



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 6 Jan  
2022  
6.30 pm

Council Chamber  
Redditch Town Hall

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
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## **GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS**

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**Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Redditch Borough Council will be applying social distancing arrangements for holding face-to-face meetings.**

**Please note that this is a public meeting and is open to the public to attend.**

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

### **GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON**

In advance of the Committee meeting, Members are strongly encouraged to consider taking a lateral flow test, which can be obtained from the NHS website. Should the test be positive for Covid-19 then the Member must not attend the Committee meeting, should provide their apologies to the Democratic Services team and must self-isolate in accordance with national rules.

Members and officers are required to wear face coverings during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, unless exempt. Face coverings should only be removed temporarily if the Councillor or officer is speaking or if s/he requires a sip of water and should be reapplied as soon as possible. As Councillors may remove their masks from time to time during the meeting, seating will be placed two metres apart, in line with social distancing measures to protect meeting participants.

Hand sanitiser will be provided for Members to use throughout the meeting.

The meeting venue will be fully ventilated, and Members and officers may need to consider wearing appropriate clothing in order to remain comfortable during proceedings.

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Members of the public will be able to access the meeting if they wish to do so. However, due to social distancing requirements to ensure the safety of participants during the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be limited capacity and members of the public will be allowed access on a first come, first served basis. Members of the public in attendance are required to wear face masks, unless they are exempt, to use the hand sanitiser that will be provided and will be required to sit in a socially distanced manner at the meetings. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

In line with Government guidelines, any member of the public who has received a positive result in a Covid-19 test on the day of a meeting must not attend in person and must self-isolate in accordance with the national rules.

**Notes:**

**Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.**



# Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

6.30 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Debbie Chance (Chair)	Brandon Clayton Alex Fogg
	Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair)	Julian Grubb Lucy Harrison
	Salman Akbar Karen Ashley Michael Chalk	

### 1. Apologies and named substitutes

### 2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip

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

### 3. Public Speaking

To invite members of the public who have registered in advance of the meeting to speak to the Committee.

### 4. Redditch Partnership Update (Pages 1 - 4)

### 5. Recommendation Tracker (Pages 5 - 16)

### 6. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 17 - 34)

There are two sets of minutes attached from meetings of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December and Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

The next edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme is due to be published on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022, after the publication of this agenda. Therefore, it will be published in a supplementary pack for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

# Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

## **7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 35 - 36)**

## **8. Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups - Update Reports**

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

## **9. External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports (Pages 37 - 40)**

- a) Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Chalk;
- b) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Chalk; and
- c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council representative, Councillor Chalk.

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## Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy – Overview and Scrutiny Monitoring Report – January 2022

### Redditch Community Sustainable Strategy (SCS)

The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy is the strategy produced by Redditch Partnership which sets out the strategic direction for Redditch and how partners can contribute to achieving a shared vision for the Borough. The current Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) was pre-scrutinised in March 2011 with the final Strategy gaining approval by full Council on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Originally the Strategy was in place for 3 years. A mini refresh of the SCS priorities was undertaken during 2015 with the outcome that a few minor changes were made to the priorities. Since then, there has been a short assessment of the priorities undertaken each year by the Partnership.

#### The current vision of the Strategy is:

*‘Redditch will be successful and vibrant with communities that have access to good job opportunities, good education, good health and are communities that people will be proud to live and work in’.*

#### The four current priorities of the SCS are:

<b>Priority One</b>	Health Inequalities	Focus is on following issues: smoking, alcohol, drugs; obesity / healthy lifestyles and mental health and wellbeing.
<b>Priority Two</b>	Education attainment, school readiness and raising aspirations of young people.	Focus is on three issues: improving literacy and numeracy; raising aspirations; and improve statistical levels of attainment particularly for Early Years and Key Stage 2.
<b>Priority Three</b>	The economy of Redditch with a focus on providing a larger and more diverse job offer.	Focus is on three broad issues: promotion of Redditch as a business location; jobs and worklessness; and fostering economic ambition in young people.
<b>Priority Four</b>	Lead on transformational change of services for citizens in Redditch	Focus is on carrying on some of the legacy work of the Connecting Families programme and identifying any further opportunities for transformational work across partners systems.

### Redditch Partnership

The SCS is overseen by a group of strategic partners working in Redditch (see structure diagram appended to this report). This group used to be known as the Redditch Partnership Board but since April 2014, the group has been slightly reconfigured and is now known as Redditch Partnership Executive Group (RPEG).

Sitting underneath this group are other groups including the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT). This is a Thematic Group looking at issues regarding

children and young people and also health issues. This group oversees the Redditch Health and Wellbeing Plan.

### **Redditch Partnership Executive Group (RPEG)**

The role of RPEG is to provide strategic direction in Redditch on the identified priorities and also provide guidance and influence on key commissioned services, projects and initiatives rolled out across Worcestershire which have an impact of the residents of Redditch.

During the past year, RPEG has continued to meet virtually (although one meeting did take place face to face in November). The group has given oversight and contributed direction to the development of the Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) and also the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) work which is being rolled out in Woodrow and across Redditch. It also hears regular updates from the two theme groups – the RCWT and the Redditch Business Leaders Group. The focus of discussions in 2022 will be on the RDC and the ABCD work.

### **Redditch Business Leaders**

This group previously used to be the Economic Development Theme Group but has morphed into the Redditch Business Leaders Group. The group is chaired by a local businessman (the CEO of FaunZoeller) and has representatives from a number of local businesses including Heller, Mettis and MSP. The aim of the group is to focus on skills especially in young people and for the past couple of years has rolled out a project facilitating business mentors working with children in schools called the Power Up mentor scheme. The group is looking to become constituted and has been working on developing a website to help reach out to other businesses and promote the work of the group.

### **Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT) and other Groups**

The RCWT usually holds meetings every two months. Meetings consist of discussions predominantly around health inequalities, children and young people and older people. During the past year, there has been several virtual meetings of the group held on MS Teams. They have mostly been utilised to provide a forum for partner organisations to update each other about the work they have been undertaking during the pandemic. Some of the key issues highlighted by partners through the meetings include:

- Impact of Covid on vulnerable people and people already struggling financially;
- Training and skills activities / opportunities available to people especially young people in Redditch;
- Housing and homelessness issues in Redditch and how RBC are tackling these; and
- Concerns about fuel poverty and impacts on people's finances.

The Positive Activities Sub Group used to exist as a group as part of the Partnership but has been superseded by the Youth Forum. It is chaired by Pete Sugg who is the lead officer for Young Solutions (an umbrella group for VCS organisations whose focus is on children and young people). They are currently focusing on bidding for the next tranche of Positive Activities funding from Worcestershire County Council



and looking at opportunities for joint working on projects relating to children and young people.

