



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 3 Feb  
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 take a lateral flow test on the day of the meeting, 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 should self-isolate in accordance with national rules.

Members and officers must wear face masks during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, unless exempt. Face masks 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**

The usual process for public speaking at Committee meetings will continue to be followed subject to some adjustments which allow written statements to be read out on behalf of residents and the virtual participation of residents at meetings of Council and Planning Committee. Members of the public are encouraged to log in virtually, either to speak or observe meetings wherever possible.

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 strongly encouraged

to wear face masks unless 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, 3rd February, 2022

6.30 pm

Committee Room 2 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. Minutes (Pages 1 - 38)

There are three sets of minutes submitted from meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

### 4. Public Speaking

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

### 5. Sustainable Warmth Funding - pre-scrutiny

Report to follow.

### 6. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 39 - 54)

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The next edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme is due to be published on 1<sup>st</sup> February 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.

- 7.** Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 55 - 56)
- 8.** Task Group Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents (Pages 57 - 58)
- 9.** Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups - Update Reports
  - a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Wheeler
  - b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Wheeler
- 10.** External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports (Pages 59 - 62)
  - a) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Chalk; and
  - b) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council representative, Councillor Chalk.

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 2nd December,  
2021

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Debbie Chance (Chair), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Alex Fogg, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison and Matthew Dormer

### Also Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer – Portfolio Holder for for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

## 39. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

No apologies for absence were received for this meeting.

## 40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillors, Akbar, Ashley, Clayton and Harrison declared an 'Other Disclosable Interest' in respect of minute item 43 due to their involvement as formal volunteers for a Community Speedwatch Group in the Borough. It was agreed that these Members would remain present for consideration of this item.

There were no other declarations of interest nor of any Party Whip.

Chair

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## 41. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 were presented for Members' consideration.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## 42. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered on this occasion.

## 43. WEST MERCIA ROAD SAFETY TEAM PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed members of the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team, who were in attendance on Microsoft Teams. During the presentation the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- The West Mercia Police Road Safety Team were based at Droitwich Police Station and covered the whole of the West Mercia region which included 4 upper tier Local Authorities. It was clarified that the team was funded solely by the funding from Speed Awareness courses and not from an existing Police budget. Members were informed that any revenue received from the enforcement of fines was returned to the Treasury.
- All of the campaigns undertaken by the team were data driven and a specialist collision data analyst worked as part of the team to analyse the wealth of data available.
- There had been 129 people killed on the roads in West Mercia during the previous three years and 1313 people had been seriously injured. In the past five years the number of those killed on the roads specifically in Redditch was 6 people and 111 people had been seriously injured.
- The role of the team did not solely focus on enforcement but also on education and engineering including traffic

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management. It was explained to Members that the following groups were targeted in education campaigns:

- Motorcyclists
  - Pedestrians
  - Cyclists
  - Drink / drug drivers
  - Young drivers and passengers
  - Older drivers
  - Drivers of HGV and LGV vehicles
  - Business drivers
  - Rural road users
- Currently several initiatives were underway including the National Drink Driving campaign, 'Dying to Drive' and a 'Be Safe, Be Seen' initiative which, it was explained, was a data led campaign launched during the darker months to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to wear bright clothes. The campaign also provided free lights and reflective items to pedestrians and cyclists who were identified by the Police whilst out patrolling across West Mercia.
  - The West Mercia Police Road Safety Team provided engineering advice through the Traffic Management Advisors to Local Authorities and occasionally were also involved in planning applications.

The Chair thanked the West Mercia Road Safety Team for their detailed presentation and the Committee were invited to ask any questions regarding the information that had been provided. Members were pleased to see that the numbers of road collisions had decreased over the past year and were interested in whether these might be attributed to traffic calming measures that had been introduced across the Borough. The West Mercia Road Safety Team indicated that the officer that would have further insight in this particular area had unfortunately not been able to attend the meeting. However, they undertook to request the information and distribute to the Committee at a later date.

The 'Dying to Drive' initiative and associated event was raised by Members. It was queried whether there would be a possibility of holding a similar event in Redditch to the one held in Wyre Forest.

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In addition to this, Members questioned whether schools within the Borough were invited to such events when they took place outside of Redditch. The West Mercia Road Safety Team informed Members that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue were the lead partner for the 'Dying to Drive' initiative and associated events and that schools from Redditch were routinely invited, however the schools were not always able to attend.

Some Members expressed concern about the rising numbers of e-scooter incidents in the Borough and whether there were any plans to look into increasing the guidance and enforcement powers. It was reported that this was a very difficult area to manage and that many of the e-scooters currently available were not part of approved schemes. It was also noted that there had been an increase in social media campaigns regarding e-scooters in order to highlight any dangers associated with them. Members requested whether there was currently any data regarding the number of incidents involving e-scooters and officers undertook to provide this information to Members.

There was interest from Members regarding the enforcement data available in the public domain in respect of road traffic collisions. It was felt that if this kind of data was more readily available to the public it might instil more confidence that action was regularly taken against those who committed speeding offences and were involved in road traffic collisions. The West Mercia Road Safety Team explained that it would be difficult to share this information in the public domain prior to court action in case it compromised any proceedings.

**RESOLVED that**

**The West Mercia Road Safety Team Presentation be noted.**

**44. REDDITCH TOWN DEAL INVESTMENT PLAN - 6 MONTHLY UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented the 6-monthly update in respect of the Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan and in doing so the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

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- The Towns Fund was a government funding scheme intended for towns across the country to improve their economy. In 2019, Redditch was identified as one of the towns eligible to bid for up to £25m from the Towns Fund.
- The Town Investment Plan (TIP) was submitted by the Town's Deal Board in January 2021 and the funding and Heads of Terms were announced in June 2021. As Members were already aware, not all of the funding for the projects had been awarded. Therefore, as a result of the shortfall, a reprioritisation exercise had been undertaken in August 2021, using the reprioritisation tools provided by central government. Prior to the reprioritisation sessions, several parameters were put in place by the Town's Deal Board that were to be considered as part of the reprioritisation process. Once the reprioritisation had taken place, the confirmed projects were submitted to Government at the end of August 2021. The Grant Offer letter was received in November 2021 which confirmed that a grant amount of £15.6m had been awarded and the requirements of Redditch Borough Council as the accountable body were outlined.

