



Council

Mon 12 Apr
2021
7.00 pm

Microsoft Teams

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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GUIDANCE ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Redditch Borough Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panels meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting conducted remotely Microsoft Teams between invited participants and live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

You are able to access the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

[Link to the live stream of the Council meeting](#)

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

Notes:

As referred to above, the virtual Microsoft Teams meeting will be streamed live and accessible to view. Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when the committee might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.



Council

Monday, 12th April, 2021

7.00 pm

**During the Covid-19 outbreak
Committee meetings are
taking place on Skype for
Business**

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:

Gareth Prosser
(Mayor)
Julian Grubb
(Deputy Mayor)
Salman Akbar
Joe Baker
Tom Baker-Price
Roger Bennett
Joanne Beecham
Juliet Brunner
Michael Chalk
Debbie Chance
Greg Chance
Brandon Clayton
Matthew Dormer
John Fisher

Peter Fleming
Andrew Fry
Bill Hartnett
Ann Isherwood
Wanda King
Anthony Lovell
Gemma Monaco
Nyear Nazir
Mike Rouse
Mark Shurmer
Yvonne Smith
David Thain
Craig Warhurst
Jennifer Wheeler

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

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

- 4. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 12)
- 5. Announcements**

To consider Announcements under Procedure Rule 10:

- Mayor's Announcements
- The Leader's Announcements
- Chief Executive's Announcements.

6. Executive Committee

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 23rd March 2021

6 .1 Green Homes Funding (Pages 23 - 28)

6 .2 Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 2020/21 (Pages 29 - 52)

6 .3 Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board - Budget Recommendations
(Pages 53 - 66)

7. Political Balance (Report to Follow)

8. Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 67 - 88)

9. Urgent Business - Record of Decisions

To note any decisions taken in accordance with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules.

(None to date).

10. Urgent Business - general (if any)

To consider any additional items exceptionally agreed by the Mayor as Urgent Business in accordance with the powers vested in him by virtue of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

(This power should be exercised only in cases where there are genuinely special circumstances which require consideration of an item which has not previously been published on the Order of Business for the meeting.)

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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Gareth Prosser (Mayor), Councillor Julian Grubb (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Roger Bennett, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Chris Forrester, Kate Goldey and Sue Hanley

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce

64. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present and outlined how the virtual meeting would proceed.

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Debbie Chance and Gemma Monaco.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

67. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday, 25th January 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

68. ANNOUNCEMENTS

.....
 Chair

The following announcements were made at the meeting:

a) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader explained that he had attended a number of meetings of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) since the previous meeting of Council. However, there were no detailed updates to provide to Council at this time.

c) Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make at the meeting.

69. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Council considered minutes from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday, 16th February 2021 and recommendations from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Monday, 22nd February 2021 directly before Council.

The following items were discussed:

Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

The Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 was considered in some detail. Members commented that the report was required to set out the pay for staff employed at all levels of the organisation, from the Chief Executive to the lowest paid staff. Reference was made to the pay increase that had been awarded to staff employed by Redditch Borough Council and this was welcomed in recognition of the hard work of staff during the pandemic.

During consideration of this item concerns were raised about the potential impact of public sector pay freezes moving forward. However, Members also noted that the proposals outlined an increase to the wages paid to staff employed by the Council that was above the level of inflation.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Council considered the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24. Members commented that a balanced budget

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position had been secured for 2021/22 despite the financial challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional workload that had been generated for Council staff. Officers working in the Financial Services team were thanked for their hard work in respect of balancing the budget.

In proposing the recommendations detailed in the report, the Leader outlined an alteration to the sixth recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor Mike Rouse. This alteration was as follows:

“The net general fund revenue budget be approved:

2021/22 £10.467 million
2022/23 £10.064 million
2023/24 £10.051 million”

This alteration was adopted.

During consideration of this item, Councillor Bill Hartnett proposed an alternative budget. This alternative budget was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance.

Members were advised that in the alternative budget recommendations 1 to 8 in the report would remain as detailed in the agenda. However, the alternative budget included altered wording and figures in respect of recommendations 9 and 10, as follows:

- “9) Approval of the increase of the Council Tax per Band D at 0.7% for 2021/22; and
- 10) Approval of the drawdown from balances of £42k for 2021/22.”

In proposing the alternative budget, Councillor Hartnett explained that a one-year settlement had been outlined for Members’ consideration. The additional information that had been requested in respect of the budget at the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16th February 2021 had helped to inform the content of the alternative budget. Consideration had also been given to the financial position of local government and the need for greater certainty to be provided in respect of Council finances moving forward. A key concern had been the impact of Covid-19 on local residents and businesses, particularly people who had been furloughed or had been made unemployed as a result of the pandemic, many of whom were struggling financially as a consequence. To address this, the alternative budget proposed that Council Tax should be increased by 0.7 per cent in 2021/22, which was equivalent to the rate of inflation or the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rather than at the £5 maximum level at which District Councils could increase Council Tax. Councillor Hartnett

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commented that he hoped that the economy could start to open up safely later in the year but he cautioned that many businesses would struggle to recover, especially as there had been little or no income during lockdown to pay for costs such as rent and utilities bills. Reference was also made to an increase in demand for support from food banks amongst Redditch residents during the pandemic and Members were asked to note that many residents in this position would struggle to pay their Council Tax. Councillor Hartnett concluded by urging the Government to provide more funding for local government moving forward.

In seconding the alternative budget, Councillor Greg Chance commented that it would be unfair in his opinion to agree to an above inflation increase to Council Tax during a global pandemic. Whilst the Council remained subject to a Section 24 Notice, Members were asked to note that the alternative budget was balanced for 2021/22 and had been verified as such by the Head of Financial and Customer Services. Decisions had been taken in previous years not to increase Council Tax at the maximum level permissible for District Councils and Councillor Chance suggested that this would be appropriate to repeat in a year when residents and businesses were struggling financially due to Covid-19. Any potential gaps arising in the budget would need to be addressed but Councillor Chance argued that this needed to be resolved by the Government, through the provision of more funding for local government moving forward.

Members discussed the alternative budget and in so doing commented on the following points:

- The proposed use of funding from balances in order to balance the alternative budget.
- The impact that the use of funding from balances could have on the extent to which the external auditors would continue to apply the Section 24 Notice to the Council.
- The causes of the Section 24 Notice that was in place for the Council.
- The loss of income for the Council should a decision be taken to increase Council Tax by 0.7 per cent rather than £5 in 2021/22. Members noted that this would amount to in excess of £80,000 in 2021/22 and over £450,000 in five years' time.
- The difficult decisions that needed to be taken in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- The need to support some of the most vulnerable members of society, including those who had been negatively impacted financially by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Council services that were supported with funding from Council Tax.

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- The other measures that could be taken to increase Council funding, including increases to fees for Council services and the sale of Council assets.
- The different approaches that had been adopted by Councils in the country with regard to increases to Council Tax and the need to meet local needs in determining any increases to Council Tax.
- The support that had already been provided by the Council to local residents and businesses.
- The notice that had been provided to Members in respect of the alternative budget.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the alternative budget was subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the alternative budget:

Councillors Joe Baker, Greg Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett,
Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler (9)

Members voting AGAINST the alternative budget:

Councillors Salman Akbar, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst (16)

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the alternative budget

No Councillors (0)

The vote on the alternative budget was therefore lost.

Members subsequently discussed the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 report and recommendations detailed in the agenda, including the altered recommendation 6. During the discussion of this report Members referred to the following matters:

- The proposals that would result in a balanced budget for 2021/22 and the return to balances of £44,000 in the first year of the plan.
- The need for the Council to have access to adequate funding in order to ensure that services remained sustainable moving forward.
- The proposed increase of £5 in Council Tax and the impact that this might have on vulnerable residents in particular.

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- The reductions in expenditure proposed for areas such as management and supervision costs and the need for the Council to achieve further efficiency savings.
- The comments that had been raised at recent meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the proposed budget.
- The position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), whereby funding was being returned to balances.
- The improvement to the turnaround times for void properties and the positive impact that this had on income for the Council.
- The work that was being undertaken to build Council houses in the Borough.
- The hard work of staff in the Housing Department to ensure that the HRA was in a sustainable position moving forward.
- The work that had been undertaken by officers in respect of compliance for Housing Services.
- The uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic, both for the public and the private sector, and the ongoing impact that this could have on Council services.

The Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 as detailed in the agenda, including the alteration to recommendation 6, was subsequently put to the vote. At the request of Members, a vote was held first in respect of recommendations 1 to 8 and 10 and a separate vote was then held on recommendation 9.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 all of the recommendations in the Medium Term Financial Plan were subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR recommendations 1 to 8 and 10 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jenny Wheeler (26)

Members voting AGAINST recommendations 1 to 8 and 10 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

No Councillors (0)

Members voting to ABSTAIN on recommendations 1 to 8 and 10 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

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No councillors (0)

The vote on recommendations 1 to 8 and 10 was therefore carried.

Members voting FOR recommendation 9 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors Salman Akbar, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain, and Craig Warhurst. (17)

Members voting AGAINST recommendation 9 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors Joe Baker, Greg Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler. (9)

Members voting to ABSTAIN on recommendation 9 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

No Councillors (0)

The vote on recommendation 9 was therefore carried.

Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22

The Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22 were considered and Members noted that the recommendations took into account the proposed £5 increase to Council Tax that had been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24. The funding gathered in the Council Tax collection would be distributed to all of the precepting authorities, including Redditch Borough Council.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions were subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the Council Tax Resolutions

Councillors Salman Akbar, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Roger Bennett, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst. (17)

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Members voting AGAINST the Council Tax Resolutions

Councillors Joe Baker, Greg Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer and Jenny Wheeler.

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the Council Tax Resolutions

No Councillors (0)

The vote on the Council Tax Resolutions was therefore carried.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday, 16th February 2021 be approved and all recommendations adopted subject to the following amendment to recommendation 6 in the minutes at Minute Item No. 78:**

The net general fund revenue budget be approved:

2021/22 £10.467 million

2022/23 £10.064 million

2023/24 £10.051 million

- 2) **the calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) as £6,517,245.77;**
- 3) **the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
 - (a) **£47,617,501 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e.*, *Gross expenditure*);**
 - (b) **£41,090,255 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e.*, *Gross income*);**
 - (c) **£6,527,246 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);**

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- (d) £249.53 being the amount at 1.2.2 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
- (e) £10,000 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Feckenham Parish precept) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act;
- (f) £249.15 being the amount at 1.2.2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2 (e) above by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
- (g) £276.38 being the amount given by adding to the amount at 1.2.2(f), the amount of the special item relating to the Parish of Feckenham 1.2.2(e), divided by the amount in 1.1(b) above;
- (h) the amounts below given by multiplying the amounts at 1.2.2(f) and 1.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands;

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Parish of Feckenham £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	6/9	184.25	166.10
B	7/9	214.96	193.78
C	8/9	245.67	221.47
D	1	276.38	249.15
E	11/9	337.80	304.52
F	13/9	399.21	359.88
G	15/9	460.63	415.25
H	18/9	552.76	498.30

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- 4) it be noted that for the year 2021/22, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	895.89	1,045.20	1,194.52	1,343.83	1,642.46	1,941.09	2,239.72	2,687.66
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	160.13	186.81	213.50	240.19	293.57	346.94	400.32	480.38
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	58.45	68.20	77.94	87.68	107.16	126.65	146.13	175.36

- 5) that having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Redditch Borough Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021/22. for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings:

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Parish of Feckenham £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	6/9	1,298.72	1,280.57
B	7/9	1,515.17	1,493.99
C	8/9	1,731.63	1,707.43
D	1	1,948.08	1,920.85
E	11/9	2,380.99	2,347.71
F	13/9	2,813.89	2,774.56
G	15/9	3,246.80	3,201.42
H	18/9	3,896.16	3,841.70

- 6) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2021 to March 2022 as detailed below:

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	Precept	Deficit on Collection Fund	Total to pay
	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	35,152,080.00	-335,887.00	34,816,193.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	6,282,921.24	-57,694.58	6,225,226.66
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	2,293,424.78	-22,030.90	2,271,393.88

- 7) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £6,464,599 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£6,517,246) and Parish Precept (£10,000) and the distribution of the Deficit on the Collection Fund (£62,647);
- 8) that the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Feckenham Parish Council the sums listed above (£10,000) by instalment after 1 April 2021 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;
- 9) that the above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes;
- 10) notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- 11) that authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services (Interim S151) following consultation with the finance portfolio holder to amend the resolution should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority Service not approve the estimated figure that is being used in this report. This is due to the Fire service having their approval meeting after this resolution report has been brought to Council.