### **Redditch District Collaborative (RDC)**

The two Primary Care Networks for Redditch are leading on a partnership initiative which is driven by the national agenda of the development of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) for each local area. The RDC has three priorities - mental health and wellbeing, frailty and obesity. Work has begun to engage with partner organisations whose work falls under one or more of these priorities. Asset mapping has taken place of services and initiatives and there has been discussion about roles within the different organisations that link communities with services under these priorities. The importance of having a clear directory of services has been highlighted by this work and the RDC is working closely with Worcestershire County Council to align with their Here2Help directory and also the Council's Knowledge Bank.

Further work of the RDC includes scoping out the possibility of developing an Integrated Wellbeing Network which will look at how we can build on the assets of communities and link them together with services to improve health outcomes for Redditch residents.

### **Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) in Redditch**

At the beginning of the year, a new ABCD team was established by Worcestershire County Council to roll out ABCD working across the County. Redditch was a focus for this work, with Woodrow chosen as the area to focus on initially. A Woodrow ABCD Steering Group was established including elected Members for the area, the Council and Voluntary and Community Sector representation on it. The Redditch Partnership Manager has chaired this group. The group has met numerous times over the year. Work to map services and community activities in the area has taken place along with some community engagement to see what local people would like to see in Woodrow.

Further funding has been awarded by WCC for this work. To take the work forward, roles called Community Builders are to be established. Community Builders work in the local areas to make connections between local people and services and activities and to initiate new activities if residents feel there is a need for them.

There is funding for one Community Builder in Woodrow and 2 other Community Builders to work in Redditch. It was decided that a further Community Builder would work in Abbeydale and another would work with Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities across the whole of Redditch. BARN in partnership with Sandycroft and Oasis Christian Centre have just been successful in bidding to host these three posts and oversee this work moving forward.

### **Wellbeing in Partnership Newsletter**

The "Wellbeing in Partnership" Newsletter became a weekly, then fortnightly email bulletin in March 2020 once the pandemic began. The idea was to get messages out as quickly as possible to partner organisations about services which were running and those that had to pause owing to the pandemic. It still serves as a point of information about projects, programmes and services in Redditch and Bromsgrove. For the foreseeable future the newsletter will remain an e-news bulletin.

**Redditch and Bromsgrove Directory of Services (Knowledge Bank)**

A directory of services building on current directories produced by the Council's Customer Service Team and the Parenting and Family Support Service was created a number of years ago. The Council's IT development team assist on the technical side of this while officers including Customer Services, Parenting and Family Support, Redditch and Bromsgrove Partnership Managers are working to populate this with all services from the statutory, voluntary and community sector available in Redditch and Bromsgrove.

The fully searchable directory is available on the Council's webpages for the public and local partners to use. Local organisations can contact the administrating team and add their organisations details to the directory if not already on there. The administrating team will also work to keep the directory as up to date as possible. The link for the Knowledge Bank is <http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/knowledgebank>

There is also a directory of services now being produced by Worcestershire County Council called Here2Help. This is still developing but it might be that this directory supersedes the Knowledge Bank in time. Here2Help can be accessed [here](#).

**Action Tracker Update**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**January 2022**

**RECOMMENDATION TRACKER REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY**

This Recommendation Tracker lists all recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including Task Group recommendations which have been agreed by Executive) until implementation is complete.

The recommendations are by;

- A. Task and Finish Group
- B. Budget Scrutiny Working Group
- C. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the quarterly Recommendation Tracker, confirms the status of the recommendations and agrees to the removal of any items which the Committee feel have been completed.

Subject and Date of Meeting requested	Actions	Lead Officer	Date completion required	Comments	Latest Update from Officers (6 <sup>th</sup> January 2022)	Completion Date and RAG Rating
<b>New Cemetery Provision - 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b>	<p><b>To the Executive Committee RECOMMEND</b> that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Redditch Borough Council continue to provide new burial provision; and</li> <li>2) Ipsley Church Lane be progressed as the preferred option to provide new burial provision</li> </ol> <p><b>To Council RECOMMEND</b> that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) A sum of £320,000 be budgeted to progress new burial provision</li> </ol>	Mike Birkinshaw		<p>All recommendations 1-4 were agreed by the Executive Committee at their meeting held on 15th December 2021</p> <p>Recommendation 3 will be considered at Full Council due to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022</p>		AMBER
<b>Dementia Task Group – Final Report September 2021</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) officers work with local agencies including the Older People’s Forum, Age UK to hold a Dementia Awareness Event in the Town Hall and promote the event on the Council’s website.</li> <li>2) officers undertake a refresh of the Older People Services Booklet which is currently available on the Redditch Borough Council website and include a specific section regarding Dementia Services available in the Borough.</li> </ol>	Jo Gresham		<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed all of the recommendations made by the Dementia Task Group at their meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.</p> <p>An additional recommendation was made (recommendation 4).</p> <p>All recommendations 1-4 were agreed by the Executive Committee at their meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Owing to the fact that we are still in a pandemic and the Council is discouraging large face to face meetings, this recommendation will have to be implemented at a time when it is safe to do so.</li> <li>2) The Redditch Partnership Manager had a conversation with Pat Witherspoon from the Older People’s Forum about the directory. Pat oversees the updating of the directory and was having problems doing so given the number of groups not up and</li> </ol>	AMBER

RED – Overdue AMBER – Ongoing GREEN – Completed

	<p>3) Dementia Training be provided to all Elected Members in order for them to better understand the changing needs of the residents in the Borough.</p> <p>4) As part of the work in respect of Integrated Care System, the Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council to work alongside partner agencies to provide Members with further information on Dementia services in the Borough and potential services for the future.</p>				<p>running due to the pandemic. The idea was to try to update and republish but as this was proving difficult, this was put on hold for the time being. The Redditch Partnership Manager will relay the recommendation that a specific section on dementia be included in any future edition of the booklet. However, it may be some time before we are confident that information in the booklet is up to date and can be republished.</p> <p>3) This recommendation was agreed in principle at the Member Support Steering Group and Dementia training will feature as part of the new Members indication from the next municipal year.</p> <p>4) Kevin Dicks contacted Public Health and the Primary Care Networks about this recommendation. Some discussions took place about what help and support is out there for dementia – Public Health suggested a couple of things in relation to awareness raising and</p>	
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					<p>training - "In follow up re Dementia Friends Training - It looks like the national DF champions programme has been stopped/paused for the time being but this is website to sign up to be a champion:  <a href="https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=what-is-a-champion#.YYo5MWDp3IU">https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=what-is-a-champion#.YYo5MWDp3IU</a>                      Worcester University offer training and workshops for organisations  <a href="https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/school-of-allied-health-and-community/allied-health-research/association-for-dementia-studies/ads-education-and-research/">https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/school-of-allied-health-and-community/allied-health-research/association-for-dementia-studies/ads-education-and-research/</a></p> <p>Discussions will continue to take place about services as Kevin is working closely with the PCNs to take forward the Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) initiative. This covers mental wellbeing as a priority so dementia can be looked at as part of this.</p>	
<b>Suicide prevention Task Group</b>	1) That the Redditch Borough Council Equalities Strategy should reflect the			The final report was presented at O&S in July 2020.	1) The Equality Strategy is currently under review to consider the impact of the	AMBER