During the Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan update, Members were further informed that the following projects had been approved and allocated Towns Deal funding. It was explained that specific conditions for the approved projects were detailed as part of the Heads of Terms and would be fully developed and addressed at the business case development stage. Further clarification on each project was presented for Members' information. This included the following:

#### Redevelopment of Redditch Library Project

- Worcestershire County Council (WCC) were fully engaged in the Redditch Library project and Members were assured that the needs of the service and infrastructure would be considered prior to any relocation, ensuring accessibility for all customers. It was confirmed that WCC understood that one of the requirements for relocation of the library was that it must be a Town Centre location. Members were also assured that a full consultation would be undertaken once relocation options were known.

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Further detail regarding the Library project was reported to Members in respect of the inclusion of the broader range of project outcomes which were as follows:

- Perceptions of place by residents and businesses – this would involve the design of new and improved public spaces that connected the ‘old town’ with the main shopping centre and would include the establishment of a new and attractive public space for residents and businesses to use.
  - Increased land values through increased demand around the new public space.
  - Increased visitors to the town by providing a new space for events and activities.
  - Improved permeability for residents and visitors through the provision of easier access to key nodes in the town and by opening up access between the ‘old town’ and the main shopping centre.
  - Improved perception of safety which would be implemented through improved street scene and by designing out poor visibility.
  - Improved community cohesion through the provision of a new events space at the heart of the town.
- A Redditch Library project group had been established which was to be led by North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR). The group also included representatives from the Property, Legal and Finance teams at Redditch Borough Council. Members were also informed that Mott MacDonald had been procured to develop the business case associated with this project.

## Town Centre Public Realm Project

- A project group would be established for the Town Centre Public Realm project and that WCC were the lead partner in this project. In addition to WCC it was reported that NWEDR, Mott MacDonald and representatives from Redditch Borough Council’s Planning, Environmental Services and Conservation teams were also part of the project group. Mott

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MacDonald were also involved as part of the development of the business case.

## Innovation Centre

- A project group was to be established and would be led by NWEDR and also include Mott MacDonald and Property, Legal, Finance and Planning teams from Redditch Borough Council. In addition to this, procurement was currently underway regarding consultants who would potentially be involved in the design and build of the Innovation Centre alongside Mott MacDonald.

The Committee was informed that the next steps for the projects would be to work on the detailed business cases which were due to be submitted in June 2022.

During the detailed update it was accepted that communications in respect of some aspects of the Towns Deal funding had not been as successful as hoped thus far. However, Members were informed that this was to be addressed in January 2022 and that an enhanced Communications strategy was to be implemented going forward which would include social media updates, newsletters and the establishment of an interested party database.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his comprehensive update and invited the Committee to ask any questions.

During detailed discussion Members were interested in the following areas:

- The reprioritisation of the projects and how this had been carried out particularly in light of the decision to no longer pursue the Transport Interchange and Railway Quarter project. Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which contained the information regarding the reprioritisation process and explained that it was the Town's Deal Board and not the Council's decision regarding the parameters applied to this process. As discussed earlier in the meeting, the reprioritisation tool provided by central government had been used and through this process each

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project was scored and selected accordingly. Councillor M. Dormer, who was in attendance in his role as Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships confirmed that although the Interchange and Railway Quarter project was not being undertaken as part of the Town's Deal Fund, work was still underway in this area and meetings were taking place with relevant partners, including West Midlands Combined Authority, to articulate the project in the hope that it could still go ahead in the future.

- The impact to Redditch Borough Council if any increase of costs for the three projects was experienced – It was stated to the Committee that the projects had been carefully costed with contingencies and that it was hoped that any increase in costs would be avoided. However, it was noted that unavoidable delays or an increase of costing to supplies might be experienced that were out of the control of the Council and would be mitigated if they became apparent.
- Effective spending of the allocated funding – It was highlighted to Members that the projects would be subject to robust business cases and would need to be signed off by the Section 151 officer at Redditch Borough Council and Town's Deal Board Chair prior to their submission in June 2022. In addition to this, the business cases would address any project specific conditions that had been set out in the Head of Terms received previously.

Some Members were concerned with the transparency of the process and decisions made by the Board to date. As previously stated, the Chief Executive reiterated that the communications plan was to be improved for the future and that all projects were subject to strict conditions and that a consultation period would be completed. It was commented on that the establishment of an ambassador for each project would increase the visibility of the projects going forward. In addition to this, the Chair of the Board acting as the 'Communications Ambassador' would increase engagement on any future project consultation.

The Chair once again thanked officers for their detailed update and looked forward to being updated again in 6-months' time.

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**RESOLVED that**

**Redditch Town Deal Investment Plan - 6 monthly update be noted.**

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

The Minutes from the Executive Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and the Executive Committee's Work Programme were presented for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED that**

**Executive Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and the Executive Committee's Work Programme were noted.**

**46. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED that**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.**

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

**a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jennifer Wheeler**

The Chair reported that the last meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, due to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021, had been cancelled due to lack of available reports. Councillor Wheeler expressed her disappointment that there had only been one Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting this municipal year and felt that this posed a risk to the Council and its finances for the future. Although she understood that there had been pressures placed on officers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, staffing issues and the implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning

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system it was vitally important that this group met regularly and received the relevant reports in order to effectively scrutinise the Councils' budget.

Councillor Wheeler informed the Committee that she hoped that the working group meetings would take place in 2022 in order that this important scrutiny function be carried out regularly.

Members were informed that the next meeting of the group would take place on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

During consideration of this item a request for nominations was made for a new Member of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group. Councillor Chalk was nominated, however it was confirmed that, as he was already a member of the group, he did not need to be nominated. It was decided that nominations would be requested again at the first meeting of the Committee due to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

**b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jennifer Wheeler**

The Chair updated the Committee and reported that a meeting of the group had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 and had included a discussion of the development of the New Measures Dashboard. In addition to this, a presentation of the new system was provided to Members. It was hoped that the new Dashboard would be easier for Members to navigate and provide a useful tool in Performance Scrutiny in the future.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.**

**48. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS**

The External Scrutiny Bodies Update reports were presented by Councillor Chalk to the Committee for their consideration. He

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explained that there were no additional updates, however it was expected that there would be updates from all of the External Scrutiny Bodies, at the Committee's next meeting due to be held on 6th January 2022.

**RESOLVED that**

**The External Scrutiny Bodies Update reports be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.02 pm

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Monday, 13th December,  
2021

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillors Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Alex Fogg, Julian Grubb, Andrew Fry, Emma Marshall and David Thain

### Also Present:

Councillor Aled Evans – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

### Officers:

Michael Birkinshaw, Claire Felton (via Microsoft Teams), Sue Hanley and Carl Walker

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill and Jo Gresham

## 49. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chance, Clayton and Harrison with Councillors Fry, Marshall and Thain in attendance as their respective named substitutes.