(During consideration of this item there was an adjournment from 7.31 pm to 7.48 pm.)

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70. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Council was advised that two urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting in January 2021. The first of these decisions related to funding for action that could be taken to enable the decarbonisation of the Greenlands Business Centre and Redditch Town Hall. The second urgent decision had granted Members a dispensation to participate in the debate and vote in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 and the Council Tax Resolutions.

71. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no further urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.04 pm



Executive Committee

Tuesday, 23rd March, 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Mike Rouse (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Bill Hartnett, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, David Thain and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Matthew Bough, Claire Felton, Chris Forrester, Sue Hanley, James Howse, Kath Manning and Simon Parry

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

90. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

92. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had pre-scrutinised the Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 at a meeting held on 17th March 2021. However, as no recommendations had been made on the subject, the minutes of that meeting had not been provided for Members' consideration.

During consideration of this item the Leader advised Members that the Council had entered into the pre-election period. Members were asked to be mindful of this moving forward.

93. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

Chair

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Monday, 22nd February 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

94. GREEN HOMES FUNDING

The Climate Change and Energy Support Officer presented a report which detailed the Council's application for funding that could be used to improve the energy efficiency of homes located in the Borough.

The distribution of the grant funding that was available was managed by Local Energy Hubs. Redditch was located in the West Midlands and the Midland Energy Hub (MEH) was managing the distribution of funding locally. There was additional funding available to support Councils and partner organisations with the administration of the scheme.

The intention was for the grant funding to be used to improve the energy efficiency of the worst performing properties, which had received energy efficiency ratings of E, F G. Many of these properties were managed as social housing, including Council houses managed by Redditch Borough Council, and therefore the Housing Department would be actively involved in the project. Residents in these properties were often impacted by fuel poverty and therefore the work would have a beneficial impact on their finances. The deadline for the completion of funded projects would be 31st December 2021 and the funds would need to be spent in accordance with the grant guidance.

There were risks attached to the project, particularly in respect of the relatively tight timescales available to complete the works. In addition, there were risks associated with Coronavirus, though Covid secure practices would be adopted.

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

- The average expenditure of £10,000 per property and the works that could be funded at this level.
- The works that would be undertaken on Council house properties. Officers explained that measures such as the

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installation of loft, wall and garage insulation would feature in these works.

- The match funding required from the Council in respect of Council properties that were supported through this process. Members were advised that this funding would be provided as part of the capital programme for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- The availability of some of the funding for other social housing providers.
- The number of houses that would benefit from the programme. Officers explained that it was difficult to quantify the number of houses that would benefit at this stage.
- The extent to which a plan had been developed to ensure that the funding could be spent and works completed by the deadline of 31st December 2021. Officers advised that there was an aim to get on site quickly and to complete the works as efficiently as possible within the time available.
- The Council's energy efficiency programme. Members were informed that this project formed part of that programme.
- The extent to which the funding was available to support improvements to the energy efficiency of properties in the private sector. Officers advised that many privately owned homes were already performing well but there were some exceptions and applications could be submitted in relation to these properties.
- The criteria for applications for the funding and the potential for some applicants to be turned down. Officers clarified that all eligible properties in the private sector would be provided with an opportunity to apply for funding, with funding being granted on a first come first serve basis. However, the Council was not anticipating that demand would outstrip supply.
- The detrimental impact that fuel poverty could have on households.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Capital and Revenue Budgets (Housing and General Fund) are increased to receive Redditch Borough Council's Green Homes Grant scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £280,700; and**

- 2) **delegated authority is granted to the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services and Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.**

95. FINANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2020/21

The Head of Finance and Customer Services presented the Financial Monitoring Report for the third quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

Members were advised that Officers were anticipating a £150,000 overspend at the end of the financial year. The Council had recently been informed that the Government would be allocating a further £35,000 to the authority to help cover lost income from fees and charges, which would help to offset this overspend.

Additional expenditure was anticipated in respect of the benefits subsidy and payments. This was because there had been no court processes during the Covid-19 pandemic and this work would need to be addressed at a later date.

The budget for Enabling Services was overspent by £172,000. A significant contribution to this overspend had been pressures arising from the Local Government Pension Scheme. This overspend had been partly offset by salary savings from vacant posts.

There was a significant underspend in the capital programme and this was projected to continue over the three year period of the programme. Senior Officers were in the process of reviewing the content of the Capital Programme to ensure that expenditure aligned more closely with the budget in future years. However, Members were asked to note that many of the delays to expenditure in the capital programme had been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In respect of the HRA, the Council was anticipating a significant surplus by the end of the financial year of £750,000. In part, this was due to a delay in respect of work by the Repairs and Maintenance department, as during the Covid-19 pandemic the

focus had been on delivering essential works. The works that had not been completed at this time would eventually need to be progressed and therefore the surplus generated in 2020/21 had not been incorporated into the budget for future years out of recognition that these funds would need to be spent.

After the report had been presented Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The repairs and maintenance jobs that had not been completed during the Covid-19 pandemic and the extent to which this had created a backlog.
- The potential for a plan to be developed in respect of undertaking the repairs and maintenance jobs that had not been undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic. Officers advised that proposals were being developed to ensure that an organised approach was adopted to addressing this matter. Health and safety would need to be considered as part of this process, with staff currently working for a maximum of three hours at properties in order to keep people safe.
- The possibility that assistance might be required from external contractors in order to address the backlog in repairs and maintenance. Officers confirmed that it was anticipated that a limited amount of support would be required from external contractors for this purpose.
- The potential for Members to be notified once the Council started to address the backlog in repairs and maintenance.
- The reserve that had been included in the budget to offset any business rates that were lost at appeal. Officers explained that this reserve had been considered prudent to include in the budget to ensure that the Council had financial reserves to fill any gaps that might arise as a result of companies successfully appealing against the level of their business rate payments.
- The reserve of £432,000 recorded for the Financial Services team and the purpose of this reserve. The Committee was advised that this reserve was intended for expenditure on the new finance system and would be largely spent by the end of the financial year.
- The purpose of the reserve that had been recorded for Green Lane, Studley, which had been recorded as funding for negotiations through the planning process. Members commented that this reserve was intended to help fund

ongoing negotiations with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwickshire County Council in respect of the assets owned by Redditch Borough Council at that location.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020 be noted;**

RECOMMENDED that: -

- 2) **an increase to the Capital programme 2020/21 of match funding with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for a digital upgrade of CCTV £21,000 be approved; and**
- 3) **the revised fees and Charges for Bereavement services be approved for 2021/22.**

96. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD - BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The Head of Finance and Customer Services presented the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board held on 11th February 2021. Members were advised that during this meeting Wyre Forest District Council had advised that they would be withdrawing a request for additional income to host the IT service and premises provided to WRS. The recommendations detailed in the minutes of the Board meeting outlined the resulting changes to the budget for WRS in 2021/22 accordingly.

Members discussed the minutes and in doing so welcomed the change in the position that had been adopted by Wyre Forest District Council in respect of this matter.

RECOMMENDED that the following figures be approved for 2021/22 and 2023/24:

- 1) **the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,726k;**
- 2) **the 2021/22 income budget of £529k;**

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- 3) the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2021/22 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Redditch Borough Council	562	17.57

- 4) the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

Redditch Borough Council	£10k
Total	£60k

- 5) the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to three Technical Officers.

Council	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	0

97. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members were advised that there were no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration on this occasion.

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

Members were advised that there were no referrals from either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Executive Advisory Panels for consideration on this occasion.

99. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following updates were provided in respect of the Executive Advisory Panels and other groups:

- a) Climate Change Cross Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Anthony Lovell

Councillor Lovell explained that consideration was being given by the Council to electric charging points for vehicles and the grant funding available for this purpose. The Council would aim to submit bids for this funding moving forward.

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

Councillor Dormer informed Members that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was scheduled to take place on 29th June 2021.

- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Nyear Nazir

Councillor Nazir advised that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Board had not yet been published. There was a further meeting of the Board scheduled to take place on 27th May 2021.

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

Councillor Dormer commented that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group had taken place on 2nd March 2021. During this meeting Members had discussed the induction process for Councillors due to be elected in May 2021. Reference had also been made to the potential for the Council to continue to live stream meetings once meetings resumed in person. An additional meeting of the group, prior to the end of the municipal year, had been requested to enable Members to discuss the available webcasting options further.

During the delivery of this update, Councillor Dormer explained that the Member Support Steering Group had

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discussed the requirement for local authorities to return to holding meetings in person from 7th May 2021 onwards. This would apply to formal Committee meetings and the group had agreed that informal and private meetings, such as meetings of the group, Portfolio Holder Briefings and Scrutiny Task Group meetings, should continue to take place virtually wherever possible. Concerns had been raised by Members of the group that it would be too early to return safely to physical Committee meetings by 7th May 2021, particularly as the Covid-19 pandemic remained in place. For this reason, the Leader had spoken to the leader of the opposition and they had agreed to write together to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to set out their concerns on behalf of the Council.

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.

The Meeting commenced at 6.42 pm
and closed at 7.30 pm

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Executive Committee 23rd March 2021**GREEN HOMES FUNDING**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors Craig Warhurst/ Anthony Lovell
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Judith Willis
Report Author	Name: Simon Parry, Kath Manning Job Title: Housing Property Services Manager, Climate Change Officer Contact email: simon.parry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk kath.manning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: Ext 3201, Ext 3044
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	n/a
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding somewhere to live - Living independent, active & healthy lives - Aspirations, work & financial independence - Communities which are safe, well maintained & green
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee **RECOMMEND** that:

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets (Housing and General Fund) are increased to receive Redditch Borough Council's Green Homes Grant scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £280,700.
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services and Head of Community & Housing Services following consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have allocated £59.95m of funding to Phase 2 of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element of the Green Homes Grant scheme, which runs until December 2021.

The distribution of this funding is being managed via Local Energy Hubs (the Midlands Energy Hub, MEH, in the case of Redditch).

The allocations have been calculated to reflect the number and proportion of EPC Band E, F and G properties within the Local Authority area: for Redditch Borough Council this will be £255,000, with an additional capitalisation allocation of £22,950 and an additional fixed cost of £2,750 for Stock Analysis or modelling to support proposal development and future energy efficiency schemes.

The deadline to accept the allocation is 15th April 2021.

2.2. Key information:

- Funded measures must improve the properties' Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings (SAP) ratings.
- Measures must be targeted at properties with the worst SAP ratings: Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) score D (up to 50% of properties), E, F and G.
- Decarbonisation of energy systems is integral to the scheme, so no fossil fuel powered measures will be funded.
- The occupants of the properties in the scheme must be overall at above average risk of fuel poverty: across the scheme, there must be an average household income of less than £30k or other factors which are a proxy for fuel poverty risk such as receipt of means tested benefits.
- The average capital works per property cannot exceed £10k.
- The deadline for completion of funded projects is December 31st 2021, unless extended by MEH with permission from BEIS and HM Treasury as required.
- Any tenures may be funded, though the proportion of funding differs between tenures (see 3. Financial Implications).