	<p>Council's commitment to suicide prevention and supporting good mental health, and that in producing the updated version of the Equalities Strategy for 2020 to 2024 objectives and actions should be included to cover the following:-</p> <p>a) That officers continue to publicise messages around positive mental health to staff and promote opportunities to participate in training and events.</p> <p>b) That officers develop the signposting information available on the intranet to support staff in being able to signpost either service users or colleagues to the relevant support services.</p> <p>c) That officers mark suicide prevention awareness day in September 2020 including using this as an opportunity to promote the work of local groups that support suicide prevention.</p> <p>d) Recognising that not all staff may undertake the Mental Health First Aid training, that officers</p>			<p>A further recommendation (recommendation 4) was made by Executive at the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020. (Actioned on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020)</p> <p>All recommendations were agreed at the Executive meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020.</p> <p>1)The Equality Strategy is currently under review and will be going to CMT at the end of May. One of the main objectives will be a Mental Health Objectives and the recommendations from the Suicide Task Group will key actions against this objective covering communication, signposting, events, training, and partnerships.</p> <p>The Policy Team will be annually reviewing the strategy once adopted and the objectives will be in place for 4 years.</p> <p>The Policy Team have made contacted the newly formed Suicide Prevention Team at WCC who will be working across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The 3-year project secured Wave 3 funding from NHS England to reduce the risk of suicide with a particular focus on middle aged men. Key elements of the project include</p>	<p>pandemic and is expected to be published Summer 2022.</p> <p><u>Update for 1a and b</u>          Opportunities are utilised where possible to promote good mental health and wellbeing. Recently a series of online wellbeing sessions were provided in the run up to World Mental Health Day for staff such as seated yoga, tai chi, breathing exercises and tapping.          To support staff, a free mental health Check-In tool has been promoted on the Orb and Oracle to help staff assess their current state of mind and provide suggestions for growth. Users can create an anonymised account, and once logged in can opt to take a quick or full check-in. Users will be asked a series of questions about their mental health to assess how they are currently coping. Once the check-in is complete, users will be able to view their results and explore suggestions for how to improve their mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Update for 1d</u>          Worcestershire County Council is currently offering free mental health first aid courses both online and face to face. These</p>	
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	<p>arrange for some alternative web based training resources to be provided for staff, to be aimed at those working in front line posts.</p> <p>2) Support to local voluntary sector organisations around improving promotion of their organisations</p> <p>a) That officers from the Communications Team work with the Partnership Manager to identify local voluntary sector organisation which offer support around mental health and wellbeing and/ or promote suicide prevention.</p> <p>b) That the organisations identified be invited to participate in workshop training sessions to be provided by the Communications Team to help them to better publicise the support and services their organisations provide through use of social media and other publicity.</p> <p>3) Publicising the findings of the Task Group</p>			<p>raising awareness, suicide prevention training and developing localised community centred initiatives to build opportunities for men to talk and build relationships.</p> <p>The Policy Team will work with the Redditch Partnership Manager, Communications and HR colleagues on the signposting element marking Suicide Prevention Day 2021.</p> <p>a) The Communications Unit continue to do this where possible through the intranet and have instigated initiatives such as the Staff Space enabling staff to link up for chats if struggling with making links with others while working at home. Redditch Partnership Manager has promoted a whole range of mental health projects and initiatives provided by partner organisations in the "Wellbeing in Partnership" news bulletin which goes to all 4th Tier Managers and CMT</p> <p>b) Mental health programmes/initiatives and projects are available by searching "mental health" in the Council's online directory Knowledge Bank. Future work can be undertaken to develop this.</p>	<p>have been promoted both to staff and partner organisations.</p> <p><u>Update for 2a and 2b</u> Communications Team worked with Redditch Partnership Manager to hold a MS Teams Training session for the VCS to support them in how to utilise social media to their best advantage to promote their services and positive messages about mental health. This session took place on 30th September in the run up to World Mental health Day on 10th Oct. There were around 8-10 organisations that attended, and the sessions was viewed really positively. A "top tips" guide to help with social media was produced to be circulated to the VCS.</p> <p>It is envisaged that more work could continue from the session including engaging with the VCS and building a collective social media presence under a collective hashtag such as #youarenotaloneRedditch.</p> <p>The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has made available £4 million for a grant fund to support suicide</p>	
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	<p>4) Officers be tasked with sending a copy of the Suicide Prevention Task Group's final report to Worcestershire County Council and the Member of Parliament for Redditch.</p>		<p>c) This was not undertaken owing to Officer capacity but please see section 2.  d) Officers to follow up with HR in respect of progress</p> <p>2) the Pandemic unfortunately prevented any face to face training to take place on this issue. It is suggested that a face to face workshop be undertaken in and around 20 Sept to mark World Suicide day this year instead.</p> <p>3) Redditch Partnership Manager has publicised the review at meetings she has attended regarding mental health and also through the Wellbeing in Partnership newsletter. She has also brought it to the attention of the County Council's Suicide Prevention Group. Redditch Partnership Manager is attending a county Suicide Prevention workshop on 3rd March and will feedback to relevant channels any relevant work or opportunities which arise from this to link in with the Task Group review.</p> <p>With the establishment of a Suicide Prevention Team in Public Health, as mentioned above, the Redditch Partnership Manager and Policy Team will</p>	<p>prevention VCSE organisations across 2021 to 2022. A portion of the grant fund will be ring-fenced specifically to help support small community-led and user-led groups and organisations. The Suicide Prevention VCSE Grant Fund was launched on 2 December 2021 and will close on 16 January 2022.</p> <p>The strategic objectives of the fund are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service provision: to support suicide prevention VCSE organisations to meet the increased need or demand for suicide prevention services because of the pandemic</li> <li>• to support service provision particularly to people considered to be at a higher risk of suicide, through the work of the diverse range of suicide prevention VCSE organisations and enhancing service provision to high-risk groups</li> </ul> <p>More information is available at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/suicide-prevention-fund-2021-to-2022">Suicide Prevention Fund 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	
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				link in with this team and explore ways of supporting each other going forward with work around suicide prevention in Redditch.		
<b>Parking Enforcement Task Group Final Report – June 2020</b>	<p>1) that at a meeting of Worcestershire Leaders' Board the Leader should raise the need to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for all zigzag road markings outside schools in the county. As part of this process the Leader should formally request that Worcestershire County Council write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request that additional, ring-fenced funding be provided to Worcestershire County Council that can be invested in introducing these additional TROs;</p> <p>2) subject to the successful implementation of Recommendation 1 above, Redditch Borough Council should fund an additional Civil Enforcement Officer post dedicated to enforcement action around schools, to work term-time only;</p> <p>3) Officers from Redditch Borough Council work with Worcestershire County Council, local schools and West Mercia Police to develop a strategy to tackle</p>			<p>Amendment made to recommendation 2 to “<i>that</i>, subject to the successful implementation of Recommendation 1 above, <i>and following a scoped trial period</i>, Redditch Borough Council should consider funding an additional Civil Enforcement Officer post dedicated to enforcement action around schools to work term-time only;”</p> <p>All recommendations and amendments were agreed at the Executive meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020.</p> <p>In respect of recommendation 1 - The Leader has raised the issue of parking enforcement at a meeting of Worcestershire Leaders' Group and a letter formally setting out the group's findings was sent to relevant lead Members and Officers at Worcestershire County Council on this subject.</p> <p>A copy of the group's report was sent to all of the county councillors representing a Redditch division. A formal response was received from some of those Members, a copy</p>	<p>At an Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 the Chief Executive recommended that some monitoring be undertaken within the next 6 months by Officers around schools in addition to the possibility of looking into School Streets, an initiative where a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times was implemented on the road outside a school. It was agreed that the Parking Enforcement Task Group be re-established to reconsider the outstanding recommendations and the possibility of the implementation of School Streets in the Borough. The Chief Executive also agreed that the earlier suggestion of offering Redditch as a trial area was a positive one and could potentially provide good outcomes for the Borough.</p> <p>At that same meeting, Councillor Beecham volunteered as Chair of the Parking Enforcement Task Group should it be re-established, and Members</p>	AMBER