## 50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Prior to any discussion, Councillor Chalk sought clarification regarding the appropriateness of declaring an interest as the Chair of the Planning Committee. This was also queried by Councillors Ashley and Grubb who were Members of the Planning Committee. The Chair explained that the Planning process was completely separate to the scrutiny process due to take place at the meeting and therefore no declarations of interest needed to be made. It was

Chair

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agreed that all Members present would be able to take part in the discussions.

There were no declarations of any Party Whip.

## 51. PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chair explained to the Committee that four members of the public had registered as Public Speakers and that each had a total of three minutes to address the Committee, under the Council's Public Speaking Rules, unless they had chosen to 'share' their time with the other registered speakers.

At the invitation of the Chair, Ms J. Kane addressed the Committee, as follows:

*"Hello and first of all I would like to thank the Chair for allowing me to speak at this evening's meeting. My name is Joanna Kane and I am also speaking on behalf of Joni Lovell, who had intended to attend tonight and speak in person but unfortunately is unable to do so.*

*Personally, I have lived in Redditch for more than 25 years and walked in Arrow Valley Country Park on countless occasions. I still remember the first time years ago when I discovered the hub of Arrow Valley Country Park South off Church Lane, commonly known as Ipsley Meadow. The land was given over to the people of Redditch, as public open space for recreational purposes for the then new town, by Redditch Development Corporation. I was stunned that we had such a beautiful open area on our doorstep, and I don't think it's possible for anyone to fully appreciate it until they've seen it for themselves. It's the closest part of Arrow Valley Country Park to local communities and it's a well-known viewing point in Redditch. It's important to emphasise that this is not vacant, unused land; in fact it's very well used for recreational activities including dog walking, kite flying, running, cycling and paragliding.*

*Over the last 18 months, the importance of recreational public open space for both our physical and our mental wellbeing has been heightened because of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting*

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*lockdown. This is a vital piece of land for local people to enjoy, free of charge.*

*We know that the council has to make a decision about where to locate a new cemetery.*

*Eight months ago, Councillor Matt Dormer, the leader of the council, promised the people of Redditch that all 26 potential sites would be re-examined. He said: "I will ensure the examination process that I am undertaking personally is fully transparent so the public can understand the problems the council is facing on this issue, and I will ensure the council works with the public on any final option to ensure we mitigate concerns and provide the best possible burial site."*

*What work – which Councillor Dormer said would be significant – was subsequently done to deliver on his promise to re-examine each site?*

*Why have only three sites been put forward as options in today's report? And why was the application for change of use of this part of Arrow Valley Country Park South submitted to the planning committee before the options went to the Executive?*

*The 23 sites that were rejected include Edgioake Lane, where there is already a cemetery which could be extended by purchasing an adjoining field, and Sillins Lane, which wasn't followed up because the owner didn't want to sell the land. However, the council has the power to apply for a compulsory purchase order if there is a compelling case in the public interest.*

*Also, an area of land at Brockhill Drive is shown in Appendix 1 as fitting the criteria for a new cemetery, but has been discounted with no explanation. Why have these three sites not been brought to the table?*

*And what consultation, if any, has been held with those places of worship where the first part of the funeral service would be held, before the whole cortege travels to the new cemetery?*

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*We do know that more than 800 people felt so strongly about the planning application that they took the time to write individual objections online, but they were all ignored. Why was this the only opportunity people have had to comment on the future of a much-loved public recreational open space, and why were residents not consulted before the planning application was made?*

*What work was being done to involve local people in a full, open public consultation before we went into lockdown, particularly in the year leading up to the planning application first being made in August 2020?*

*Indeed, some may say that lockdown was the ideal time to submit such a controversial application to planning, with the likelihood that few people would find out about letters to neighbouring properties or read one paper notice on a bus stop.*

*We feel this council is making decisions behind closed doors, only paying lip service to consulting residents after these decisions have been made. Those who don't support the official narrative are ignored.*

*This isn't public consultation and leaves residents angry, disappointed and disenfranchised. Is it any wonder that more and more people have so little trust in politicians?*

*The development of a cemetery on part of Arrow Valley Country Park seems like a land grab and sets a dangerous precedent for the future of the whole park.*

*We are asking the scrutiny committee to consider whether the officer's report before you tonight really has re-examined all 26 sites, as was promised by Councillor Dormer, and has properly investigated all the viable options. Why were no business plans drawn up for Sillins Lane, Brockhill Drive and Edgioake Lane, and why were possible sites that could be surplus to requirements, such as golf courses, not investigated?*

*We are conscious that the council Executive meeting is taking place this Wednesday and are asking the Executive to do the following:*

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- *Firstly, allow a further period of time for officers to go back to the drawing board to investigate alternative sites, rather than rushing this monumental decision through in 48 hours' time. With the given burial rates, only an extra half an acre of ground at the Abbey cemetery, which can be found under the expanse of redundant tarmac and border extension, would gain the council three years to have a new cemetery ready. This would take the urgency out of the decision.*
- *Secondly, instruct officers to revisit alternative options and in particular develop business plans for expanding the existing cemetery at Edgioake Lane, and using land at Sillins Lane and Brockhill Drive.*
- *Thirdly and finally, review all the public comments on the planning application, which has to date been the only opportunity for residents to have their say on the future of the hub of Arrow Valley Country Park South."*

A written statement was read out to the Committee on behalf of Mr P. Bladon, as follows:

*"I'm considering all land, north and north-west of the current Abbey Cemetery.*

*Is there any hard evidence that Redditch Borough Council has ever considered the purchase, (or if necessary, the compulsory purchase), of land north and/or north-west of the current Abbey Cemetery?*

*This includes both sides of Weights Lane, and in Dagnell End Road.*

*I am of course aware of the relatively recent housing development for example, Odell Street.*

*And the areas suggested, includes land in Bromsgrove District. It has been suggested, when the need for more burial space was discussed over ten years ago, that these possible sites, or ideas, were 'brushed aside' and ignored; and Bromsgrove District Council wasn't even asked.*

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*Thank you."*

Councillor Brunner, who was in attendance (via Microsoft Teams), addressed the Committee and then presented the following statement:

*"Good evening and thank you Chair. I do apologise that I am not actually there in person.*

