aid will only be considered for work that will be undertaken in the Borough of Redditch, and/or will be wholly or principally for the direct benefit of residents of the Borough of Redditch.

6.2 Grants cannot be used for retrospective funding; that is to replace money that has already been spent, or to cover items or services that have already been bought.

6.3 Any grant awarded must only be spent for the approved purpose, i.e. applicants must spend the money on what they said they would spend it on.

7. Risk considerations in grant giving

7.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that best use is made of its resources. This section considers risk in grant giving related to failure to achieve best use of Council resources. It does not consider risk assessment of, for example, items related to health and safety, which should form part of the grant assessment criteria as outlined in paragraph 9.6.

7.2 The Council acknowledges that the creativity and innovation of the voluntary sector can carry risks for non-delivery, for example where a new idea does not work out as intended.

7.3 The Council uses the general principle of requiring a lower level of risk the higher the amount of funding provided. Maximum levels of funding will only be provided where the risk of non-delivery is very low.

7.4 In order to achieve an appropriate balance between managing risk and supporting innovative ideas or new organisations, a grant limit of £5,000 will apply to:

- a) organisations that have been in existence for less than one year;
- b) organisations that do not have audited accounts;
- c) organisations that are not registered with either the Charity Commission or Companies House, or other appropriate government regulator; and

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- d) innovative pieces of work testing a new approach to service delivery.

7.5 Assessment of all voluntary and community sector grants made by the Council will look more favourably on applications that:

- a) have a strong evidence base of need;
- b) provide strong evidence that the proposed approach is likely to achieve the desired outcomes;
- c) do not contain high revenue costs that cannot be sustained; and
- d) demonstrate how a lasting benefit will be achieved.

7.6 The higher the sum of money applied for, the greater the need for applications to:

- a) be from organisations with a good track record of delivery;
- b) be from organisations with a range of funding streams;
- c) meet wider aims and objectives of the Council;
- d) support delivery of Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy or other appropriate document; and
- e) demonstrate co-operative working relationships with other organisations.

8 Grant Conditions

8.1 Information on the conditions that will apply to a grant will be made available to applicants before they apply.

8.2 Monitoring information will be required on all grants, as outlined in section 11.

8.3 All grant offers will be subject to the grant recipient accepting the grant conditions. A full set of grant conditions and monitoring requirements will be agreed with grant recipients before the final grant award is made. No changes will be made after this time.

9. Assessment Process

9.1 All opportunities for Voluntary and Community Sector grant funding from Redditch Borough Council will be openly advertised using a minimum of:

- notice of the opportunity on the 'Voluntary Sector Support' section of the Redditch Borough Council website; and
- notice of the opportunity circulated among an appropriate network or infrastructure organisation.

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- 9.2 In addition to the minimum requirements outlined in paragraph 9.1, other advertising maybe undertaken to promote grant opportunities as openly as possible.
- 9.3 Information provided to grant applicants will include as a minimum:
- the amount of money that is available;
 - clear information on the purposes for which funding is offered;
 - clear information on eligibility criteria;
 - details of the full assessment criteria against which applications will be judged;
 - a full list of conditions that will apply to the grant, including payment schedules and required monitoring information;
 - the deadline by which applications must be submitted; and
 - the date by which applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application.
- 9.4 Grant application forms will be made available in paper and electronic formats.
- 9.5 Applicants must complete a Standard Application form and provide relevant supporting documents. This is to ensure objective assessment of all grant applications. The Council will not award any grant to an organisation whose application has not been formally assessed.
- 9.6 All grant applications will be assessed using pre-selected assessment criteria. The details of the assessment criteria will be made available to all applicants before they apply for funding. The assessment criteria will be chosen as relevant for the funding opportunity, but as a minimum will include:
- a clear outline of how the purposes for which the grant is made available will be met;
 - the outcomes that the proposal will achieve;
 - the structure and delivery plan that will support the achievement of the stated outcomes;
 - the clarity of the proposal's financial outline, and the organisation's ability to successfully manage finance;
 - the approach to health and safety, duty of care, and other appropriate best practice requirements, and the organisation's ability to successfully manage these on the project; and
 - the sustainability of work after the period of grant aid.
- 9.7 All assessment criteria will be based on meeting need within the community. There will be no pre-determined demographic allocation of funds. Some funding opportunities may be restricted to a particular delivery area, e.g. to a specific ward, but only where this is to address a specific identified need.