	<p>problem parking near schools;</p> <p>4) the need for road markings to be replaced as soon as possible after resurfacing work has been undertaken should be discussed at a forthcoming Redditch Highways Forum meeting. All Worcestershire County Councillors representing a Redditch division should be provided with a copy of the group's final report to facilitate a discussion of this subject;</p> <p>5) training in respect of parking enforcement arrangements in the Borough should be provided in a single training session each municipal year as part of the member induction programme. New elected Members should be offered the opportunity to shadow a Civil Parking Enforcement Officer;</p>			<p>of which was shared with members of the scrutiny group.</p> <p>The proposed training has been considered and agreed by the Member Support Steering Group. However, due to the current social distancing measures in place during the Covid-19 pandemic the Member Support Steering Group has decided to focus on quasi-judicial and overview and scrutiny training in 2021/22. It is anticipated that the training in respect of parking enforcement will take place at a later date once it is safe to do so.</p> <p>The Parking Team liaise with County, other Districts and the Local PCSOs and discuss a number of topics one of these is parking outside schools. However due to COVID-19 and the Schools being shut for a large part of the last year some delays have been experienced. However, the Parking Team are planning to get all partners together including representatives of some schools once pupils return to discuss this topic.</p>	<p>were happy with this suggestion. However, due to the change in membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee there has been a delay in re-establishing the task group.</p> <p>An update will be provided on the O&amp;S work programme in 6 months' time.</p>	
<b>Pre decision scrutiny – Disposal of HRA Asset – Green Lane Studley –</b>	No. 65 Green Lane, Studley be declared surplus to requirements and officers to dispose of the site;	Guy Revans		These recommendations were agreed at the Executive meeting on 10th September 2019.	At the beginning of November, WarCC came back with their decision whether or not to adopt the bridge structure. Regrettably, they decided that	AMBER

RED – Overdue    AMBER – Ongoing    GREEN – Completed

<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b></p>	<p>any HRA capital receipt achieved based on the current market value of No. 65 Green Lane, be used to increase the HRA stock;</p> <p>Option C - The Capital Engineering Scheme be approved, with Authority be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to submit a detailed planning application to Stratford-on-Avon District Council, for the complete scheme. If successful, the Planning consent will include an outline approval for the erection of 2 No. 4 bed houses</p> <p>the sites for the 2 No. 4 bed houses be marketed and the received monies, after deduction of the amount as described in ii) above, shall be used as Capital funds towards the cost of the Engineering Works</p> <p>the additional funds required to complete the Engineering Works be taken from the Capital Locality Scheme Budget, as the proposed works are of the nature that the budget was set up for in the first instance;</p> <p>the estimated cost of the Engineering Works cannot be finalised at this time, as Officers are currently endeavouring to</p>			<p>A Hybrid Planning Application was made to both Stratford-upon-Avon District Council (SoADC) and this Authority, which included:</p> <p>1.Full Application - Demolition of former railway brick arched bridge, removal of embankments, and realignment of existing footpath/cycle way to form an at-level crossing.</p> <p>2.Outline Application - Demolition of No.65 Green Lane, and construction of 2 No. 4-bed houses with all matters reserved.</p> <p>After some weeks the relevant Planning Case Officer at SoADC confirmed that the Planning Application recommendation was for refusal (residential part of the application and a number of objections had been received against the demolition of the bridge structure itself).</p> <p>The Planning Application was withdrawn, and would be re-submitted after a re-design of the scheme eliminating the residential proposal.</p> <p>When the revised planning application was submitted to Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC), without the</p>	<p>for a number of reasons, they could not accept adoption of the structure.</p> <p>Following, further consultation with WarCC, it was suggested to them that as this Asset was to remain with this Authority, it would be beneficial if the necessary detailed Structural Assessments and future inspection regime was undertaken by WarCC on our behalf, obviously on a rechargeable basis.</p> <p>WarCC advised that they would be prepared to accept this arrangement subject to formal agreements. It is therefore the intention to report back to Executive Committee to confirm such arrangements as soon as possible.</p> <p>With regard to the adjacent property, No. 65 Green Lane, which is part of our HRA Housing stock, this property formed part of the initial site which included removal of the bridge structure. As the bridge structure remains as part of our assets, an Outline Planning application was made to Stratford-on-Avon District Council, for the replacement of this dwelling with a 3-bed detached dwelling. Consent</p>	
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	<p>determine the most cost effective method of disposing of the extensive surplus material from the excavated embankments. However, subject to the satisfactory outcome of this analysis the total Engineering Works should not exceed £200k</p>			<p>proposed residential development, they have advised that this constitutes a new planning application and that a fee, together with a detailed structural survey of the bridge was required. There was no requirement of a detailed structural survey of the bridge was mentioned in the original application. Additionally, planning officers at SDC have advised that the second application, purely for the removal of the bridge structure and replacement with an at-level Cycle Way/Footpath crossing, is unlikely to be approved.</p> <p>Given the above, Officers are currently in discussion with Warwickshire County Council (WarCC), on the possible adoption of the bridge by the WarCC. Consequently, we are awaiting a formal response from WarCC on the likelihood that such an option will be accepted. Once a detailed response is received back from WarCC, a further report will be presented to Executive Committee, either to accept the transfer of this asset to WarCC, or failing an agreement being reached, considerations of the way forward.</p>	<p>has recently been received for this proposal, and the property was sold at auction on the 25 November 2021.</p>	
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<p><b>Endorsement of Proposals for the Redevelopment of Matchborough and Winyates for the Purposes of Public Consultation (formally Development Partner to progress the possible redevelopment of Winyates and/or Matchborough District Centres and Surrounding Areas)</b></p>	<p>Recommended that assurances be given that no Council housing stock or business unit assets would be lost from the redevelopment of the Winyates and Matchborough district centres.</p>	<p>Ruth Bamford/ Ostap Paparega</p>		<p>The Executive Committee will receive a report seeking agreement to a brief for development which will require potential development partners to work with the Council on the regeneration of the local centres and protect the Council's income and financial position and ensure the provision of social housing at current level.</p> <p>This item appears on the Executive Work Programme and the report will be pre-scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being considered by the Executive Committee (The report is currently due to be considered not before 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021, though the date may change.)</p>	<p>Due to delay with further building reports required to inform consultant work report due to be considered in February with consultation in the new year.</p>	<p>AMBER</p>
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# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 7th December,  
2021