*I am respectfully asking that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the following recommendation to send to the Executive Committee sitting on Wednesday. That the recommendation to make a decision on burial provision be deferred until this Council has had a full qualitative and quantitative cost benefit analysis report produced. The reasons I ask you to consider the recommendation are as follows:*

*The report does not include a qualitative and quantitative cost benefit analysis. The report is riddled with inconsistencies. The budget estimates of time and development costs are not substantiated, and this has skewed the consideration of the Abbey Extension by cost alone. There is no evidence in this report of Redditch's Birth and Death statistics being factored into the report. The transport information is factually incorrect. There is a bus service from Redditch Bus Station which stops on the Birmingham Road outside of the Abbey Stadium. Several buses which go to Birmingham use this route. The bus service to Icknield Street Drive is operated every two hours and does not run during school start and pick up times. The 800 plus objectors have made their feelings pretty clear and I am sure that other speakers have or will eloquently speak and put forward more salient arguments. Please do seriously consider this recommendation.*

*Thank you Chair."*

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. I. Pickles addressed the Committee, as follows:

*"We are here tonight to do two things:*

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*To endorse the Lord Chalk's blue-breasted cavalry of a Planning Committee and their 8 to 1 debagging of the lone, red-breasted knight valiant in November.*

*And on this momentous tonight of 13 December 2021 we are here to rubber stamp The Birkinshaw 'Fag-End' of a report by a 7 to 2 majority – perhaps 7 to 3 if we all vote with our stated beliefs!*

*We are also here to witness our noble Oversight and Scrutiny Committee – that bastion of democracy that protects our public purse – crush a 'Jewel of the Redditch Crown' given to us by NTDC, donkey's years ago, before most of you were born. This was a 1970's bequest in perpetuity to our work/life balance here in Redditch.*

*In short a ironic summary:*

*"We come to bury a local treasure to ensure that our dear departed can live on!"*

*My colleagues have given eloquent scrutinization to what is in The Birkinshaw Biopic (HOLD IT UP AND/OR BIN IT) so I will concentrate on what is not in it!*

*Why was Ipsley Meadow wrenched from the learned list of 25 sites to be the answer to the cemetery problem when it had already been ruled unsuitable for burial provision by both Borough and County consultants?*

*Why was the derogatory reference to the work of a 'former planning consultant' used to dismiss his 30-year plus of experience and rubbish his Abbey Extension plan as a 'waterlogged white elephant.' At the same time, RBC's own cunning plan uses enlarged areas in different locations with dodgy water- level recordings and extravagant Boris-type numbers to dump the obvious solution!*

*Why has RBC gone back to 'in the box thinking' to ignore the science of burial technology which will make in-ground internment obsolete within 25 years and leave only traditional religious burials*

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*to take place. This will reduce Redditch in-ground average of 160 per year to a distant memory!*

*Why have we not consulted our local Islamic brothers and their Imams from our 3 mosques on this one? I guarantee they would, like many other towns in the land, be ready and willing to privatise their burial provision at a suitable but smaller location?*

*That great founder of the Blue Coats, Benjamin Disraeli, maintained that there are 'lies, damn lies and Statistics.'*

*The report in question may have some economy of the truth but no lies and damn lies and definitely no statistics!*

*Where is the attempt to model birth & death rates in Redditch going forward and factor in the advances in burial science (mentioned already) and how vaporisation and de compostation, floating memorial gardens, high rise burial pods and even the Elon Musk solution vision of burial in Space!*

*Where is the evidence that the Abbey Site extension plan is viable and not flawed and the probability that the Ipsley Meadow slope will leach out burial chemicals and require additional expense of DE leaching barriers to prevent burial slippage into the river Arrow?*

*Where is the acknowledgement that this rammed through proposal to bury the meadow has caused the biggest citizen protest- 850 letters plus press, TV features and Social Media posts - since the days of 'save the Alex?'*

*So we are back to where this protest started for me...TRAFFIC*

*Why are our Council Leaders deaf to the protests at the inevitable presence of the RBC bulldozers bashing in the new cemetery entrance into the narrow Ipsley Church Lane. This lane already services 500 residences and their vehicles, office toing and froing and DON'T FORGET that Sir Chalky's Planning Committee will be granting some developer permission to create 2 years of site - development chaos in Ipsley Church Lane as the old GKN site is raised to the ground to prepare for an estate of 'des ressiees!'*

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*Come on now O&S members, remember the words of John Maynard Keynes, the father of modern economics' who said:*

*"When the facts change - I change my mind"*

*He also said... ironically:*

*In the long term, we are all dead!*

*Finally, I would like to thank Madam Chair for the opportunity to speak to her committee tonight and say to her:*

*"if you pull this one off tonight, Sir Kier of Kensington will make you a Dame!"*

(After this item the meeting stood adjourned from 19:03 to 19:08.)

## **52. NEW CEMETERY PROVISION - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Bereavement Services Manager delivered a presentation in respect of the New Cemetery Provision. In doing so the following was highlighted for Members' consideration:

- Redditch Borough Council operated three cemeteries and four closed churchyards. The three cemeteries were Plymouth Road Cemetery, Edgioake Lane Cemetery and Abbey Cemetery.
- Plymouth Road Cemetery opened in 1855 and was closed to new burial space. The definition of a new burial space was clarified as a burial space that had not been pre-purchased or had been used before.
- Edgioake Lane Cemetery opened in 1885 and had only five years left of burial provision available should the current demand for usage remain the same. This cemetery had been operational for 136 years.
- Abbey Cemetery opened in 1937 and had approximately six months of new burial provision left. It was noted that once Abbey Cemetery no longer had provision for new burials then pressure would fall to Edgioake Lane Cemetery to accommodate new graves. However, if the number of current burials remained the same (approximately 120 new graves

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per year) then provision at Edgioake Cemetery would lessen considerably and provision would no longer be available after 12 months.