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- 2.3. RBC took part in a successful Green Homes Grants LAD Part 1a bid to fund works to privately owned properties, for which the completion deadline has been extended to June 30th 2021, so it is anticipated that the majority of the Part 2 funding will be spent on RBC Social Housing properties.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. RBC have been allocated a capital grant of £255,000 to be spent in line with grant conditions.
- 3.2. An additional capitalisation allocation of £22,950 can be used for administration and enabling works and can be allocated to capital or revenue budgets at the discretion of the Council. This mobilisation payment will be awarded upon signing of the Award Letter.
- 3.3. Upon Signing of the Award Letter, or once MEH has received the funding from BEIS whichever is later, an additional fixed cost of £2,750 is provide all councils for Stock Analysis or modelling requirements to support proposal development and future energy efficiency schemes.
- 3.4. A full project proposal (see Operational Implications) and compliance with reporting requirements is required for receipt of the full Part 2 grant allocation. A full breakdown of funding need and allocation between Housing and General Fund will be ascertained as part of the development of this project proposal.
- 3.5. For privately rented or social housing properties, Green Homes Grant funding can only fund up to two-thirds of the cost of measures, up to a maximum of £5000. (Any owner occupier properties are required by BEIS to be fully funded using the grant monies.) There is sufficient funding in the existing RBC Housing Capital Budget 2021-22 to provide match funding for RBC social housing properties.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The general power of competence in s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the council to undertake such a project.
- 4.2 Given the level of spend and timescale, an OJEU compliant framework will be used to procure delivery of the works (in progress).
- 4.3 A legal review of the Grant Conditions will be undertaken prior to acceptance.

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5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Strategic Purposes**

5.1 The funding aligns as follows:

- **Finding somewhere to live:** improving housing stock
- **Living independent, active & healthy lives:** healthier home environments
- **Aspirations, work & financial independence:** addressing fuel poverty
- **Communities which are safe, well maintained & green:** reducing carbon emissions

Climate Change Implications

5.2 This funding is specifically to reduce energy consumption with an emphasis on decarbonisation, so is key for addressing Climate Change.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1. Allocation of the funding will be based on criteria set by BEIS and will not be based on personal characteristics other than related to income.
- 6.2. Equality and Diversity considerations particularly in relation to accessibility will be included in procurement of Contractors and the design of the project, with the Policy Team consulted as necessary.

Operational Implications

6.3 The Housing Capital and Compliance Team will oversee the operational delivery, working closely with the:

- Tenancy and Neighbourhood team for liaison with tenants
- Climate Change Officer in respect of privately owned properties
- Public Energy Efficiency Programme Lead and Midlands Energy Hub Regional Principal Energy Projects Officer in respect of low carbon technologies.

6.4. Property assessments for RBC social housing are in process, under the Worcestershire County Council ERDF funded Public Energy Efficiency Programme (PEEP). These will identify appropriate measures for the Green Homes Grant funding and PEEP may also

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contribute funding to measures that are not eligible under the Green Homes Grant scheme.

- 6.5 Once contractors are procured and the mobilisation payment has been received, engagement with tenants, leaseholders and homeowners, detailed technical surveys, Retrofit Assessments and pricing will take place, to enable production of the proposal.

- 6.4 Key Dates:

15/4/21	Deadline to enable signing of award letter and enable release of mobilisation payment
24/5/21	Final deadline for submitting proposal and accessing full funding allocation
July	Interim report
December 31 st 2021	Delivery completion deadline

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Effect	Mitigation
No funding	Benefits not realised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept funding
Timescales - deadlines not met	Funding not accessed or needs to be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation already in progress. • Regular monitoring of spend. • Close communication with Midlands Energy Hub regarding potential delays and any need for reallocation. • Finance and legal to review Grant Conditions regarding any risks related to returning funding.
Covid19	Transmission and resultant harm, impact on timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-secure practices. • Health and Safety involvement in project planning.
Insufficient experience of low carbon technologies	Measures underperform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert advice from PEEP and Midlands Energy Hub

Executive Committee 23rd March 2021**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Background papers:

- MEH Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery Part 2 – Grant Letter Redditch
- MEH Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery Part 2 Guidance

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Craig Warhurst Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement • Cllr Anthony Lovell Portfolio Holder for Climate Change 	9/3/2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guy Revans Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services • Judith Willis Head of Community & Housing Services 	9/3/2021
Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Goldey Senior Business Support Accounting Technician • Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services 	2/3/2021 11/3/2021
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor • Rachel Martin Team Leader – Contracts and Commercial 	3/3/2021 11/3/2021
Policy Team	n/a	
Climate Change Officer	Kath Manning Climate Change Officer	Report author

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202123rd March**Finance Monitoring Quarter 3 2020/21**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services
Report Author	Name: Kate Goldey Job Title: Senior Business Support Accounting Technician Contact email: k.goldey@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881208
Wards Affected	none
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	n/a
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**The Executive Committee to RESOLVE –**

The current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020.

The Executive Committee to RECOMMEND the: -

- 1.1 Approval of an increase to the Capital programme 2020/21 of match funding from PCC for digital upgrade of CCTV £21k **see 3.6.1**
- 1.2 Approval of the revised fees and Charges for Bereavement services be introduced for 2020/21 **see appendix 4.**

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2. BACKGROUND

To report to Executive on the Council's financial position for Revenue and Capital for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial performance of the Council for 2020/21. The report reflects the finances across the new strategic purposes to enable Members to be aware of the level of income and expenditure attributed to each area and how this compares to budget. The summary below shows the financial revenue position for the Council for the period April to December 2020/21.
- 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 2020/21.
- 3.3 The £9.702m original budget as included in the table below is made up of the budget approved in February 2020.

In addition the Latest Budget 2020/21 of £10.267m includes transfers from reserves of £565k which is shown in **appendix 2**.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive Committee**
202123rd March**Revenue Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2020/21**

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2020/21 £'000	Revised budget 2020/21 £'000	Budget to date 2020/21 £'000	Actuals to date 2020/21 £'000	Variance to date 2020/21 £'000	Projected outturn 2020/21 £'000	Projected Variance 2020/21 £'000
Aspiration, work & Financial independence	663	654	648	890	242	883	229
Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	4,203	4,559	3,391	3,267	-124	4,447	-112
Enabling the Authority	2,674	2,465	1,747	1,837	90	2,636	172
Finding somewhere to live	1,055	1,060	792	610	-182	866	-193
Living independent, active & healthy lives	664	716	440	352	-88	659	-57
Run and grow a successful business	444	814	649	742	93	903	89
Totals	9,702	10,267	7,667	7,698	31	10,394	127
Corporate Financing	-9,702	-10,267	-9,227	-9,107	119	-10,209	59
Grand Total	0	0	-1,559	-1,409	150	185	185

Financial Commentary:

It is important to note that the council has received £1,456k in COVID-19 grants in four tranches from central government to date of which £771k has been spent. This means that there is £626k remaining which can be used to mitigate some of the overspends/losses as shown above and explained in more detail below as appropriate. It has recently been announced that the Council will receive a fifth tranche of grant £496k which is still waiting to be received.

The Council has also filled in returns to central government with the expectation that a proportion of the losses the council has experienced detailed on the returns due to COVID-19 will be met by government which should reduce the deficit position detailed above. The Council has received the first quarter of this grant and has been factored into the above figures. The Council is still awaiting confirmation on the second quarter grant and if and when this will be received.

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There are a number of variances across the strategic purposes. The summary above shows the 2020/21 revenue position for the Council to the end of quarter 3 and the main variations are as a result of the below.

Aspiration, work & Financial independence (£229k projected overspend)

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 have been some additional costs required within Benefits subsidy for Benefit payments on B&B's due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There also has not been any court recoveries taking place and none have been projected by the year end to take place. **£327k.**
- Benefits and Revenues have some salary savings due to a pending service review **£97k.**

Communities which are safe, well maintained and green (£112k projected 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:

- There is a saving within the Anti-Social behaviour team 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 **£135k.**
- Bereavement services is forecast a projected overspend due to additional expenditure on works for the planning application for the potential new cemetery at Ipsley Church along with additional expenditure for the upkeep and extensive use of the equipment during the pandemic **£159k.**
- Core Environmental operations have an underspend in quarter 3 due to the strategic routes teams having low vehicle costs as a result of restricted work due to COVID-19 **£50k.**
- Development Control have received additional income against their budgeted income target. This is expected to continue for the remainder of the financial year showing a projected outturn of an additional **£59k** to be received.
- Strategic planning is expected to have underspend by the end of the year due to temporary salaries savings **£39k.**

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

- There is an overspend within Accounts and Financial Management due to additional resources required due to the pressures of Covid on projects like the implementation of the new ERP system of conducting the council audits remotely. These require greater resources than would have been the case if officers were still on site. **£16k.**
- There is an underspend within Asset & Property Management due to sites being closed as a result of COVID-19 and therefore savings are materialising on utility budgets and small operational budgets **£131k**
- There is a variance in Corporate services which is mainly due to a vacancy management factor target to be met. This will be reallocated from other services by the end of the financial year. See savings monitoring at point 4 to this report **£116k.**
- Corporate services also have an overspend due to higher than originally budgeted for pension costs. Officers are currently looking into how this deficit can be mitigated **£313k.**
- Customer Services have savings on salaries and secondments, and this is currently being reviewed **£60k.**
- Human resources and ICT also have underspends on salaries which will be reviewed going into the final quarter of 2020/21 however some of the savings will be used to offset the corporate savings targets **£101k.**

Finding somewhere to live (£193k projected saving)

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

- Within Homelessness Services there has been a review of the budget and grant received which has resulted in a projected saving that will also be factored into next years budgets **£190k.**

Living independent, active & healthy lives (£57k projected underspend)

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

- There is a shortfall in income within community transport/Dial-a-ride and shop mobility due to the impact of COVID-19 **£66k.**

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- Parks and events have savings as events have not taken place also due to COVID-19 along with some temporary salary savings **£117k**.

Run and grow a successful business (£89k projected overspend)

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

- Assets and Facilities management have some small underspends on general utilities and operational budgets **£35k**.
- Business development have seen reduced income from their learning online services and Civic suite hire which is a due to the Impact of COVID-19 **£50k**
- In Economic & Tourism development there is a projected overspend by year end due to some additional costs following the closure of the Rubicon Business centre. There is also a shortfall in income at the other business centres projected **£102k**.
- Whilst there is no variance showing please note there will be an additional client payment to Rubicon Leisure of **£112k** to quarter 3. This is as a result of the net loss of income following the forced closure of the sites due to the Government legislation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Shareholder Committee receives financial and performance reports to enable the Council to understand the Company financial position. Weekly reviews of the cash flow position are undertaken by Rubicon Leisure and the request from the Council is the most up to date and timely figure that can be assessed. The Company requires the funding to enable it to continue to pay its suppliers and employers and therefore ensure sufficient funds are available. It is furthermore projected that Redditch Borough Council will need to also make a final payment to the end of the financial year of **£288k**. This additional support required by Rubicon Leisure Ltd from the Council is to be met via the general COVID-19 grant received.

Corporate Financing (£59k projected overspend)

- It is expected that additional costs will be incurred for a Levy payment to the Worcestershire Pool due to the growth of Business Rates in the area from what we had predicted in the initial Government Return at the start of the year. Some of this will be re-distributed back to the Council which would not have been the case if we weren't part of a pooling arrangement.
- This has been netted off against savings on MRP and interest due the Capital programme having delays on certain projects.

3.4 Savings Monitoring

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The medium-term financial plan included £467k of savings identified to be delivered during 2020/21 the breakdown of these savings is attached at **appendix 3**. £45k of these identified savings is in relation to reductions in enabling costs.

To quarter 3 £282k identified savings have been realised against the budgeted April to September savings of £350k.

In addition to the above officers have been required to find further savings throughout the financial year 2020/21 to meet the vacancy factor (£205k) and the enabling services (£45k) targets. At quarter 3 additional savings (above those identified) have been realised of £733k.