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse and Craig Warhurst

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, James Howse and Steve Shammon

### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

### 36. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Gemma Monaco.

During consideration of Minute Item No. 41, the Chair was called out of the meeting to attend an emergency incident. In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice Chair, Councillor Mike Rouse was nominated to Chair the rest of the meeting.

### 37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 38. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader explained that Minute Item No. 40 – the Financial Outturn Report for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2020/21 – had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021. However, no recommendations had been made by the group on the subject of the report.

Chair

**39. MINUTES****RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**40. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

The Executive Director for Resources presented the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Committee was informed that the HRA had been underspent during the year by £1.9 million. There were a number of reasons for this underspend, which were mainly related to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This included a reduction in expenditure on Repairs and Maintenance during the various lockdowns. However, it was anticipated that the work that had not been delivered during this period would be undertaken during the 2021/22 financial year.

During consideration of this item, Members were asked to note that there had been a typographical error in the recommendation listed in the report. The housing rents capital budget would need to increase by £465,000, rather than £436,000. Furthermore, this would involve a process of reallocation, or the virement of funding, within the overall HRA capital budget rather than an increase to the budget.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement explained that the proposed reallocation of £465,000 in the HRA capital budget would help to support the roll out of the Council's new Housing IT system. The new Housing IT system would be replacing the Saffron system that was still being used by the Council but which was not considered to be modern software. The new system would be introduced in a context of significant change within the Housing Department, following a staff restructure and at a time when rent arrears were increasing due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on tenants' personal finances. Training would be provided to staff to enable them to make best use of the new IT system as soon as possible.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling also commented specifically on the report. Members were asked to note that the funding for the £465,000 that would be reallocated to support the Housing IT system would be provided from the HRA and would not impact on the general fund position.



Reference was made to the backlog in terms of the work of the Repairs and Maintenance team, arising due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and questions were raised about how this work could be addressed in a timely manner. The Committee was advised that external contractors would be procured to help clear the backlog, although the Council's Repairs and Maintenance team would continue to undertake work and would be prioritising particular jobs for completion over forthcoming months.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the outturn financial position (subject to audit) in relation to the HRA revenue and capital budgets for the year April 2020 – March 2021 as detailed in the report be noted; and**

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 2) a total of £465,000 be reallocated in the Housing Rents Capital Budget to the Housing System Capital Budget.**

**41. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2024/25 UPDATE**

The Executive Director of Resources provided an update on the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Committee was informed that unfortunately there were challenges in terms of the Council's balances moving through the three year period of the plan. The plan would therefore need to focus on increasing balances during the period. There were also budget pressures arising from both pay related and non-pay related increases in inflation which represented a risk to the budget. Officers were proposing that the Council should increase Council Tax by £5 in 2022/23 and this would be built into assumptions when developing the plan. There were further options available to the Council to help balance the budget and these would be explored further over the following months.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling explained that the presentation provided a useful update on the position of the Council in the budget preparation process and ensured that there was transparency in this process. Members were asked to note that the Executive Committee would be required to make some difficult decisions in order to achieve a balanced budget. The Council would also need to prioritise action that could be taken to increase the authority's balances. Unfortunately, there remained a lot of uncertainty about local government finances and this made it difficult to prepare a budget. Council Tax remained a significant contributor to local authority finances and it was important to try to increase the Council

Tax base in respect of Band D properties and above, as this would have a positive impact on the budget moving forward.

The update was subsequently discussed by Members and concerns were raised about the potential impact that inflation could have on the Council's budget. The Committee was advised that the proposed increase of £5 to Council Tax was at the maximum level by which an increase could occur without the requirement for a local referendum to take place. However, this increase would not be sufficient to cover the impact of increases in inflation, which were particularly likely to have implications in respect of income from fees and charges. Therefore, inflation was a risk to the Council which would need to be managed.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**42. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Officers confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 for the Executive Committee's consideration.

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 be noted.**

**43. MOBILE HOMES ACT 2013 - INTRODUCTION OF LICENSING FEES**

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented a report on the subject of the introduction of licensing fees under the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

Members were informed that the Mobile Homes Act 2013 introduced the potential for Councils to charge licensing fees to cover the costs of various activities associated with site inspections, including an annual site inspection. Inspections were undertaken to ensure that there was compliance with required standards. The legislation also permitted Councils to serve notice, which previously could only be undertaken following court action.

There were no mobile home sites in the Borough on the date of the meeting. However, Officers were aware of 10 applications having been submitted to the planning department relating to mobile home sites. The introduction of licensing fees for mobile home sites

would ensure that there would be a clear framework in place prior to the introduction of any such sites.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the potential for mobile home sites to be introduced in the Borough. Officers clarified that the sites that were the subject of the Council's planning process could involve single units or a collection of units at one site.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement explained that the proposed licensing fees had been suggested at a level that would cover costs but which would not be punitive. There would be a fine of £5,000 in cases where non-compliance was identified.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the Mobile Home Fee Structure is approved and implemented to all relevant sites throughout Redditch Borough and reviewed on an annual basis; and**
- 2) **the recovery of expenses through enforcement action is approved and implemented to all relevant sites throughout the Borough.**

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

Officers confirmed that there were no referrals from either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

**45. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

The following updates were provided in respect of the Executive Advisory Panels and external bodies:

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

Members were advised that a meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group was scheduled to take place in January 2022.