- Discussions regarding new burial provision within the Borough had been ongoing since 2010 when a site at Brooklands Lane had been identified as a potential location for a new cemetery. After investigation, this site was proved to be unsuitable as it was located on an aquifer and therefore failed the initial ground water testing required by the Environment Agency.
- Since 2014, a further 25 investigations had taken place at various locations across the Borough. The outcomes of the 25 investigations were detailed as follows:
  - 16 sites were assessed and subsequently discounted.
  - 5 sites were assessed, deemed suitable for further investigation, and were subsequently discounted.
  - 4 sites were assessed, deemed suitable for further investigation, however, were not recommended for use.
  - 1 site was assessed, deemed suitable for further investigation, and was then recommended for approval.
- Historically, the layout of cemeteries was based on two traditional Victorian designs. One of the designs was for cemeteries that were built on a hill and curved pathways and trees were utilised as features. The second traditional design was a much more formal layout that adopted a garden design.
- When considering the design of new cemeteries, Local Authorities had more options than the more formal, Victorian layout used in previous years. It was noted that these types of new designs would enhance the local surroundings in respect of biodiversity and general ecology. An example of this could be seen locally at Westall Park Natural Burial Ground, which was presented as more of a memorial park rather than a traditional cemetery. The Council would aim to provide this kind of innovation in any cemetery proposals.
- In addition to looking towards a new style of cemetery design, it was noted that Redditch Borough Council's Bereavement Services had previously taken an innovative approach when looking at provision of services in the Borough. Most notably, a Green Apple Award winning scheme had been successfully implemented utilising waste

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heat from the crematorium to reduce energy usage at the Abbey Stadium.

- The Council did not have a statutory duty to provide burial provision in the Borough. However, if this provision was not provided in the future, it would impact on the residents within Redditch. Those who were newly bereaved could potentially have to look further afield in order to bury their loved ones. In addition to this, not providing new burial sites could pose a potential conflict with Policy 45 within the Local Plan, in that there were not sufficient sustainable transport solutions to enable Redditch residents to access two of the closest cemeteries outside of the Borough, Bromsgrove Catshill Cemetery or Westlake Park Natural Burial Ground. The result of this would be that families would have to use private forms of transport in order to access these cemeteries. It was noted that, were it to be agreed that no future burial provision would be made available in Redditch, this might not prevent a private provider acquiring land and building a private cemetery as an alternative to Local Authority burial provision. If Members agreed there would be no new burial provision in the future this would not provide a significant amount of savings for the Council as the existing services, including staff and equipment resources, would still need to be maintained.
- Three further options were available to the Council and were detailed within the report. These were as follows:
  - Reuse of Plymouth Road Cemetery – this would require a change in the law through the passing of a private bill in Parliament in order to extinguish existing rights of burial, to gain the legal power to disturb human remains and to permit the moving and re-siting of memorials. Were this to be the preferred option for the Council in the future it could possibly result in 10 years of new burial provision. However, this process presented various challenges including conflict with the Local Plan and a protracted and potentially costly process in order to pass the private bill, which could take up to 5 years. In addition, Members were advised that an objection could be submitted by anybody at any time regarding the reuse of burial sites within Plymouth Road Cemetery. Were an

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objection to be received, then approval from the Secretary of State would be required in respect of the reuse of that specific grave. Depending on the outcome of that process this might result in the Council having to pay compensation to any interested parties. Finally, Members were informed that in order to reuse any consecrated sections on this site, legal permission would need to be sought from the Worcestershire Diocese by way of a Bishop's Faculty.

- Land off Ipsley Church Lane – This site had recently been granted permission for a change of use by the Planning Committee at Redditch Borough Council. The permission was subject to significant conditions to secure the biodiversity and enhance the ecology contained within the site, which, as detailed earlier in the meeting, was deemed to be an important factor when considering the building of a new cemetery at any potential site in the Borough. It was noted that this option would require the shortest implementation time of approximately two years and would not conflict with the Local Plan. The costs associated with this option would be the lowest of all of the options presented within the report and would provide multi-generational burial provision for up to 80 years. The land off Ipsley Church Lane would provide a large site that could be developed over a number of years in a phased manner and could result in over 50% of the site remaining unused, but ecologically enhanced, for the next 40 to 50 years.
- Bordesley Abbey Extension – This site consisted of three parcels of land and no additional testing had been undertaken at this location. Members were advised that the bulk of this site was located within the boundaries of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which, it was noted would create additional complexity were it to be developed, due the necessity of additional consent to utilise this land. Members were asked to note that this site provided limited burial provision for the future and conflicted with the Local Plan in terms of size for the smaller parcels of land and sustainable transport. In terms of the archaeology of this site, concerns had been raised. Discussions with Worcestershire County Council

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Archaeology department had been held and they had advised that even if the scheduled monument consent was approved and planning permission granted, the mitigating costs would be significant and would therefore deem the site unviable. Finally, it was reported that were this site to be agreed as the preferred option for the Council, the time required for implementation would be significant due to the extra approvals required in order to carry out any potential development.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chair invited Councillor Evans in his role as Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services to comment on the report. In doing so, he noted that this was an emotive subject within the Borough, however it was important that all parties involved in the meeting remained respectful, particularly to officers who were in attendance.

Councillor Evans reiterated that this issue had been ongoing since 2010, with no decision having been made. Furthermore, it was important to note that were there to be any additional delay, the outcome would be that no new burial provision would be available in the Borough, resulting in a significant impact on Redditch and its residents. It was stated to the Committee that expert advice had been provided and that all of the options within the report had been thoroughly investigated and presented in great detail, including the challenges that would be faced at Plymouth Road Cemetery and at the Bordesley Abbey site and the benefits of the development of the land off Ipsley Church Lane. Councillor Evans added that were any other options to be presented at this stage, this would prolong an already delayed process and would result in additional costs for the Council whilst testing was carried out.

During his comments, Councillor Evans addressed the issue of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO). He explained that a CPO would not be appropriate in this instance as there was sufficient land owned by Redditch Borough Council which could be used to develop a new cemetery.

Prior to opening the debate, the Chair reminded the Committee that the planning application, previously considered by the Planning Committee, was not under scrutiny at this meeting as planning was separate process to Overview and Scrutiny.

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During a detailed discussion by the Committee, it was noted that Arrow Valley Park was a large area and development had already taken place within the park. It was also confirmed that all faiths and religions would continue to be able to make use of any future cemetery provision within the Borough.