3.5 Cash Management**Borrowing**

As of the 31st of December 2020, there was no short term borrowing 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 £341k for 2020/21 due to expenditure relating to current capital projects.

Investments

As at the 31st of December 2020, the council had placed £11m in investment accounts to generate an income for the Council. Within the quarter, the council received £1,791.67 in interest from their investments, and paid £201.70 in negative interest charges. It has been necessary to make some negative interest rate investments to spread the risk of the council's investment portfolio and adhere to the treasury management strategy's maximum investment limits. Negative interest deposits have only been made with the Government's Debt Management Office deposit facility when the maximum investment limit has been reached with the higher yielding Money Market Fund and when bank balances have been above the £2m risk level.

An interest receivable budget has been set of £209k for 2020/21 for any investments made.

Executive Committee
202123rd March**3.6 Capital Budgets****Capital Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2020/21**

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2020/21	Revised budget 2020/21	Budget to date 2020/21	Actuals to date 2020/21	Variance to date 2020/21	Projected outturn 2020/21	Projected Variance 2020/21
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	3,430	8,779	6,585	3,484	-3,101	4,507	-4,273
Enabling the Authority	55	392	330	194	-136	218	-174
Living independent, active & healthy lives	40	1,837	1,378	371	-1,007	521	-1,315
Run and grow a successful business	250	500	375	156	-219	426	-73
Totals	3,775	11,508	8,667	4,205	-4,462	5,672	-5,835

Financial Commentary:**Communities which are safe, well maintained and green**

These budgets include those relating mainly to Environmental services – Fleet replacement, Finance and Customer Services – Regeneration fund and Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to deliver against the purpose ensuring an area is both safe and attractive for the community.

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

- One of the main projects within this strategic purpose is the capital budget for the Vehicle replacement. It is planned for all vehicles to be replaced by March 2021 in line with the current vehicle replacement programme.

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-
- The capital budget for the removal of 5 weirs through Arrow Valley Park has been delayed due to Covid-19 and it is therefore expected this will not commence until the early part of 2021/22.
 - There are number of S106 schemes that are also unspent mainly due to the delay from the impact of Covid-19 along with not being able to appoint contractors. It is projected and hoped that these schemes will now commence in 2021/22 and it therefore requested to carry the budgets forward into the New financial year.
 - The Regeneration project whilst an amount has been spent there is no further planned spend in this financial year due to unforeseen circumstances with the current pandemic. This project will therefore resume in the new financial year and a request for the budget to be carried forward into 2021/22 will be made.

Enabling the Authority

These budgets include those relating mainly to Environmental services – Computer Systems and Finance and Customer Services – New Enterprise systems to deliver robust and efficient enabling services.

- The variance for this quarter relates to the Fleet management computer system and the Environmental Services Computer system. Suitable systems are being finalised prior to procurement taking place via a Framework. This is likely to now take place the end of March and the beginning of the new financial year. It will therefore be requested to carry forward the budget into 2021/22.

Living independent, active & healthy lives

There are a number of budgets relating to the delivery of the strategic purpose including Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, CCTV and Home repairs Assistance.

- The main underspend relates to the Disabled Facilities grant budget (DFG's) there has been little activity on this project in the first year of using a new agency and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be requested to carry forward the balance remaining into the new financial year 2021/22.

Run and grow a successful business

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

- This capital budget is for the public buildings project which has commenced in this financial year 2020/21. The project is intended to be complete by the end of the year however there are building works which have been slightly

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delayed due to the pandemic and buildings having limited openings. This will be monitored through the last quarter of the financial year.

3.6.1 CCTV infrastructure

As requested at **1.1** West Mercia PCC has made available a further £21k CCTV capital grant to support the current digital infrastructure upgrade to the North Worcestershire CCTV scheme.

This further funding is to join the already approved scheme which CCTV Community Services are currently co-ordinating. This will further enhance the CCTV infrastructure upgrade as opposed to the purchase of replacement analogue cameras and once implemented the digital infrastructure will reduce transmission costs from the revenue budget

Following the successful digitization of the CCTV infrastructure project at Redditch and Bromsgrove and other collaborative initiatives across West Mercia the PCC were keen to make further investment in CCTV across the region, enabling Councils to further enhance and improve the CCTV provision, of which the Police force is a primary beneficiary

3.7 Housing Revenue Account

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April 2020 – September 2020.

3.8 Earmarked Reserves

The position as at 30th December 2020/21 is shown in **Appendix 2**.

3.9 General Fund Balances

The General Fund Balance as at the 31st of March 2020 was £1.599m. A balanced budget was approved in February 2020 to include identified savings which have been built into individual budget allocations. This also included a planned return to balances for 2020/21 of £82k. The current level of balances will therefore increase to £1.681m with recommended level of balances of £750k.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

5.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

Climate Change Implications

5.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

6.1 No direct implications as a result of this report.

Operational Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - HRA April – December 2020/21

Appendix 2 - Earmarked Reserves 2020/21

Executive Committee
2021

23rd March

Appendix 3 - Savings Monitoring 2020/21

Appendix 4 – Bereavement Services fees and charges 2021/22

Appendix 5 – Capital programme – slippage request to 2021/22

Executive Committee
202123rd March**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services	various
Lead Director / Head of Service	Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services	various
Financial Services	Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services	various
Legal Services	Claire Felton Head of Legal, Democratic and Property services	various
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	n/a	

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)**REVENUE 2020/21 Quarter 3**

	2020/21 Full Year Budget £'000	2020/21 Budget to Date Apr - Dec £'000	2020/21 Actuals Apr - Dec £'000	2020/21 Variance Apr - Dec £'000	2020/21 Projected Outturn £'000	2020/21 Projected Variance £'000
INCOME						
Dwelling Rents	-23,083	-17,794	-17,677	117	-22,936	147
Non-Dwelling Rents	-537	-498	-479	19	-543	-6
Tenants' Charges for Services & Facilities	-667	-498	-436	62	-592	75
Contributions towards Expenditure	-44	-33	-50	-17	-59	-15
Total Income	-24,331	-18,823	-18,642	181	-24,130	201
EXPENDITURE						
Repairs & Maintenance	6,038	4,469	3,545	-924	5,398	-640
Supervision & Management	8,249	2,494	1,987	-507	7,832	-417
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	294	221	39	-182	209	-85
Provision for Bad Debts	182	0	0	0	182	0
Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets	5,715	0	0	0	5,715	0
Interest Payable & Debt Management Costs	4,179	1,759	1,760	1	4,179	0
Total Expenditure	24,657	8,943	7,331	-1,612	23,515	-1,142
Net cost of Services	326	-9,880	-11,311	-1,431	-615	-941
Net Operating Expenditure	326	-9,880	-11,311	-1,431	-615	-941
Interest Receivable	-118	-89	-89	0	-118	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planned use of Balances	-208	-156	0	156	0	208
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Surplus)/Deficit on Services	0	-10,125	-11,400	-1,275	-733	-733

Financial Commentary:

Appendix 1 details the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the period April - December 2020

The major variances are due to the following:

- **Repairs & Maintenance** - Due to covid restrictions the R&M teams have had limited access to properties. Consequently, expenditure is lower than normal by a significant margin
- **Supervision & Management** - the variance is predominantly due to vacant posts pending the ongoing review of the Housing function and reduced professional and consultancy fees
- **Rents, rates & taxes** - Awaiting insurance premium costs but expected to be lower than budgeted

NB: 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 2020/21 Quarter 3**Strategic Purpose****Help Me to Find Somewhere to Live in my Locality**

	2020/21 Full Year Budget £'000	2020/21 Budget to Date Apr - Dec £'000	2020/21 Actuals Apr - Dec £'000	2020/21 Variance YTD £'000	2020/21 Projected Outturn £'000	2020/21 Projected Variance £'000
1-4-1 Housing Replacement	3,200	1,959	1,970	11	3,000	-200
Bathroom Renewals	105	79	0	-79	0	-105
Kitchen Renewals	180	135	1	-134	3	-177
Catch Up Repairs	0	0	4	4	4	4
Asbestos Removal	400	300	86	-214	150	-250
Structural	30	23	21	-2	33	3
Roofing	270	203	0	-203	0	-270
Electrics	888	666	316	-350	480	-408
Gas Central Heating	416	312	148	-164	200	-216
Windows	100	75	5	-70	6	-94
Balcony Replacements	150	113	0	-113	0	-150
disabled adaptations	700	524	14	-510	80	-620
Water Supply	50	38	0	-38	0	-50
Excellent Estates	350	263	14	-249	150	-200
FRA Works	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stock Condition Survey	0	0	49	49	63	63
Fencing Replacements	90	68	0	-68	0	-90
New Housing System	469	352	201	-151	250	-219
Door Access Systems	72	54	0	-54	15	-57
Electric Heating	42	32	0	-32	0	-42
Electrics - Catch up works	624	468	0	-468	0	-624
Door Renewals	20	15	0	-15	0	-20
Hard Wire Smoke Detector Installation	378	284	0	-284	150	-228
Damp & Mould	38	29	0	-29	0	-38
Fire Safety	82	61	0	-61	0	-82
HRA Property Purchase Capital Works	270	203	0	-203	0	-270
Compartmentation Works	1,800	1,350	261	-1,089	350	-1,450
Bin Stores	200	150	0	-150	0	-200
External Painting	0	0	12	12	30	30
Design & Supervision	300	0	0	0	0	-300
	11,224	7,756	3,102	-4,654	4,964	-6,260

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 1/4/2020	Budgeted Release/new reserves 2020/21	Revised Balance b/fwd 1/4/2020	Transfers in existing reserve 2020/21	Transfers out existing reserve 2020/21	New Reserve 2020/21	C/fwd 31/3/2021	Planned use for 2021/22 Budget	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
GF Earmarked Reserves									
Community Development	(66)	0	(66)	0	0	0	(66)	0	To support the costs associated with community projects
Community Safety	(302)	0	(302)	0	272	0	(30)	0	External grant funding to be released over a number of years on Community Safety Projects ongoing
Corporate Services	(150)	0	(150)	0	1	0	(149)	0	Funding to support potential costs of future service reviews.
Economic Growth Development	(330)	0	(330)	0	0	0	(330)	0	To fund the Economic Development opportunities across the Borough
Electoral Services	(44)	0	(44)	(5)	0	0	(49)	0	To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government
Equipment Replacement	(48)	0	(48)	0	22	0	(26)	0	ICT equipment reserve
Financial Services	(132)	(300)	(432)	0	0	0	(432)	0	Brexit reserve along with a transformational growth reserve and also funds to support the new enterprise system
Corporate Financing	(1,997)	(836)	(2,833)	0	0	0	(2,833)	0	The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.
Housing Benefits Implementation	(269)	0	(269)	0	0	0	(269)	0	Specific welfare reform grant received
Housing Support	(746)	50	(696)	(25)	0	0	(721)	0	Government Specific Grant - annual funding
Land charges	(9)	0	(9)	0	0	0	(9)	0	To fund potential litigation in relation to Land Charges
Land Drainage	(129)	0	(129)	0	0	0	(129)	0	To support costs associated with health and safety issues within the environment
Parks and Open spaces	(8)	0	(8)	0	0	0	(8)	0	To fund a review of the local allotments.
Planning	(669)	0	(669)	0	241	0	(428)	0	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. Along with grants for One Public estates, Business Improvement district grant and Town deals grant.
Sports Development	(68)	0	(68)	0	59	0	(9)	0	Ringfenced grants for a number of sports development activities to improve Health and Wellbeing in the Borough
Town Centre	(2)	0	(2)	0	0	0	(2)	0	To support improvements in the Town Centre High Street
Warmer Homes	(12)	0	(12)	0	0	0	(12)	0	To support the costs associated with community projects (repair)
Totals	(4,981)	(1,086)	(6,067)	(30)	595	0	(5,502)	0	
HRA Capital Reserve									
Capital Reserve-HRA	(15,259)	0	(15,259)	0	0	0	(15,259)	0	Reserve to enable the debt repayment on HRA, and future repairs and maintenance along with support for the Housing Growth Programme.
Totals	(15,259)	0	(15,259)	0	0	0	(15,259)	0	