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

Officers confirmed that a meeting of the group was due to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

# Executive Committee

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

Councillor Nazir explained that a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board had taken place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. During the meeting, the Board had received a presentation on the subject of Worcestershire Children First and the Board's pledges to looked after children and care leavers. Members were advised that the Board had been keen for district Councils to sign up to the pledges.

Clarification was provided that the pledges were as detailed below:

- We will ensure that your voice is heard and that you are involved in decisions about your life.
- We will ensure that you have a safe, secure and stable home in which to live.
- We will help you stay in touch with your family, friends and anyone else who is important to you.
- As your corporate parent, we will celebrate your progress and achievements.
- We will make sure you are offered a health assessment and help you to access services that keep you healthy.
- We will support your lifelong learning and developing independence through ensuring you can have access to education, training and work experience.
- We will help you to build trusting relationships with key people in your life.

Members commented that these pledges were very important and would in principle receive the support of the Executive Committee. However, it was suggested that it would be more appropriate for a decision to be taken in respect of this matter through the submission of a Motion on Notice on this subject for consideration at a forthcoming meeting of Council.

At the meeting of the Board held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, a presentation had also been delivered on the subject of the new Kick Start Scheme. Worcestershire Children First had created a new administrator post which looked after children could apply for. In addition, the Board had received an update in respect of the shortages in terms of trained foster carers in Worcestershire. Attempts were being made to recruit more trained foster carers in the county.

# Executive Committee

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

Officers confirmed that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was due to take place in February 2022.

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

Members were informed that no meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel were scheduled to take place.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.12 pm

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## Executive Committee

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Wednesday, 15th  
December, 2021

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Gemma Monaco (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Anthony Lovell, Mike Rouse and Craig Warhurst

#### Officers:

Michael Birkinshaw, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Guy Revans

#### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill and Jo Gresham

#### 46. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Nyear Nazir.

#### 47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 48. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Members pre-scrutinised the New Cemetery Provision report and had agreed three recommendations. This meeting was live streamed and the Leader had watched the proceedings, as had many other members of the Executive Committee. There were a number of members of the public who spoke to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the subject of the New Cemetery Provision report and the Leader thanked those members of the public for taking the time to speak to the Committee.

Councillor Wheeler, who chaired the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, had been invited to attend the Executive Committee meeting to outline the findings of the Committee, including key points raised by the public.

Chair

# Executive Committee

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**49. MINUTES (TO FOLLOW)**

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**50. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The following Question on Notice was considered in accordance with paragraph 16.3 of the Executive Committee Procedure Rules:

Question from Ms Joni Lovell:

“Please can the site given as 'land off Ipsley church lane' be referred to as 'top Ipsley meadow, part of the Ipsley water meadows, part of Arrow Valley Park South, an integral part of Arrow Valley Country Park, which is Public Open Space with unrestricted access for RECREATION **and** how will the Executive committee be taking into account public comments at the Overview and Scrutiny committee 48 hrs ago and the 800 plus public objection comments on the publics only consultation, which was on a full planning application for this one particular site?”

The Leader provided the following answer to this question:

“The terminology “land off Ipsley Church Lane” was used within the recent change of use planning application and, as such, is recognised by Members and the wider public. It would be counterproductive to change this title at this late stage and might lead to confusion, as the public might think the new title relates to a different site.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to gather evidence and to make recommendations, based on that evidence, to the Executive Committee. This occurred at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Whilst the minutes of that meeting are not available for our consideration this evening, the meeting was live streamed and I, and other colleagues present this evening, watched the live stream of the meeting and heard the comments from the public. In addition, the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been published in a supplementary pack for our consideration. Councillor Jenny Wheeler, who chaired the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, is here this evening to present the Committee’s recommendations for our consideration and I am sure that in doing so she will highlight some of the key points that were raised at the meeting.



The Executive Committee will not be considering matters relating to the consultation on the planning application that was considered in October 2021, as this related to an entirely separate process.”

#### **51. NEW CEMETERY PROVISION**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services introduced the New Cemetery Provision report for the Executive Committee’s consideration.

Members were advised that the issue of a reduction in capacity, in terms of new burial provision in the Borough, had been identified and discussed by Members since 2010. Since then, the availability of burial space in the Borough at existing cemeteries had decreased further.

There were two options available to the Council moving forward:

- a) To provide no more new burial sites for the use of residents in the Borough. There was the possibility, though no guarantee, that a private sector provider would provide a burial service in this scenario. The Council would have no influence over the land that a private provider would purchase for a cemetery in this situation nor could the Council control how the service was delivered.
- b) The Council could take action to ensure that new burial provision could be made available to Redditch residents in the future. Should Members prefer this option, consideration needed to be given to the appropriate location for the site of new graves. This could include reusing burial plots at the Plymouth Road Cemetery, although this would potentially be morally questionable, given the Council had access to land that could be used for burial purposes. There was also land at other sites, including at Bordesley Abbey and land off Ipsley Church Lane which could potentially be used for this purpose.

There was approximately 18 months of burial site provision remaining in existing cemeteries managed by the Council. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services expressed concerns that if no decision was taken, space for new burial provision would run out, leaving many families without a place in the Borough to bury their loved ones. This would impact on families who did not have access to pre-purchased plots in existing cemeteries, potentially resulting in a two-tier system in the Borough whereby some families would be able to bury loved ones in existing family burial sites whilst others would need to travel outside the Borough. The Executive Committee was asked to note that this could have a particularly significant impact on families from more deprived

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backgrounds, who might struggle to travel to alternative sites outside the Borough.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services commented that the Council's preferred option would be to continue to deliver new burial provision in the Borough. The preferred site of the Council was land off Ipsley Church Lane. He concluded by stating that, given the circumstances, it would be a derogation of duty for the Executive Committee not to make decisions on this subject during the meeting.

Following the introduction from the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, the Bereavement Services Manager delivered a presentation and in doing so highlighted a number of areas for Members' consideration:

- The Council already operated three cemeteries and four closed church yards.
- Plymouth Road Cemetery was already closed to new burials, whereby a grave was used for the first time by a family. Burials continued to take place in that cemetery for pre-purchased graves, though capacity was limited.
- There remained capacity for new burials at the Abbey Cemetery site for six more months.
- There was capacity for new burials to take place for five more years at the cemetery at Edgioake Lane, subject to the current rate of demand remaining the same. However, once the Abbey Cemetery could no longer accommodate new graves, demand would increase and then there would only be capacity at the Edgioake Lane cemetery for new graves for 12 months.
- A site at Brooklands Lane had been identified in 2010 as a possible location for a new cemetery. However, this option had been rejected because it was found to be unsuitable as it was located on a minor aquifer and therefore failed the initial ground water testing required by the Environment Agency.
- A total of 25 further potential sites had subsequently been investigated since 2014 by the Council as potential locations for a cemetery. Of these sites, 16 had been assessed but found to be unsuitable, five sites were deemed suitable for further investigation, but then discounted, 4 sites were assessed, deemed suitable for further investigation, but not recommended for use and 1 site had been assessed, deemed suitable for further investigation, and then recommended for approval.
- The majority of cemeteries in the country were based on two traditional designs that had been formulated in the Victorian era. The first traditional model had a requirement for tree planting and the second traditional model adopted a garden style design.