Members raised a number of questions regarding the officer's report. These were as follows:

- How many phases were there for the land off Ipsley Church Lane and what impact would this have on the development costs? – The £250,000 development costs that had been identified within the report for phase 1 referred to the cost of satisfying the specific planning conditions for the site and to develop the site. It was acknowledged that there could potentially be an increase in costs. However, the expectation would be that any additional costs would be self-funded once the cemetery was operational. Members were informed that there was no specific detail on the number of phases of development as these would be identified as part of the planning process. A clearer picture of any additional costs would also be more apparent as part of the planning process noting that additional conditions could potentially be part of any future planning permission regarding the site.
- How had officers arrived at the sum of 25 years' future burial provision at the Bordesley Abbey site? – It was explained that the vast majority of the area would be discounted as it fell under the Scheduled Ancient Monument site within Bordesley Abbey. Further explanation was provided in respect of the plans for this site and officers confirmed that a local resident had brought forward some of the ideas for the site and therefore it was appropriate to refer to this within the report.
- Were the initial costs of £90,000 contained within the report regarding the Bordesley Abbey extension an estimate? – It was confirmed that this was an estimated cost at Bordesley Abbey.
- What were the costs of the ground water testing at the land off Ipsley Church Lane and did the sum outlined in

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the report include costs that had already been incurred? – It was confirmed that the sum of £70,000 within the report did not include any costs previously incurred. Officers undertook to provide Members with the figures for costs already incurred prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee due to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

- In what way did the Bordesley Abbey site conflict with policy 45 of the Local Plan? – The transport links provided served the Abbey Stadium and not Bordesley Abbey.
- What did the process of the consent to utilise land on a Scheduled Ancient Monument entail? - The process consisted of the application for Scheduled Ancient Monument consent and was initially straightforward. However, it was explained that although there was no cost associated with the initial application, it was clear, after discussions with Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Department, that in order to mitigate any archaeological concerns associated with the development of the Scheduled Ancient Monument site, the costs would be so significant as to render the site unviable.

There was agreement among Members that it was imperative that the Council continued to provide new burial provision within the Borough and that funds must be available in order to achieve this. However, some Members raised concerns that there had not been a sufficient amount of consultation regarding this decision and that this should be addressed. It was also queried whether the historic investigations that had taken place would still be relevant given that they were carried out several years ago. The Committee was informed that the previous investigations had been re-visited by officers and tested against the most recent version of the Local Plan.

After considerable discussion, Councillor Fogg proposed that the report be delayed and re-visited in order to provide more detail in respect of costings and times of implementation of each development. This proposal was not seconded and therefore not taken forward as a potential recommendation.

Reference was also made to the potential for Members to vote on Councillor Brunner's proposal, detailed in her speech to the

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Committee. However, Members were advised that, as Councillor Brunner was not a member of the Committee, she could not propose a recommendation and her suggestion could only be taken forward if it was proposed and seconded by Members of the Committee. This did not occur.

A robust debate continued, and Members were given further information regarding aquifers, ground water testing and its importance in the provision of burial services, public consultation regarding future cemetery preferences and the expectation of how a new cemetery would operate and co-exist in a public open space, such as the land off Ipsley Church Lane.

Councillor Fry proposed an amendment to the recommendations proposed within the officer report. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Fogg.

The amendment was as follows:

- 1) *“Redditch Borough Council continue to provide new burial provision;*
- 2) *that the New Cemetery Provision report be deferred until such time as a short public consultation be undertaken by officers prior to its consideration by Executive Committee in order for them to better understand what the views of the local residents are; and*
- 3) *a sum of £320,000 be budgeted to progress new burial provision.”*

In discussing the amendment, Members commented that this issue had been delayed for a significant amount of time. It was further noted that Councillor Dormer, as Leader of the Council, had provided opportunities for residents to contact him should they have wished to provide feedback on these proposals.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

The Committee returned to the substantive recommendation, with the vote on each recommendation taken in turn rather than on block. On being put to the vote the recommendations were endorsed by the Committee.

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**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **Redditch Borough Council continue to provide new burial provision;**
- 2) **Ipsley Church Lane be progressed as the preferred option to provide new burial provision; and**
- 3) **a sum of £320,000 be budgeted to progress new burial provision**

**53. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme was presented for the consideration of the Committee. The Chair confirmed that there were no changes.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

**54. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING**

On this occasion there was no urgent business to be considered.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.53 pm

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January,  
2022

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison, Luke Court and Emma Marshall

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Jo Gresham (via Microsoft Teams) and Sarah Sellers

### 55. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Chance, Clayton and Fogg with Councillors Marshall and Court as named substitutes for Councillors Clayton and Fogg respectively.

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

An 'Other Disclosable Interest' was received from Councillors Wheeler and Marshall in respect of minute item 58 due to their involvement in the Woodrow Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Steering Group. In addition to this, Councillor Marshall declared an additional 'Other Disclosable Interest' in respect of minute item 58 due to her involvement in Sports Redditch. It was agreed that all Members present would be able to take part in the discussions.

There were no declarations of any Party Whip.

### 57. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered on this occasion.

Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January, 2022

## 58. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Chief Executive delivered the annual update in respect of the Redditch Partnership. Members were informed that Helen Broughton, the Redditch Partnership Manager, would be leaving the Council that she would be greatly missed by Officers. It was acknowledged that her work over the years had been invaluable, particularly during the past two years throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown.

The following was also highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) was produced by the Redditch Partnership and updated every three years. A mini refresh of the strategy was undertaken in 2015 and the four priorities of the SCS were reviewed each year by the Partnership. The current Priorities of the SCS were as follows:
  - Priority One – Health Inequalities
  - Priority Two – Education attainment, school readiness and raising aspirations of young people.
  - Priority Three – The economy of Redditch with a focus on providing a larger and more diverse job offer.
  - Priority Four – Lead on transformational change of services for citizens in Redditch.
- The work of the Redditch Partnership had been particularly important, and its benefits well received during the pandemic as it facilitated the coordination of communities in Redditch.
- The Redditch Business Leaders Group was chaired by Simon Hyde, CEO of Faun Zoeller, who was passionate about increasing skills within the Borough, particularly for young people. Members were informed that through this group an initiative called 'Power Up' had been rolled out. It was explained that this was a mentor scheme that worked with young people and schools within the Borough. During the pandemic the work of the Redditch Business Leaders Group had been crucial as it had worked closely with local

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businesses whose challenges included economic issues and staff shortages.

- Over the past two years, the work of the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT) had included working with those who had been impacted by Covid-19.
- The Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) was leading the partnership initiative in respect of the national agenda of Integrated Care Systems. It was reported that the RDC worked closely with Primary Care Networks. The Committee was informed that the RDC had three priorities: mental health and well-being, frailty and obesity. Although the demographic of Redditch did not necessarily experience the priority of frailty, it was noted that the Bromsgrove wards of Wythall and Hollywood were within the Primary Care Networks boundaries and that frailty was a priority in these wards due to their older demographic. Members were also informed that the RDC worked closely with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to align with their Here2Help directory.
- The work of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) team was involved in the strengthening of assets within the local community. It was noted that an ABCD Steering Group had been established in Woodrow and this group had met regularly over the past year. Members were advised that funding had been awarded by WCC to establish Community Builders roles to work across Woodrow. These roles would be responsible to make connections between local people and services.
- The Wellbeing in Partnership newsletter had been initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic and had proved to be an extremely useful tool for communities and had provided information on a range of local services all in one place. This was also true of the Knowledge Bank which provided details of local services and could be found on the Council's website.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his update and requested it be noted specifically that her thanks be extended to Helen Broughton for her work over the years as Redditch Partnership Manager. It was noted that Helen was a lively, dynamic

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and hardworking officer who would be greatly missed. Members were in agreement and wished Helen well in her new career.