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SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME - RBC

APPENDIX 3

Department	Service	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2020-21 £'000	2020-21 Apr - Dec £'000	Quarter 3			
						On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Business Transformation	Human Resources	Enabling	Savings on car mileage budget	-2	-1	Y			
Community Services	Lifeline	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Additional income for digitalised systems	-17	-13	N		Y	17
Community Services	Community Services - Shopmobility	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Savings arising from a new model of working the shopmobility service	-1	-1	N		Y	13
Community Services	Community Transport	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Dial - a Ride savings	-90	-68	N		Y	25
Corporate Services	Communications & Print	Enabling	Additional Saving from New Print Contract	-10	-8	Y	-10		
Corporate Services	Communications & Print	Enabling	Additional Saving from New Print Contract - Shared Service Element of above	0	0	Y	4		
Corporate Services	Corporate Services	Enabling	Management Review	-54	-41	Y			
Corporate Services	Corporate Services	Enabling	Reduction in enabling costs - 1% per annum	-45	-34	Y			
CAFS	Customer Access & Financial Support	Aspiration, work & financial independence	Service restructure	-30	-23	N		Y	8
Environmental Services	Core Environmental Operations	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Inflation on income from WCC for underpass maintenance	-2	-1	Y			
Environmental Services	Engineering	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Inflation on income from WCC for land drainage	-2	-1	Y			
Environmental Services	Transport	Enabling	Additional income from MOTs.	-3	-2	N		Y	2
Environmental Services	Place Teams	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Inflation on income from WCC for verge maintenance	-3	-2	Y			
Environmental Services	Engineering	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Income from WCC for design services provided by Engineering & Design Team	-3	-2	N		Y	2
Environmental Services	Bereavement Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Additional income from changes in structure re commercialism	-11	-8	N		Y	8
Finance & Resources	Finance	Enabling	Insurance contract saving	-80	-60	Y			
Family support	0-19 Prevention and Early Intervention Service	Enabling	Income for new contract for Prevention and Early Intervention service	-32	-24	Y			
Legal & Democratic Services	Democratic Services	Enabling	Budget no longer required	-3	-2	Y			
Legal & Democratic Services	Democratic Services	Enabling	Budget no longer required	-10	-8	Y			
Legal & Democratic Services	Legal Services	Enabling	Additional income from HRA recharge	-34	-26	Y			
Leisure & Cultural	Business Development - Business	Run and grow successful business	Community centre no longer in use - Hawthorn Road	-1	-0	Y			
Leisure & Cultural	Business Development - Cultural	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Additional income from civic suite	-1	-1	N		Y	
Leisure & Cultural	Business Development - Cultural	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Reduction in advertising budget civic suite	-1	-1	Y			
Leisure & Cultural	CMT	Enabling	Professional fees budget saving	-17	-13	Y			
Planning & Regeneration	Development Management	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	Savings on car mileage budgets	-2	-2	Y			

Department	Service	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2020-21 £'000	2020-21 Apr - Dec £'000	On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Planning & Regeneration	Planning Policy	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	General supplies and services budget savings	-5	-4	Y			
Planning & Regeneration	Building Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	General supplies and services budget savings	-1	-1	Y			
RBC Reg Client	Licensing	Run and grow successful business	Inflationary increase on income	-1	-1	Y			
RBC Reg Client	Licensing	Run and grow successful business	Inflationary increase on income	-3	-2	Y			
Rubicon Client	Rubicon Client	Run and grow successful business	Saving due to AVVC being run by Rubicon	-4	-3	Y			
TOTAL				-467	-350		-7		75

Issue over incorrect information in 2021 – 22 fees and charges agreed at full council 25th January 2021 for Chapel Media supplier within Bereavement Services.

The following information was on page 66 of the public reports pack relating to fees and changes, this extract shows what was approved with regards to the Chapel media supplier. These charges are from the old provider shown below:

Wesley music additional options

Administration for first visual tribute in a service 24.00

Administration for additional visual tributes in same service 12.00

Visual tribute cost per photograph 3.00

Visual tribute cost per minute of video 6.00

Visual tribute(s) only provided on USB 30.00

CD of Chapel Service 61.00

Additional copies of CD of chapel service 38.00

DVD of Chapel Service 74.00

Additional copies of DVD of chapel service 44.00

Visual tribute(s) added to DVD / USB recording of service 24.00

Webcast of Chapel Service 88.00

The items that should have been included in this section are as follows:

Chapel Media Supplier

Webcast Live (inc VAT)	£88.00
Webcast Live & 28 day view inc downloadable version (inc VAT)	£50.00
Keepsake copy of webcast (DVD/USB) (inc VAT)	£74.00
Single Photo (inc VAT)	£27.00
Slideshow (up to 25 photos) (inc VAT)	£75.00
Pro Slideshow (up to 25 photos set to music) (inc VAT)	£99.00
Family made video checking	£24.00
Keepsake copy of Pro tribute (DVD/USB/Downloadable)	£30.00
Additional physical copies (DVD/USB)	£44.00
Each extra 25 photos	£38.00
Extra work (such as adding videos to pro tribute)	£38.00

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Description	Strategic Purpose	Revised Full Year Budget 2020-21 £	Projected Outturn 20-21 £	Projected Variance £	Request for Slippage to 2021/22 £	Comments
Locality project - landscape improvement	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	25,000	23,175	-1,825	1,825	Budget to be spent on Capital hedge works - orders have been issued to contractors.
Open space improvements - North Moons moat	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	3,000	0	-3,000	3,000	vacant office post has led to delay - this should take place Q4 2021/22
Arrow Valley Country Park - Play, Open Space and Sports Improvements.	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	184,000	178,000	-6,000	6,000	The project is expected to be completed by the year end.
Terrys Field	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	9,000	0	-9,000	9,000	Works have been committed and contractors appointed but will take place in the first quarter of 2021/22.
Gf Asbestos	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	40,000	30,000	-10,000	10,000	
Improved Parking Scheme	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	81,048	60,786	-20,262	20,000	The balance will be requested to be carry forward into the new financial year when the project will be completed.
Hedgerow Mitigation measures by restoration and hedge laying with associated fencing and gates at AVP SHM and AVP North	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	21,500	0	-21,500	21,500	Vacant officer post has led to delays and it is anticipated that spend will take place over 3 years 21-23
Replacing 3 fuel pumps and upgrading tank monitoring equipment	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	25,000	0	-25,000	25,000	There are discussions over the current position of the Depot and will require the budget to carried forward in to 2021/21
Improvement to Morton Stanley Open Space	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	25,633	0	-25,633	25,633	Roll forward into 2021/22 (some value of this S106 not yet received)
New Digital Service	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	86,450	60,000	-26,450	26,450	Project delayed due to the current pandemic and wil be requested to carry forward the budget into 2021/22.
Improvement to original Pump Track at AVCP	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	60,606	0	-60,606	60,606	Project consultation with local cycle enthusiasts completed. Reviewing match funding opportunities . Works proposed Summer 2021
Improvement to Morton Stanley -Play Area for toddler and junior play	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	79,686	0	-79,686	79,686	This works will be completed in April 21
Improvement to Sports Pitches infrastructure in Morton Stanley Park	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	98,535	0	-98,535	98,535	Awaiting Specification for Framework for agronomist seasonal sports turf probably be 2022 because of play season window
Café and Infrastructure Morton Stanley Park	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	100,000	0	-100,000	100,000	This should be completed by Sept 21
Grassland Mitigation measures- recreating and monitoring grassland habitats in MS and AVCP	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	146,590	0	-146,590	146,590	Vacant officer post has led to delays it is anticipated that spend will take place over 3 years 21-23
Green Lane Studley	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	200,000	0	-200,000	200,000	Planning negotiations still ongoing Move to 2021/21
Morton Stanley Play, Sport and Open Space Improvements (General)	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	333,403	35,000	-298,403	298,403	Western Power order raised for infrastructure works but remaining budget will need to roll forward into 2021/22
Removal of 5 weirs through Arrow Valley Park	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	437,000	0	-437,000	437,000	This Project has been delayed due to COVID and there will be no spend expected in this financial year. Project expected to take place 21/22
Regeneration Fund	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	5,225,276	2,870,606	-2,354,670	2,354,670	Nothing further planned for this financial year due to unforeseen circumstances with current pandemic - projects will resume in 2021-22.
Fleet Management Computer System	Enabling the Authority	16,600	0	-16,600	16,600	Move to 2021/22 - framework contract due to be completed early next financial year
Environmental Services Computer System	Enabling the Authority	157,200	0	-157,200	157,200	Contract to be signed at the beginning of March. It is unlikely that payments will be made this financial year. Request funding is moved to 21/22
HMO Grants	Living independent, active & healthy lives	29,515	0	-29,515	29,515	Spend based on information from Millbrook agency
Energy & Efficiency Installs	Living independent, active & healthy lives	90,065	40,000	-50,065	50,065	3 year projects

Description	Strategic Purpose	Revised Full Year Budget 2020-21 £	Projected Outturn 20-21 £	Projected Variance £	Request for Slippage to 2021/22 £	Comments
Disabled Facilities Grant	Living independent, active & healthy lives	1,556,847	400,000	-1,156,847	1,156,847	Spend based on information from Millbrook agency
Improvements at Business Centres	Run and grow a successful business	73,614		-73,614	73,614	The project of refurbishing Greenlands Business centre has now started on site (Jan 2021)The progress on the project has been held back since last quarter while we secured additional funding from SALIX to replace the rear windows.This SALIX funded project will affect how the refurbishment capital project work is progressed. Salix funded window replacement in May 2021. Expenditure of this capital fund completed July 2021. IF a request to be able to slip the budget into next Financial year can be made.
			3,697,567	-5,408,001	5,407,739	

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD**

THURSDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY 2021, AT 4.33 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. Dyke (Chairman, during Minute No's 31/20 to part of 38/20), J. Squires (Vice-Chairman in the Chair for part of Minute No. 38/20), A. D. Kent, H. J. Jones, J. Raine, T. Wells, N. Nazir, M. Johnson, E. Stokes, D. Morris and P. Dyke

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. D. Mellors, Mr. M. Cox, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. C. Forrester, Ms. K. Goldey, Mrs. P. Ross and Ms. K. Somers

Partner Officers: Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council, Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council and Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council

31/20

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

32/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33/20

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 19th November 2020, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 19th November 2020, be approved as a correct record.

34/20

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGETS 2021/2022 -
2023/2024**

The Senior Business Support Accounting Technician, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 17 and 18 of the main agenda report.

The Senior Business Support Accounting Technician, BDC further drew Members' attention to page 19 of the main agenda report. Whereby it

was noted that, following further discussions with the Chief Executive, Wyre Forest District Council, the host for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), IT and accommodation providers; the Chief Executive had withdrawn their proposed £13k increase in charges for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. Therefore, Members were being asked to approve the reduced revised budget.

The Senior Business Support Accounting Technician, BDC highlighted that the remainder of the budgets, as agreed by the Board at the meeting held on 19th November 2020, remained the same.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the 2021/2022 – 2023/2024 budget breakdown for the district council's partners and the revised budget for 2020/2021.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the partner contributions breakdown for 2021/2022 to 2023/2024.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to a question with regard to Redditch Borough Council's (RBC) partner contributions, and in doing so explained that partner contributions were based on the original amount of funding that partners had put into the partnership in 2010, when the partnership was first formed.

A small exercise was carried out in 2013/2014 to look at revising the partner percentages against the workload created by each of the partner councils.