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- 9.8 Organisations requesting a grant application over £5,000 will have the ability to receive funding for the full legitimate costs of providing a service or project. However, applicants must provide clear explanations for all calculations related to full cost recovery.
- 9.9 All grant applications will be assessed by the Council's Grants Panel. The Grants Panel will consist of a minimum of five elected Members. Conflicts of interest will be recorded, and members with a conflict of interest for a particular grant round will not participate in the assessment of any application in that grant round.
- 9.10 The Grants Panel will receive appropriate training in grant assessment, and will be supported by at least one officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise in the area for which the grant is being offered.
- 9.11 The Grants Panel will report its recommended decisions on grant applications to the Council's Executive Committee for approval.
- 9.12 Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application, and will be signposted to appropriate support for securing funding from alternative sources.
- 9.13 Appeals against the process used to award a grant will be dealt with using Redditch Borough Council's complaints procedure. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships will handle the initial complaint. There is no right of appeal as to the decision itself.

10. Assessment Timescales

- 10.1 Applications will be sought from October of each year for projects commencing after 1 April of the following year.
- 10.2 Decisions on the award of grants will be made in February of the following year with projects commencing after 1 April.
- 10.3 Other opportunities may be made available to apply for grants. In all cases, there will be a minimum of four weeks from announcement of the grants opportunity to the closing date for applications, and a maximum of 12 weeks from the closing date for applications to receive notification of the outcome.

11. Monitoring

- 11.1 All grant funded projects will be regularly monitored with applicants obliged to submit details of how the project is progressing. Monitoring requirements that will apply to a grant will be commensurate with the amount of money awarded, and will be agreed with the funded organisation before final confirmation of a grant award is made.

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- 11.2 Receipts or other monitoring information must be submitted to the Council as proof of spend within six months of the grant being received by the organisation (till slips, credit card vouchers, photocopied or altered receipts will not be accepted).
- 11.3 The Council reserve the right to withhold future payments and reject any further applications if they are dissatisfied with how grants funds have been used.

12. Collaborative Working

- 12.1 The Council recognises the potential benefits of working collaboratively with other funders. The Council will investigate all opportunities for working with other funders where this will provide a better use of Council resources.



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

1. Introduction

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

2. Scope

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

3. Funding Framework

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

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

4. Purposes of the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework

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

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

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

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

6. Worcestershire Compact

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



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No Direct Ward Relevance

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12. WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

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

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	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Oral updates on the progress of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group; and 2. the Housing Mutual Exchange Task and Finish Group. 	<p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service</p>
8 April 2009	<p>REGULAR ITEMS</p> <p>Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2008/09</p>	Chief Executive
OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED		
8 April 2009	Dial-a-Ride Review - Scoping Document	
8 April 2009	Redditch Passenger Transport Area Review – Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
8 April 2009	Third Sector Task and Finish Group – Stage One Update on Responses to the Group’s Recommendations	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
30 April 2009	Councillor Call for Action – Briefing	Relevant Lead Head of Service
30 April 2009	Emergency Planning - Briefing	Relevant Lead Head of Service

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17 June 2009	Uses of the Countryside and Visitors Centre – Scoping Document	Relevant Lead Head of Service
8 July 2009	District Centres Task and Finish Group – Update Report on Response to Recommendations	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
2 September 2009	Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group – Update on Response to Recommendations – Planning Charges.	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
14 October 2009	Communications Task and Finish Group – Update on response to recommendations	Relevant Lead Head of Service
January 2010	Update on fly tipping and the progress of the 'Worth It' campaign.	Relevant Lead Head of Service
March 2010	Review of Ditches - update report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
March 2010	Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group – update on implementation of the Charging Policy	Relevant Lead Head of Service
June 2011	Third Sector Task and Finish Group – Stage Two Update on responses to the Group's recommendations	Relevant Lead Head of Service
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED		
	Overview and Scrutiny Member Training on Pre-Scrutiny.	Relevant Lead Head of Service