Members questioned who would be responsible for looking after the Asset Based Community Development work going forward. It was reported that the Head of Housing and Community Services would be looking after the work for the immediate future with a view to recruiting a new Community Services Manager post, which, it was explained, was currently vacant.

During further detailed discussion Members were interested in the following:

- The skills available in the local area and whether the delivery of skills met the needs of local businesses. Members were informed that it was not Redditch Borough Council's role to deliver the skills to the people of the Borough however it was important that the Council worked alongside relevant partners to better understand the needs of local businesses in order to upskill residents which could result in them securing better jobs. It was noted in particular that there was a need for digital manufacturing skills in the Borough. It was clarified, however, that not many courses were available that offered upskilling in this particular skills area. It was stated that manufacturing apprenticeships would be particularly useful for Redditch and the local businesses.
- The inclusion of young people in the plans that specifically affected them and their future. Members' attention was drawn back to the report which had included information regarding the Youth Forum and the projects that were being explored by this group. In addition, it was reported that an application was in the process of being made to the Connected Futures Fund which was a partnership bid particularly concerned with what young people wanted from employment support. Members were advised that it was hoped that should the funding be awarded it would assist with better understanding of the aspirations of young people within the Borough. In addition to this it would provide information on the effect on young people's mental health, particularly in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns experienced over the previous two

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years. Members were interested in how young people joined the Youth Forum, whether this was through a nomination or election scheme and what was the age range of the participants. The Chief Executive undertook to request the information from the relevant officers and circulate the information to the Committee.

- Engagement with schools across the Borough, particularly in the Early Years setting. Members were advised that as noted, it was difficult to engage with schools and sometimes increased engagement was not as successful as hoped. It was suggested by Members that Councillors who sat on governing bodies within schools could potentially be a way to better engage with schools.
- How to make Redditch a more attractive place to teach. It was reported to the Committee that it was not the Council's role to attract people to the Borough to teach, however, it was hoped that this would be an outcome of some of the projects currently being undertaken. It was highlighted that there were limited options within the Town regarding upskilling in various vocational jobs, and that there were limits to the training, which meant that at some point during the training students had to go further afield to access more in-depth and detailed training. Members pointed out that there was a local establishment offering excellent apprenticeships and training courses Midland Group Training Services (MGTS) but its operating levels were generally at capacity, leaving places limited.
- Whether it would be possible to link the four priorities of the SCS with other areas of the Council's work for example in order to limit the levels of obesity within the Borough e.g. could there be a mechanism within the Planning process that would limit the number fast food establishments granted planning permission. Members were informed that the SCS priorities did permeate through most of the Council's responsibilities, much like Climate Change. The planning process was legislative and prescriptive meaning that levels of obesity within the Borough would not be a material consideration when assessing a planning application.

**RESOLVED that**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January, 2022

**The Redditch Partnership Update be noted.**

## 59. RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Recommendation Tracker was presented for Members' consideration. Members were asked to note that all of the recommendations were currently at Amber status, largely due to the pandemic, and would need to remain on the Tracker until the recommendations had been completed. It was discussed whether this would necessarily be the case for all of the recommendations included in the Tracker, as some of the recommendations were now likely to become embedded in Council processes going forward and would therefore never be 'completed' due to their ongoing nature.

Although this was the case for some of the recommendations it was agreed that those with Amber status would remain on the Tracker for the time being and would be reviewed again when the document was brought back for consideration by the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The contents of the Recommendation Tracker be noted.**

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

The Committee was presented with two sets of Executive Committee minutes and the latest version of the Executive Work Programme, as published on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022. During consideration of this item, it was requested that an update item in respect of the New Cemetery Provision be placed on the Committee's Work Programme with a particular focus on any public consultations that were to be undertaken. It was confirmed that this would not be regarding any part of the planning process as this was entirely separate to the scrutiny process.

The Democratic Services Officer present undertook to add the item to the Committee's Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**The Executive Committee Minutes and Work Programme be noted.**

**61. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.**

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

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

During consideration of this item the Chair requested nominations to fill the Budget Scrutiny vacant seat. Councillor Luke Court received a nomination and on being put to the vote this nomination was carried.

Councillor Wheeler welcomed Councillor Court to the group and explained the importance of the scrutiny work that the group undertook during the municipal year. Members were informed that some difficulties had been experienced this year in receiving reports due to the decreased capacity within the Finance team. It was explained that there had been a significant recruitment exercise for the Finance Team and that going forward that this would hopefully resolve any issues.

Members were advised that the Executive Director for Resources had presented a sobering Medium Term Financial Plan at the last meeting and that some difficult decisions would need to be made by the Council going forward.

**b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Councillor Wheeler informed the Committee that no meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group had taken place since the previous update. However, it was confirmed that a meeting was scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and she would provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.**

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

Councillor Chalk updated the Committee in respect of the External Scrutiny Bodies and in doing so informed Members that the written updates that were provided gave an outline of the meetings rather than an in-depth update. He advised that should Members wish to look at the meetings in more detail the minutes were available online and most of the meetings had been live streamed.

It was explained to the Committee that the next meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee was due to take place on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The External Scrutiny Bodies Update Reports be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.31 pm



## MINUTES

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January,  
2022

### Present:

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

### Officers:

Matthew Bough, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, James Howse, David Riley and Darren Whitney

### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

### 52. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gemma Monaco and Nyear Nazir.

### 53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 54. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at the latest meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Members had pre-scrutinised the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2022/23, Fees and Charges 2022 and Council Tax Base 2022/23 reports, at Minute Item No.s 59 – 62 on the agenda for the consideration of the Executive Committee. However, as the group had made no recommendations on these items there were no referrals from the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for consideration at the meeting.

Members were advised that an updated copy of the appendix to the Fees and Charges 2022 report had been issued that day in the Additional Papers 1 pack. The Committee was urged to refer to this version of the appendix when debating that item.