The only change was that RBC had spent slightly more on its Environmental Health and Licensing services. So, this was reflective of the historical contribution that RBC had always made.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to a question with regards to Wyre Forest District Council removing the additional £13k increase in hosting WRS. Members were informed that further discussions had taken place with the Chief Executives of each of the partner authorities and that following those discussions the Chief Executive, Wyre Forest District Council had agreed to withdraw the additional £13k charges. However, this was on the assumption that the officer partners of the Board would meet during the summer to further discuss the cost of hosting all aspects of the service going forward.

The Head of Regulatory Services and the Technical Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), responded to Members in respect of income generation, namely the three additional technical officers working on income generation and the Business and Relationship Manager vacant post.

The Technical Officer, WRS commented that the current Business and Relationship Manager's post had been kept vacant because of the ongoing situation with Covid-19. Some of those funds had been used

for agency staff. Income generation had largely stayed the same, ongoing contracts had continued and there had been some surprising opportunities to bid for additional work outside of WRS's existing business relationships and significant contracts could be awarded this year. There were some opportunities that officers would be going for.

The Head of Regulatory Services further commented that he could not deal with the Business and Relationship Manager's post until he had finalised the Licensing and Support Services Manager's role. He was hoping to compete this within the next seven days. He would then look at the Business and Relationship Manager's role and if the original reasons for having that post remained the same of if there was a better way going forward.

RECOMMENDED that partner authorities approve the following for 2021/22 and 2023/24:

- 1.1 the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,726k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 the 2021/22 income budget of £529k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2021/22 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	466	14.59
Malvern Hills District Council	410	12.82
Redditch Borough Council	562	17.57
Worcester City Council	530	16.58
Wychavon District	745	23.29
Wyre Forest District Council	484	15.15
Total	3,197	

- 1.4 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

Bromsgrove District Council	£9k
Malvern Hills District Council	£8k
Redditch Borough Council	£10k

Worcester City Council	£10k
Wychavon District Council	£14k
Wyre Forest District Council	£9k
Total	£60k

- 1.5 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to three Technical Officers.

Council	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	5	6	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	10	
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Worcester City Council	5	4	30
Wychavon District Council	7	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	5	5	
Total	32	36	30

35/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - DECEMBER 2020

The Senior Business Support Accounting Technician, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 29 and 30 of the main agenda report.

The Senior Business Support Accounting Technician, BDC explained that the report covered the period April to December 2020, Quarter 3.

The detailed revenue report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The revised budget for 2020/2021 excluded the increase in ICT and rent at Wyre Forest District Council, as discussed during Agenda Item 4, (Minute No. 34/20). There was a projected outturn for 2020/2021 of £44k surplus.

It was appreciated that this was an estimation to the year-end based on the following assumptions:-

- There were two vacant posts within the service, we have assumed no recruitment to either the Business & Relationship Manager and the Regulatory Apprentice for the current year.
- If April to December 2020 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of the year , there would be an overspend on this service of £14k.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the WRS – Profit & Loss Report 2020/2021 showing an overall projected outturn of £88k surplus reducing to a £44k surplus by the year end.

The following variances were highlighted: -

- Savings due to employees working on the Local Outbreak Response Team.
- Reduction in car allowances, due to a change in working patterns with the current pandemic.
- Savings due to a reduction in dogs straying.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the WRS Income for 2020/2021, Income from Partners, an additional income of £290k.

Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council queried the funding received from Public Health. Councillor Squires had noted that the report stated that, any grant funded expenditure was shown separate to the core service costs as this was not funded by the partnership. Where was the accountability for this funding?

The Head of Regulatory Services clarified that effectively Worcestershire County Council (WCC) had commissioned WRS to do a number of pieces of work, so from a financial probity situation, the responsibility for ensuring that the funds were spent well and obtained best value for money would sit with WCC and the Director of Public Health.

The governance of the expenditure fell with WCC.

Members agreed that they were happy with the explanation provided and would ask the Head of Regulatory Services to only provide the Board with further information should there be any future variances to his statement.

RESOLVED that

- a) the final financial position for the period April to December 2020, be noted,
- b) partner authorities be informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in

relation to Bereavements as follows:-

Council	Apr-Dec Actual Bereavements £000	20 for
Redditch Borough Council	9	
Malvern Hills District Council	6	
Worcester City Council	10	
Bromsgrove District Council	5	
Total	30	

- c) partner authorities are informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to Pest Control as follows:-

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn Recharge in Relation to Pest Control 2020/21 £000
Redditch Borough Council	7
Wychavon District Council	6
Bromsgrove District Council	1
Total	14

- d) partner authorities are informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to three additional Technical Officers as follows:-

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	2	2	
Malvern Hills District Council	1	8	

Worcester City Council	2	3	35
Bromsgrove District Council	1	5	
Wychavon District Council	2	7	
Wyre Forest District Council	1	4	
Total	9	29	35

36/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES, SERVICE PLAN 2021-2022

The Board considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Service Plan 2021/2022.

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations, as detailed on page 37 of the main agenda report.

The Board signed off on the service plan for WRS each year. The process helped to make Members aware of what the service was proposing for the relevant financial year and provided a sign off that some central government bodies liked to see in relation to service delivery plans e.g. the Food Standards Agency.

The plan followed very much the pattern of previous years and had an Executive Summary to pick up the main points. Last year's plan was overtaken by events, with the response to the global pandemic. At the time of writing the plan, the country remained in lockdown, with only a limited picture of how we would move forward.

Government was clear that lockdown would be followed by a move back to a tier-based framework of controls that would stay in place for a period, whilst the vaccination programme was on-going. At the moment, the service was planning for some involvement in COVID-19 controls for the first quarter of 2021/22, but it seemed likely that could run well into quarter two.

Flexibility would be necessary to reshape what was being delivered as the local environment changed during the first half of the financial year.

Away from the pandemic, the service would continue to shape its work around the long-standing strategic priorities for local authority regulatory services provided by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

A range of high-level activities had been identified within the plan so that Members would be aware of the general focus of activity.

The plan was devised in the face of on-going financial uncertainty in local government generally. Working with businesses and other partners was a key theme for both generating income to mitigate financial risk but also to ensure that outcomes were delivered that matched the priorities of partners and stakeholders.

Whilst much of our work for customers had fallen off during the initial period of the pandemic response, most of our long-standing customers had come back to WRS.

The performance indicators suite generated for 2017/18 had been retained to give continued comparability of performance across the years. WRS would continue to use intelligence to drive the business forward and the embedding of this approach and its associated processes would continue.

The Risk Register had been updated to reflect the current position. Our long-standing investment in mobile and flexible working had found WRS well-placed to deal with the need for home working and the majority activities were now enabled for this working pattern.

As with previous years, Members were asked to pay particular attention to the provisions for food hygiene delivery in the coming year. This was to meet one of the recommendations of the auditors from the Food Standards Agency who visited the service in May 2017. This year would be different from previous years due to the impact of pandemic controls. The Food Standards Agency had already decided that its moratorium on the normal inspection programme would remain in place until at least 30th June 2021.

WRS were unclear at this stage as to what the Food Standard Agency's expectations would be in relation to these businesses, whether the visit programme would simply be re-scheduled or whether some investment in resource to catch-up would be required; potentially for 2 years with additional support from partner authorities to enable officers to catch up. Further information would be provided to the Board once the picture was clearer.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to questions from Members with regards to additional funding for the 'visit programme' and the future vision for WRS in respect of working from home and virtual meeting areas/ rooms; and if a fixed presence was required.

Members were informed that currently no additional funding was available for the catch up of the 'visit programme'.

With regards to the success of officers working remotely from home this was something that would be considered going forward; however, there was a balance to be achieved in maintaining team identity and morale.

WRS carried out investigative work for some larger investigations which required a group of people working together and to maintain those relationships, by being able to bounce ideas off each other. This did not work as well in the

virtual world, as it did face to face.

There would be opportunities to reduce the footprint in terms of the number of desks required but in his opinion some of the negative things that had come out of the lockdown was personal isolation and these things needed to be addressed to ensure that we could deal such things, before rushing into an arrangement to get rid of office space and go effectively into virtual meetings and purchasing office space as and when required. He would not envisage this as the way forward, certainly not for the kind of services that WRS delivered. But there were options going forward to change the way that WRS delivered some of its services.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Plan for 2021/2022, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- b) that Members specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to the partners' roles as local food authorities.

37/20

ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 1 TO QUARTER 3

The Community Environmental Health Manager, WRS, presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 for 2020/2021; and in doing so highlighted that, as Members would appreciate the year had continued to be a most extraordinary year in officer's professional careers; with significant resources increased in quarter 3 with officers either being fully or partly engaged in the Covid-19 response.

ACTIVITY DATA

As highlighted by the Head of Regulatory Services during the previous agenda item, the suspension of the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown would see a significant backlog having to be addressed once lockdown restrictions were lifted. However, he would reassure Members that where intelligence indicated that a premises presented a problem, officers would continue to respond.

There had been an unexpected flurry of statutory nuisance work during November.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, there was a reversal from the last quarter with accident numbers up and a fall in complaints and enquires. However, two lengthy and complex investigations had concluded in quarter 3, which related to serious injuries being sustained at a workplace and a fatality in connection with leisure activities.

Although numbers had increased into quarter 3, the number of licensing cases received in the year to date represented a reduction of approximately 31% and 24% compared to previous years. This was hardly surprising with the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID-19 restrictions and overall officers had seen a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications, particularly for temporary event notices.

In quarter 3 planning application numbers continued to rise, following the trajectory predicted by our historical data. Information Requests, often associated with the planning and development process had also continued on an upward trajectory during this period, supplemented by requests for information about the Covid-19 response.

Performance

Quarter 3 was a period in the year where reporting against the suite of indicators was more limited. The year continued reasonably well from a customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 73.6% and business customers at 98.1%. Given the demands and pressures on the service this year, this was seen as impressive.

People who felt better equipped to deal with issues had fallen slightly from 72.3% to 67.5%, however it was still above the 62% that it was this time last year.

Compliments outnumber complaints by around 4:1 (31:120). Staff sickness was up but still looking good at 1.65 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). This included additional staff taken on for the pandemic response. This was better than last year's figure at quarter 3 (3.82 days per FTE.)

Members were further informed that, engagement with licensed premises featured heavily in Covid-19 related activity. Officers reported each year on the proportion of premises subject to allegations of failing to uphold the 4 licensing objectives.

The table below showed the levels of allegations that our normal indicator would yield up until 31st December 2020 and alongside these, the same figure if Covid-19 breaches were included in the calculation.

District	Normal Measure	With Covid-19 Breaches
Bromsgrove	4.9	15.8
Malvern Hills	3.0	8.3
Redditch	8.3	19.9

Worcester City	4.5	10.7
Wychavon	3.3	14.0
Wyre Forest	4.5	23.0

This reflected the hugely increased level of engagement with the licensing trade that WRS had seen during the pandemic. It was important to note that the vast majority of breaches identified had been minor and that the vast majority of pubs and restaurants with alcohol licenses had worked incredibly hard to achieve compliance and protect the health of customers. Now that premises could only operate as takeaways and alcohol sales had to be by delivery only, these figures should fall dramatically.

Members took the opportunity to thank officers for everything they had done throughout the pandemic and the work that they continued to do now. Officers were doing a remarkable job and Members expressed their thanks for keeping people safe.

The Community Environmental Health Manager, WRS stated that he would be pleased to pass on the thanks expressed by Members to the teams.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 and 3 for 2020/2021, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

38/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES INFORMATION REPORT - COVID ADVISORS

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Technical Services Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the weekly COVID-19 activity updates distributed to Board Members. It was useful to know where there were issues and what those specific issues were and how they were being dealt with.

The Technical Services Officer, WRS then provided the Board with an information report on Covid Advisors.

Members were informed that the Worcestershire district councils had received a grant allocation to fund compliance and enforcement work, therefore Covid advisors were largely funded by the district councils. However, there were now seven posts funded by Worcestershire County Council, following a request from the Incident Management Teams, 3 advisors for Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council and 4 advisors for Worcester City Council.