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- There were other options available to Councils when developing new cemeteries and Westall Park Natural Burial Ground, in Holberrow Green, Worcestershire was cited as an example of this alternative design model.
- Redditch Borough Council had a history of providing innovative Bereavement Services. The crematorium had adopted measures that benefited the environment, with the use of waste heat at the crematorium to reduce energy usage at the Abbey Stadium, which was a green apple award winning scheme. This was still used as an example of best practice nationally and had recently been mentioned in the all-party parliamentary group on funerals and bereavements annual report published in 2021.
- The Council would aim to be equally innovative in terms of the new proposed cemetery that would be introduced in the Borough. The focus would be on introducing a cemetery which was designed to enhance the local ecology and biodiversity.
- There was no statutory requirement for the Council to deliver burial provision in the Borough.
- There were cemeteries in Bromsgrove District and at Westall Park with the capacity to accommodate new graves. However, the challenge of not providing burial space in a cemetery in the Borough was that this would conflict with requirements in the Local Plan. There was limited public transport available to enable Redditch residents to access both Bromsgrove and Westall Park Natural Burial Ground and families would therefore need to use private methods of transport to access those cemeteries.
- Customer demand had been reviewed and in total, 60% of the Council's customers required new graves. It was these customers who would be disadvantaged if the Council decided to take no further action in respect of this matter.
- There were three potential options available to the Council in terms of the provision of new burial space:
  - Reuse of grave sites at Plymouth Road Cemetery. This could only occur subject to legislative change through a private law bill in Parliament. The Council would need to be provided with the powers to extinguish existing rights of burial, to disturb human remains and to move memorials. Should this approach be adopted the Council would be able to secure new graves for approximately 10 years. Experts had advised the Council that it could take up to five years to progress this option further. Members were asked to note that anybody could submit an objection to the reuse of particular sites and this could result in the award of financial compensation by the Council to interested parties. Furthermore, many of the graves were situated in consecrated ground and therefore the Council would also

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require approval through a separate legal process involving the Bishop's Faculty.

- Land off Ipsley Church Lane could be used as the site for a new cemetery. The Council had secured outline planning permission to use the site as a cemetery, subject to addressing a number of conditions that had been set by the Planning Committee. This site would involve the shortest implementation time of all the potential sites, of two years, before burial space could be made available. The development of the site as a cemetery would also involve the lowest levels of financial expenditure for the Council, particularly as planning costs and tests on areas such as ground water had already been completed. Should this option be approved, it would result in new grave plots being provided for a further 80 years.
- The Bordesley Abbey site was located close to the existing Abbey Cemetery and could be used as a cemetery. However, this location, comprising three small sections of land, would not in combination meet requirements in the Local Plan. The site was also located in a listed heritage site and scheduled monument consent would therefore be required to utilise the land for a cemetery. Discussions had been held with Worcestershire County Council's Archaeology department, which had advised that the financial costs involved in securing both planning permission and scheduled monument consent would be so significant as to render the site unviable. Members were also asked to note that, should the Council approve this option as the site for a cemetery, there would be a three-year period before burials could commence.
- In comments raised during public consultation and at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, concerns had been raised about the potential loss of open space used for recreational purposes, should the site off Ipsley Church Lane be approved. However, this land would remain accessible to the public if it was used as a cemetery, with plans in place to retain the existing lines of desire. Furthermore, use of the cemetery would occur in phases and it was likely that parts of the site would not be used for up to 30 years. In addition, public access to the site would remain available.
- Concerns had also been raised about the potential appearance of the cemetery. The Committee was advised that the Council would be aiming to have a ground-breaking cemetery which would appear very different to the traditional Victorian models.
- Questions had been raised during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding the public consultation that would take place in respect of the cemetery design. Members were informed that the Council would aim to consult with the

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public on the design and layout of the proposed cemetery before an application was considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee. The architects who would be procured to design the site would also be required to undertake public consultation, including on site.

Following the presentation of the report, Councillor Jenny Wheeler, Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who chaired the meeting of the Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, was invited to present the Committee's conclusions in respect of the New Cemetery Provision report. Councillor Wheeler explained that the Committee had received a presentation on the subject of the report and had welcomed contributions from Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services on this subject.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the three recommendations in the report. However, the Executive Committee was asked to note that whilst the first and third recommendations had received unanimous support, the second recommendation had been approved by a majority of Members present without unanimous support.

The Executive Committee was informed that during consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, members of the public had been invited to speak and a written statement had also been read out on behalf of a resident. Concerns had been raised by the public regarding the public consultation process that had been undertaken in respect of the report. Questions had also been raised about the process that had been followed with respect to revisiting the 26 sites that had been identified, which previously had been announced by the Council. The public had also raised concerns about the potential loss of public open space, should the land off Ipsely Church Lane be used as the site of a cemetery and questions had been raised about how this site had come to be identified as the Council's preferred option. The Executive Committee was asked to consider this feedback both in relation to the New Cemetery Provision report and in order to learn lessons about any future reports that focused on areas of significant interest to the public.

The Executive Committee discussed the outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's deliberations in respect of the New Cemetery Provision report and in doing so commented on the following points:

- The organisation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and the detailed scrutiny of the report that had been undertaken. Members praised the Overview and Scrutiny

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- Committee for this work and complimented Councillor Wheeler on her chairing of the meeting.
- The action that had been taken to re-examine each of the 26 sites that had been assessed. The Leader confirmed that he had revisited each site, in consultation with Officers, and had concluded that the most appropriate site had been identified as the Council's preferred option.
  - The consultation that had been held with the public in respect of the Council's preferred site. The Leader commented that both he and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change had met with residents at the preferred site to discuss the proposals.
  - The feedback that had been received from the public in respect of the consultation on the planning application that was considered in October 2021 and the focus of this consultation feedback.
  - The location of the residents who had responded in this consultation process. Members noted that the majority of respondents had lived in Matchborough and Ipsley.
  - The length of time in which the consultation process in respect of the planning application had applied, which had been longer than usual.
  - The restrictions in respect of public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to keep Council staff, Officers and members of the public safe.
  - The suggestion that had been received from the public regarding compulsory purchase by the Council of alternative sites and the difficulties with the compulsory purchase process.
  - The public access that would remain available to the site should a cemetery be introduced at land off Ipsley Church Lane. Members commented that this would effectively remain public open space because there would continue to be public access to the site and much of the site would remain undeveloped for many years.
  - The extent to which the public were concerned about the introduction of a cemetery based on the Victorian model of cemeteries.