There were 24 Covid Advisors in post, but unfortunately some had recently been lost due to illness. Advisors focused on assisting with business compliance and engaging with the public, ensuring that they were maintaining Covid secure activities. When infection rates had started to increase last year, advisors also engaged with local schools and recreational areas.

During Lockdown 2 preparations were made for reopening of the Night time Economy by attempts to recruit Security trained personal. As well as being more expensive, the supply and quality was generally not good.

Members' attention was drawn to the Tables as detailed on pages 114 and 115 of the main agenda report.

Some Members further reiterated that the weekly Covid updates from the Technical Services Officer, WRS were greatly appreciated and had proved very useful and informative.

At this stage in the meeting, the Vice-Chairman took over the meeting, as the Chairman had to leave the meeting due to technical issues.

In response to Member's questions the Technical Services Officer, WRS stated that no real issues had been identified, most issues were minor. Sensible conversations were had with members of the public and the Covid Advisors. People and businesses generally engaged with the Covid Advisors whether the outcome was positive or negative.

The Incident Management Teams had raised an issue with regards to concerns being raised in communities where English was the second language. There had been a particular business that had involved a large outbreak and Public Health were involved, whereby a large number of the workforce were foreign nationals. WRS were able to access both Romanian and Bengali translators and also had the back up of a translation service.

Councillor Kent took the opportunity to thank the Head of Regulatory Services and his teams for their valued response to Member engagement.

The Vice-Chairman took the opportunity to express further thanks and appreciation to officers for the work they continued to do under very difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED that the Information Report – Covid Advisors be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman

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**Redditch Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Annual Report 2020 – 2021**



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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Over the last year it has been a pleasure to be the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It has been a good year as there has been a lot of cross-party working. This is significant in a number of different ways; the importance of cross-party decision-making when representing the community as a whole, in addition it shows that by working together in partnership we can move things forward as a Council. The majority of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were cross-party recommendations.

It is noted that there have been two specific Task Groups established during the year the Dementia Task group and the Parking on Unicorn Hill Task Group. We have had in-depth group discussions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which have resulted in these task groups being set up. It is worth noting that the Parking on Unicorn Hill Task Group was set up as a result in closer working with the Leader of the Council. Frequently we discussed individual items put forward by the whole Committee and raised issues that mattered to the community.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee used its powers to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive Committee as well as to pre-scrutinise items before the Executive Committee made a decision. During the year, training was provided to reinforce Members' understanding and skills to undertake scrutiny effectively. Since that training was delivered, we've had some really constructive, apolitical meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who have contributed their time and energy to make this a successful year for Overview and Scrutiny. It has been a difficult year during lockdown with the meetings being online. However, we have got through this and continued with the job in hand. Thanks also go to Andy Fry, Jenny Wheeler as well as to Councillor Mike Chalk who has provide excellent written updates on the work of the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny sub-Committees during the year. I am proud that I have been able to continue in my role as Chair.

I would also like to pay tribute to Councillor Pattie Hill and the work and dedication she put in during her time on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Joe Baker
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Redditch Borough Council during 2020 – 2021.

THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The role of overview and scrutiny is an important one in the Council's governance structure, in providing challenge and driving improvement. It is often referred to as the "critical friend" of the Council and can review any issues of concern or real interest to local residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the Council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by thoroughly scrutinising their decisions to ensure that the Council continues to provide the best services possible for Redditch residents. As part of this role, the Committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions made by the Executive Committee and to request that the Executive Committee review the original decisions, taking into account the issues raised by the Committee.
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Executive Committee by reviewing Council policies and strategies, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Performance and financial monitoring, to ensure the Council's services are sustainable and to the highest possible standard.
- Commissioning reviews of services/topics that impact on the Council or on the lives of Redditch residents.
- Pre-scrutiny of items prior to a decision being made by the Executive Committee.
- Setting up Task Groups to focus on specific subjects and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the Council and community as a whole. A flow chart on how to consider potential scrutiny reviews can be found at Appendix A and the Council's scoping form at Appendix B.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee appoints individual Members to oversee the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Membership of the Committee for 2020/21 is as follows:



Cllr Joe Baker (Chair)



Cllr Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair)



Cllr Salman Akbar



Cllr Michael Chalk



Cllr Peter Fleming



Cllr Andy Fry



Cllr Pattie Hill
(June 2020 – December 2020)



Cllr Ann Isherwood



Cllr Mark Shurmer



Cllr Yvonne Smith
(January 2021)

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES DURING 2020-21

In most years, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would hold a scrutiny training and work programme planning session at Redditch Town Hall at the start of the municipal year. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this was not possible to arrange and therefore there was no specific work planning session. However, the Committee has a rolling work programme and items were identified for scrutiny by Members of the Committee throughout the year, including:

- Items for pre-scrutiny, identified from the Executive Committee's Work Programme.
- Subjects considered suitable for further scrutiny through a Task Group investigation.
- Overview items, or subjects for discussion at a single meeting of the Committee.

Training was provided in a virtual setting to members of the Committee in Autumn 2020. This training focused on the key powers of Overview and Scrutiny as well as best practice requirements and received positive feedback from members.

Covid-19 And Remote Meetings

During the municipal year 2020-2021 the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Council operations. In order to mitigate the impact on Council activities, the Government temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person. This meant that Councils had powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. The Regulations were made in Parliament on 2nd April 2020 and applied to meetings taking place before 7th May 2021.

Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were therefore held initially on Skype for Business and later on Microsoft Teams, with the meetings streamed to the Council's YouTube channel. Meetings of scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups were also held remotely, though as these meetings are private, they were not streamed.

At the time of writing, it is anticipated that in the 2021/22 municipal year, formal, public Committee meetings will need to take place "physically" once more. However, these rules do not apply to informal meetings of Task Groups and Working Groups and Members may wish to continue to hold remote or hybrid meetings of these groups to provide colleagues with greater flexibility to participate in the scrutiny process moving forward.

As agreed by Members in 2019/20, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on a number of occasions to discuss the scrutiny process. A number of ideas for scrutiny were raised at these meetings, which helped to inform the Committee's work programme during the year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the impact of all of its recommendations that have been endorsed by the Executive Committee. A tracking report is presented to the Committee during the year stating progress made to date.

During consideration of the Executive Committee's Work Programme, Members agreed to pre-scrutinise the following items:

- Restoration and Recovery Plan
- Housing Strategy Report
- Housing Revenue Account Strategic Improvement Plan Progress
- Church Green Draft Conservation Area and Management Plan Consultation
- Redditch Town Centre Redevelopment – Town Investment Plan

In addition to pre-scrutiny of Executive Committee Work Programme items the following items were included in the Committee's Work Programme and were considered at meetings throughout the municipal year:

- Civil Contingencies Annual Report
- Skills in The Local Workforce
- Redditch Community Lottery
- Redditch Partnership Annual Report
- E-Scooter Trial

Further information about the issues discussed by the Committee during the year and Members' findings are detailed below.

REDDITCH COMMUNITY LOTTERY – UPDATE – 2ND JULY 2020 AND 18TH JANUARY 2021

At the first meeting of the municipal year the Redditch Partnership Manager introduced the Redditch Community Lottery Update for Members' consideration, including the timeline of activity, the promotional channels and the percentage split of each lottery ticket purchased. This report had been prepared as requested by Members in the previous municipal year.

Members were advised that there had inevitably been an impact on sales due to Covid-19 and the associated lockdown, as organisations were not able to hold events and promote their fundraising.

The Committee did propose that the financial implications of the Community Lottery should be investigated further. The Executive Committee considered this proposal in August 2020 but concluded that it was too early to assess the financial implications of the lottery when it had only been in operation for approximately six months by that time.

The second update in respect of the Redditch Community Lottery Update was presented to Members on 18th January 2021.

It was reported during the update that the target number of participants during the year had not been met. However, Members were informed that the demographic of people purchasing the tickets was spread evenly across the Town and were advised that it was mainly women between the age of 36 and 40 that had purchased tickets throughout the year.

Members expressed the hope that next year would provide a clearer picture of its performance. Officers undertook to provide a further update to the Committee in six months' time.

E-SCOOTER TRIAL - REPORT TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 26 AUGUST 2020 (EXTRA MEETING)

The Committee was asked to consider a report outlining the Council's proposals for a bid to take part in a national e-scooter trial.

Members were informed that the deadline for applications to be submitted to the Department for Transport to participate in the e-scooter trial was 31st August 2020. The Committee was consulted to provide an opportunity for the Council's bid to be

scrutinised in detail before it was submitted. It was reported that if the bid was successful, the location for the trial in Redditch would range throughout parts of the town centre and that the Council would need to ensure that appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were in place before the trial could be launched.

A bid was subsequently successfully submitted, and e-scooters have been introduced in the town. Members agreed that an update should be provided on the trial six months after the launch of the scheme in Redditch and the item was added to the Work Programme.

NEW CEMETERY - UPDATE REPORT - 3RD SEPTEMBER 2020

During the year, a request was made for an update to be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with respect to the new cemetery space required for Redditch. This request was made in a context in which many members of the public were keen to obtain further information about the plans for a new cemetery.

The focus of the discussions on this item were on the process for the introduction of a new cemetery and the stage that had been reached by the Council. The Committee was very clear that Overview and Scrutiny could not scrutinise any planning applications connected to the introduction of a new cemetery, which would need to be dealt with separately by the Planning committee.

The Bereavement Services Manager explained that there had been delays in the process for several reasons including the ecology and archaeology of certain sites and the appropriateness of surveying these areas. This was in addition to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked to pre-scrutinise a report in respect of the new cemetery provision, currently scheduled on the Executive Work Programme for consideration in August 2021, though the date may change.

PRE-SCRUTINY - RESTORATION AND RECOVERY PLAN - 3RD SEPTEMBER 2020

During the year Members considered the Restoration and Recovery Plan, which outlined the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown.

The key areas of the plan that were highlighted were as follows:

- Delivery of essential services had continued during the pandemic.
- Economic recovery plans were being established across both Redditch and the Worcestershire area and the Restoration and Recovery Plan would sit alongside these two documents.

- Learning from the 'first wave' of Covid-19 had been recognised and had resulted in major changes to how the Council operated.
- The Restoration and Recovery Plan had been formulated around the authority's five Strategic Purposes and included priorities from the Council Plan. As the Council Plan was drafted prior to Covid-19 and, due to changes in priorities during the pandemic, a Council Plan review was scheduled to take place in early 2021 to ensure priorities were refreshed and remained relevant.

PRE-SCRUTINY - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS - 3RD SEPTEMBER 2020

This year, the Committee continued to monitor action taken in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Strategic Improvement Plan Progress report. Members were advised that there had been successes since the previous update in the key compliance areas including gas servicing, asbestos and fire safety. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown there had been impacts on the provision of Housing Services which had forced a change in priorities so that major compliance issues and emergency and essential repairs were only carried out after risk assessments were carried out and ensuring that staff were provided with adequate Personal Protective Equipment.

It was also confirmed that rent collection had been impacted due to the increase in Universal Credit applicants and residents who had been placed on furlough or had lost jobs. However, measures had been put in place to mitigate the deficit in rent arrears. Members welcomed news that the Housing Revenue Account was in a sustainable position.

As part of this discussion there was interest from Members regarding the numbers of rough sleepers and homeless people in the Borough. Members were encouraged that there were no homeless people in the Borough and that rough sleepers were provided with temporary accommodation during lockdown.