Members subsequently discussed the New Cemetery Provision report in detail and in doing so commented that there had been a significant amount of time spent by the Council in terms of reviewing options for new cemetery provision in the Borough. The reducing capacity at existing cemeteries in the Borough meant that burial provision would run out in respect of new graves in the next 18 months. Unfortunately, for all of the sites that had been identified, this meant that there could be a period of time in which it would not be possible to provide new graves in the Borough. Delaying a decision on this subject would extend the time in which

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burial provision would not be available for new grave sites in the Borough even further.

The Council had a duty to deliver services to all residents and whilst burial services were not a statutory function, Members concurred that it was morally appropriate for the authority to continue to operate cemeteries and provide burial space in the Borough. There were many residents who would prefer to be buried, rather than cremated. The decision about options after a person had died was often deeply personal and could be influenced by a range of factors including personal circumstances, faith and family preferences.

Decisions in December 2021 about burial provision would influence arrangements in place for younger and future generations for the following 80 years. Members expressed concerns that younger generations would feel let down if no decisions were taken at this stage in respect of future burial provision.

Reference was made to the funding that had been proposed in the report and clarification was requested with respect to the source of this funding. Officers confirmed that the £320,000 funding that had been requested would be capital expenditure.

The Executive Committee also discussed the extent to which land off Ipsley Church Lane was covered by a covenant in respect of land use. Officers confirmed that there was no covenant in place in relation to the land concerned.

Members noted that concerns had been raised by residents in the public consultation process for the planning application regarding the potential for the land off Ipsley Church Lane to become waterlogged and for there to be problems with the water course. Officers explained that cemeteries were heavily regulated in relation to water tables. Any new cemetery was required by the Environment Agency to provide an annual report on ground water conditions. These requirements were tighter than those in place in relation to historic cemetery sites. Members were also asked to note that technically ground water was different to surface water.

Consideration was given to the alternative sites that had been identified, particularly the potential for a cemetery to be developed at the Bordesley Abbey site. Members commented that this had previously been identified as a potential site for a wildlife park. However, when Historic England had been consulted over this idea, the feedback regarding potential development at the site had been quite critical and it was therefore possible that there would be similar opposition to development of the site for a cemetery for similar reasons.

# Executive Committee

Wednesday, 15th December, 2021

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The need for the new cemetery to be biodiverse was also discussed. Members commented that, subject to appropriate designs, there would be opportunities for the new cemetery to attract new wildlife to the area and this would benefit local habitats. This could also be used as the basis for educating children and young people and Officers confirmed that the Council would work with local schools in respect of educational opportunities.

Members concluded by thanking the Head of Environmental Services and the Bereavement Services Manager for their hard work in respect of the New Cemetery Provision report. Democratic Services were also thanked for their hard work in respect of preparing the Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Committee meetings to consider the report, particularly in light of the changing Government rules in respect of holding the meetings safely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) Redditch Borough Council continue to provide new burial provision; and**
- 2) Ipsley Church Lane be progressed as the preferred option to provide new burial provision.**

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 3) a sum of £320,000 be budgeted to progress new burial provision.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.54 pm



**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

January 2022

**WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

(Report of the Chief Executive)

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

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

January 2022

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
January 2022	Recommendation Tracker	Democratic Services
January 2022	Redditch Partnership Update	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
February 2022	Pre-Decision-Scrutiny - Asset Management Strategy and investment programme for council housing stock	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
February 2022	Pre-Decision-Scrutiny - Future Plans for Auxerre House	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
February 2022	Matchborough and Winyates Regeneration Proposals – pre-scrutiny	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development
March 2022	Update on Parking Enforcement	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Service Manager
March 2022	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22	Democratic Services Officer
June 2022	Redditch Town Centre Regeneration Business Cases	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development

**Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)****Overview and Scrutiny Committee****17/12/2021**

Officers presented a report outlining the progress on both supporting young people and green growth. As an example, a sum of £2.7M has generated 18 proposals of which 9 have been short listed. The Skills and Apprenticeship Hub secured £2.85M for the project. The board appointed a Net Zero champion who has already raised the profile with several activities. A £2.7M Growing Places Capital fund was launched at the GBSLEP annual conference to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to develop. Work is ongoing with The Princes Trust, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), colleges and various events and festivals to support young people.

The committee has asked for more detail on the figures presented on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Particularly on the 15,000 jobs created, 4,763 houses built and 4,761 learners assisted on to courses leading to NVQ 3. It was detailed that the number of learners was down because one major project did not take place, however, the committee asked for further information about the location of the housing, jobs and the learners. There was some suggested that there has been an imbalance in the allocation of support.

There was some disappointment in that the area had dropped from 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in the league table for 'life satisfaction' based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Measuring National Well-Being (MNW) statistics. It is not surprising that one cause was covid but there were other factors considered. The scores for Redditch on life satisfaction are available.

NVQ" level 3 is the highest attainment that the LEP works towards and Redditch has the lowest number of level 3 qualifications but the highest number with lower qualifications. The committee felt that more needs doing with the high schools and although the LEP was trying, they had still recommended this to the board.

In a confidential session the LEP review and the Levelling up white paper were discussed.

In general, it was felt to be a positive meeting with the comment that wherever possible going forward, there is a need to keep involving local companies.

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This was a question-and-answer meeting with the Mayor directly connected with the budget.

The Mayor, Andy Street, addressed the meeting explaining that the WMCA was in a good position as for the fourth year running, they had balanced the budget and achieved all that was expected. This was due to the efficiency with which the budget was prepared and checked. There was money levered into the area for specific purposes that were not always shown such as the £0.5B for growth. There were some concerns about progress in relation to the “levelling up white paper” and the new devolution deal.

There were several questions on housing and homelessness. There had been a £1.1B grant to use, in partnership with housing associations, to build houses.

A major part of the budget was for transport but there were allocations for jobs and skills and, when asked, there was an emphatic answer that there was no need at present for a Mayoral precept.

When the area of transport was questioned the Mayor explained the large amounts of infrastructure that were being built including for the Commonwealth Games and University Station. The Mayor indicated that £778M new money had been accessed. When questioned about subsidised bus fares, the Mayor explained that the reduced use of the buses was having an impact on the providers and that it was likely that more routes would cease and so more subsidies would be needed but that the budget might not allow this.

On the environment the Mayor drew Members’ attention to the fact that air quality was the responsibility of the local authorities but it may be that the WMCA would be given powers to act, though might not receive funding for this.

Some 400 contracts had been generated with 60 organisations, predominantly based in the West Midlands, to deliver NVQ level 3 adult education.

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