PRESENTATION FROM PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTANT, WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - OVERVIEW ITEMS – 22ND OCTOBER 2020

As requested in the previous municipal year at a meeting between the Leader of the Redditch Brough Council, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive of the Council, a presentation was received on the subject of the following public health issues:

- Flu Vaccinations
- Fruit and Vegetable Consumption
- Alcohol Admissions
- Dementia Diagnosis

- Childhood Obesity

A Public Health Consultant from Worcestershire County Council attended a meeting of the Committee in October 2020. In her presentation she outlined key information, which included statistics for the flu vaccination programme and childhood obesity in Reception age to Year 6 children. It was highlighted that Redditch was performing well in some of these areas however the number of alcohol admissions was higher, and the number of Dementia diagnoses was lower than the national average.

PRE-SCRUTINY - HOUSING STRATEGY - 22ND OCTOBER 2020

The Committee pre-scrutinised the Housing Strategy at a meeting of 22nd October 2020. This report was identified for pre-scrutiny due to the implications for Council tenants, particularly those living in the private rented sector.

Members were informed that the Housing Strategy had previously been a County-wide strategy that was complex and a decision had been made to adopt a more localised approach to the strategy where tangible outcomes could be measured more easily. Consideration was also given to the Stock Condition Survey and the work that would be undertaken over the following 20 years to improve the Council's housing stock.

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ANNUAL REPORT - 3RD DECEMBER 2020

The Civil Contingencies Annual Report was presented by the Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager in December 2020. The key area that was presented for Members information was the debrief exercise that was carried out in respect the Council's response to Covid-19 after the first lockdown. Eighteen recommendations had been made as a result of the debrief and accepted by the Chief Executive. It was reported to the Committee that all actions, except for one, were undertaken within four weeks. The outstanding recommendation was concerning data sharing which would be an ongoing action and monitored closely.

SKILLS IN THE LOCAL WORKFORCE - VERBAL PRESENTATION - 3RD DECEMBER 2020

The Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) presented a verbal update in respect of Skills in the Local Workforce which had been highlighted as an area for scrutiny at an Overview and Scrutiny training session attended by Non-Executive Members in May 2019.

The presentation detailed the support programmes and courses for 16–21-year-olds including CV preparation, communications and working in teams. There was also information provided regarding Worcestershire County Council Skills Hub service which had recently been launched and was available to employers and individuals.

The Committee was informed that a number of apprenticeship grants were available to young people and initiatives were in place to enable young people to be matched with suitable placements and vacancies within the Borough.

Members agreed that initiatives and support measures should be clearly communicated to local businesses and individuals through various business networks and channels and encouraged local businesses to do more to engage with young people in order to close the skills gap in the Borough.

CHURCH GREEN DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA AND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION - PRE-SCRUTINY - 3RD DECEMBER 2020

A detailed report was presented to the Committee for pre-scrutiny in respect of the Church Green Draft Conservation Area and Management Plan consultation.

A summary was provided of the Church Green Conservation Area and areas of special interest and Members were informed that there were a high number of buildings within the area that were Designated Heritage Assets. It was considered that the Conservation Area would act as a focus for the future regeneration of the Redditch Town Centre.

It was noted during consideration of this item that there were areas for concern which included the poor state of shop fronts, parking around St Stephens' Church and vacant units. In addition to this it was discussed that there may be a need to consider the current parking on Unicorn Hill and the impact it had on the businesses that were situated there.

At the end of the debate on this item the Committee endorsed the recommendations detailed in the report.

REDDITCH TOWN DEAL INVESTMENT PLAN – PRE-SCRUTINY – 18TH JANUARY 2021

The Head of Economic Development & Regeneration from North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) presented a report in respect of the Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan in January 2021. Consideration of this subject followed pre-scrutiny of previous reports in respect of regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre in recent years.

The Committee was informed that there were three key themes included in the scope of the Town's Fund including urban regeneration, enterprise and connectivity (including digital and transport) and that unlocking Redditch was the vision in order to move Redditch from a traditional New Town to a New Town that was fit for the 21st Century.

Members were advised that Government guidance regarding public consultation was followed during the process. An external consultant specialising in consultation had co-ordinated public engagement measures for this process. Some concerns were raised about the number of people who had responded in this consultation process, though the Committee was advised that there had been a high rate of responses and feedback had been taken into account from previous consultation exercises too.

During consideration of this item Members raised some concerns in respect of the Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan website and transparency for residents. The situation of the current Police Station future library provision were also discussed in detail.

It was agreed at the meeting that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive regular, six monthly updates in respect of the Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan, should this be approved by the Government.

REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP REPORT 2021 - 18TH JANUARY 2021

The Redditch Partnership Manager presented the Redditch Partnership Annual Report 2021. It was noted that changes had inevitably occurred over the previous year as a result of Covid-19. Members were informed that it had proven more difficult to meet in lockdown however it was confirmed that some meetings had taken place virtually. The Business Leaders Group had continued to meet regularly and had undertaken a project, mentoring young people in schools.

It was reported to the Committee that the Redditch Partnership structure had been really effective during the response to the pandemic and the Partnership was able to consolidate support and create links between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups. There were hopes that this kind of work would continue in the future and that links would continue to flourish after the lockdown.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 TO 2024/25 (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT) – 11TH FEBRUARY 2021

The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 (including the Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) was pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Committee held in February 2021.

The Committee was informed about the particular challenges involved in balancing the budget during the Covid-19 pandemic. There remained some uncertainty about future plans for local government funding and this, together with uncertainty about the potential impact of Brexit on local businesses and therefore business rate collections, made it difficult to plan ahead. However, opportunities to achieve savings and secure further income had been highlighted in the report as well as the balanced position for 2021/22.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL – 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Local authorities are required to have a Committee designated with responsibility to review the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and this Committee must meet at least once a year to discuss the work of the partnership. In Redditch this role is undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, which is a permanent sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel holds the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership to account for its work in Redditch.

A meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel took place on 30th September 2020. During the meeting Members received an update on the work of the partnership in the Borough in the preceding 12 months, this included an update on the action that was being taken to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour. There was also a discussion regarding Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020 and projects that related to and focussed on diverting young people from crime and Anti-Social Behaviour and their delivery in schools.

TASK GROUPS AND SHORT SHARP REVIEWS

Task Groups are established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issue that affects the Borough. The work carried out by Task Groups in 2020-2021 is summarised below.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK GROUP

The Suicide Prevention Task Group completed their review in the summer in 2020. The group comprised six Members including Councillor Debbie Chance (Chair) and Councillors Baker, Isherwood, Lovell, Nazir (until May 2021) and Shurmer.

The Committee was informed that in total the group had held 11 meetings and spoken to eight witnesses between June 2019 and June 2020. It was clarified that there had been a slight delay in bringing the report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The group had gathered data on the economic cost of death by suicide, the higher incidence of suicide amongst young men compared to other sections of the population and the evidence of the long-term effects on bereaved relatives.

At the end of the review the group proposed three recommendations, all of which were endorsed by the Executive Committee. Progress with the implementation of these recommendations will be monitored in the Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker.

DEMENTIA TASK GROUP

At the start of the municipal year Members decided to launch a review into Dementia in the Borough. This subject had been raised as an area of concern given the ageing population. The scope of the task group was agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2020. The scope included a requirement to investigate the provision of Dementia services in the Borough and to clarify the different types of dementia.

Councillor Michael Chalk was elected as Chair for the Task Group. Councillors Joanne Beecham, John Fisher and Jenny Wheeler were also appointed to the group.

The meetings have included interviews and consideration of evidence submitted by the following officers and representatives from partnership organisations:

- Representative from Age UK
- Redditch Partnership Manager (Redditch Borough Council)

There were delays in the investigation as a result of Covid-19 and time constraints on Members' and officers' time. However, the group has made some suggestions in respect of their recommendations and will report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on their findings in the new municipal year.

PARKING ON UNICORN HILL – SHORT, SHARP REVIEW – 18TH JANUARY 2021

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18th January 2021 it was agreed that a Short, Sharp Review of Parking on Unicorn Hill would be undertaken.

Members were informed that the scoping document had been proposed as a result of discussions that had taken place in respect of the available parking on Unicorn Hill during the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd December 2020.

The objectives for the Short, Sharp Review were proposed and included analysis of the need for car-parking on Unicorn Hill, confirmation of what parking already existed.

Councillor Peter Fleming was elected as Chair of the Short, Sharp Review. Councillors Joe Baker, Joanne Beecham and Yvonne Smith were also appointed to the review. This exercise will be completed in the new municipal year.

WORKING GROUPS

The Council has two permanent scrutiny working groups, the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – CHAIR, COUNCILLOR JENNY WHEELER

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group held a number of meetings in 2020-2021. The model of the working group had been considered successful in the previous year and therefore a similar approach was adopted in 2020-2021. Members concluded that this was a challenging time financially for the Council in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and that 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.

During the year the Budget Scrutiny Working Group considered the following matters:

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 (including the capital programme and Housing Revenue Account)
- Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant 2021/22
- Section 24 Notice and the implications of this for the Council's financial position moving forward.
- Commercialism Programme Board including the progress within the Authority with delivering commercial services and the role of Black Radley. An interview was held with a representative of Black Radley as part of this process.
- Brexit
- Impact of Covid-19
- Fees and Charges 2021/22
- Financial Monitoring reports
- Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Collection
- Housing Revenue Account

A recommendation was made to the Executive Committee in respect of the future structure of Fees and Charges reports. This was agreed with only a minor amendment by the Executive Committee at their meeting held on 8th December 2020.

**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – CHAIR, COUNCILLOR
ANDREW FRY**

The group has an important role in scrutinising the delivery of the Council's priorities. The group agreed at the end of 2019/20 that Members would continue to focus on scrutinising the performance of services in accordance with the strategic purposes. However, this would be conducted collectively, rather than through one Member monitoring a particular strategic purpose.

The Group met twice times in 2020/21. This represented a significant decline in the number of meetings compared to the previous year. However, the frequency of meetings was impacted by Covid-19. Members intend to hold more frequent meetings in 2021/22. Every meeting of the group was quorate.

During these meetings the following items were discussed:

- Voids – Process and Timescales – Interview with the Head of Environmental Services and Housing Property.
- Anti-Social Behaviour - Interview with the Head of Community and Housing Services
- Update on How Covid-19 Has Affected Council Services - Interview with the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Michael Chalk

The Committee received regular updates from Councillor Chalk, the Council's representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

During the year Councillor Chalk frequently provided written updates about the work of the Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The Battery Gigafactory
- The Comprehensive Spending Review
- Questions of the Mayor – Andy Street

Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Michael Chalk.

The Committee received regular updates from Councillor Chalk about the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). Some of the issues highlighted during the year included:

- The impact of Covid-19 and vaccination programme
- End of Life Care and ReSPECT

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Joint Scrutiny Committee - Council Representative, Councillor Michael Chalk.

For the first time, this year the Committee received verbal updates on the work of the GBSLEP's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The following points were highlighted during the year:

- Skills and Apprenticeship Hub
- Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies
- Route to Recovery

The written updates from Councillor Chalk provide useful information of scrutiny work being undertaken by other authorities across the local area and the Committee are grateful of the time taken by Councillor Chalk in providing these updates.

CONCLUSION

This has been a very different year for Overview and Scrutiny in Redditch. The Covid-19 pandemic meant a whole new way of working was introduced when undertaking public meetings. Despite this, a significant amount of pre-scrutiny work has been carried out by the Committee. In addition to this, items of interest for overview were carefully considered, providing greater clarification on those subjects to the benefit of Members and the public.

Many recommendations have been made during the year and these have often been accepted by the Executive Committee, either in totality or in an amended form. It is hoped that, regardless of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Overview and Scrutiny can continue to make a constructive contribution to the Borough in 2021/22.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee express his thanks to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, recognising in particular the valuable contribution made by Members through Task Group investigations and on the Budget and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups.

For any background information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Redditch, please visit <https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/the-council.aspx>

Democratic Services, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3031 email: joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Appendix A

Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

Note: The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation		Date of referral	
Proposed topic title			
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes			
Background to the issue			
Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)			
How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)			

Please return this form to: Jo Gresham, Democratic Services Officer, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

Email: joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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