### 55. MINUTES

**RESOLVED that**

Chair

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

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**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**56. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT 2022/23 (PREVIOUSLY FLEXIBLE HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT GRANT AND HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION GRANT)**

The Housing Development and Enabling Manager presented a report on the subject of the Homelessness Prevention Grant settlement 2022/23 for the Council. This grant replaced the previous Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Temporary Accommodation Management Fund, which had been amalgamated. The Council was anticipating receiving £314,926 in the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which was ring fenced for spending on homelessness and homelessness prevention. There had been a £66,008 underspend on equivalent homelessness grants in 2021/22. Therefore, the Council had total grant funding of £392,134 to spend on homelessness and homelessness prevention in the 2022/23 financial year.

In line with previous years, the Council was proposing to allocate this grant funding to various different Voluntary and Community (VCS) organisations that worked to support homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless, including young people. This would represent expenditure of £382,000 of the grant funding available. Officers were proposing that the Head of Community and Housing Services should be provided with delegated authority, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement, to make adjustments as needed during the year, including with respect to expenditure of the remaining funds.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement explained that the funding to the various VCS organisations had made a significant contribution to work to tackle homelessness in recent years and it was therefore important to ensure that this continued. A lot of work had been undertaken, in particular, to address issues with rough sleeping and to support young people who might otherwise struggle to access appropriate accommodation.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the following initiatives be approved to receive allocation of funding in 2022/23:**

<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>£ (up to)</b>
Redditch Nightstop - Outreach Worker to	55,600

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support 21 to 35 year olds and prevent homelessness or work towards planned moves into suitable and sustainable accommodation and the Safe Accommodation and Support scheme.	
Redditch Nightstop Core Funding	13,000
CCP Rough Sleeper Outreach Service - 2.8 FTE posts across Bromsgrove and Redditch	75,246
Fry Accord – 18 units of supported accommodation for Ex-Offenders or those likely to offend	15,457
St Basils – Provide 23 units of accommodation for young people aged 16- 23 years of age additional funding to provide 24 hour cover following a reduction in funding from County Council	14,200
Newstarts - Furniture Project to provide furniture for homeless households.	5,000
Homelessness Prevention - Spend to Save budget for use by Housing Options Officers	17,060
Temporary Accommodation Management – as 3.1 above	66,380
St Basils Smallwood Almshouses - Progression Coach to offer additional support that can operate outside of normal office hours to fit around a young persons education, training and employment.	26,500
Citizens Advice Debt Advice	23,000
Sanctuary Scheme for Victims of Domestic Abuse	20,000
Young Persons Pathway Worker	26,000
Crash Pad	14,033
County Partnership Manager	6,300
Hopes – Single and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Service	4,996
<b>Total</b>	<b>£382,772</b>

- 2) **delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement to use any**

**unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2022/23 in support of existing or new schemes.**

**57. COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOME DISCOUNT AND PREMIUM**

The Financial Support Manager presented a report which outlined proposals in respect of discounts and premiums for Council Tax payments for empty homes in the Borough. The proposed changes would come into effect from April 2022.

The Council's current scheme distinguished between existing homes that became vacant and new homes that became vacant. Owners of existing homes had to pay 50 per cent of the Council Tax for the first three months once the property became vacant whilst owners of new vacant homes, generally housing developers, were exempt from paying Council Tax for the first three months. Under the proposed new scheme, this distinction would end. No Council Tax would need to be paid on a vacant property for the first 14 days but subsequently 100 per cent of Council Tax would need to be paid. There would be exemptions from this rule, including for social and Council housing.

Consideration had been given to exempting vacant homes on the market from payment of Council Tax under this scheme, but the Council had concluded that payments should apply, partly because it was not clear that the legislation would permit this exemption and partly because the local housing market was buoyant. The Council could also use discretion to assess requests for exemptions on a case by case basis.

The report also proposed the introduction of premium Council Tax payments for homes that had been vacant for a long time. Under this part of the scheme, property owners would pay 100 per cent of Council Tax for homes that had been vacant for up to five years, 200 per cent Council Tax for properties vacant for between five and ten years and 300 per cent of Council Tax for properties that had been vacant for at least ten years. This was designed to discourage property owners from keeping homes vacant in the long-term.

Members discussed the proposals and in doing so commented that housing was in demand and it was therefore important to ensure properties were available on the local market. It was also noted that, should an exemption be applied to properties for sale, this might be used as an opportunity by a minority of unscrupulous property owners to avoid making Council Tax payments.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the potential impact that a limit of 14 days, in terms of the period in which property owners would not need to pay Council Tax on vacant properties, might have on landlords' ability to update a home before letting to new tenants. Concerns were raised that this might result in some landlords rushing to complete works, to the detriment of the property and experience of future tenants. However, Officers explained that previously landlords had had to pay 50 per cent of Council Tax from the first day on which a property became vacant and therefore this exemption for 14 days placed landlords in a better financial position in the short-term.

**RECOMMENDED that**

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

- 1) **from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the level of Council Tax discount to be applied under Section 11A (4) and Section 11A (4A) for each class of dwellings as defined by The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) will be:**

**Class A ["second homes with a planning restriction"] 0%:  
no discount**

**Class B ["second homes with a planning restriction"] 0%:  
no discount**

**Class C ["vacant dwellings"]**

- a. **Where the dwelling has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a continuous period of not more than 14 days - 100% discount**
- b. **Where the dwelling has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 14 days - 0%: no discount.**
- c. **Where the dwelling is**
  - i. **unoccupied and substantially unfurnished; and**
  - ii. **the owner of the dwelling is a local housing authority; and**
  - iii. **when next in use the dwelling will be occupied under the provisions of the Housing act 1985**  
**100% discount.**

**Owner will be defined by reference to section 6(5) and 6(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

**For the purposes of Class C when considering whether a dwelling falls within the description any period of occupation, not exceeding 6 weeks, during which it was not unoccupied and substantially unfurnished shall be disregarded.**

**Class D [“dwellings requiring major repair works”] - 100% discount**

- 2) **from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the additional council tax premium applied under section 11B of the LGFA '92, for long-term empty dwellings will be**
  - i) **for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for less than 5 years – 100% premium**
  - ii) **for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for 5 years or more, but less than 10 years – 200% premium**
  - iii) **for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for at least 10 years – 300% premium**
- 3) **the Head of Financial and Customer Services on a case-by-case basis may consider a reduction to the long-term empty premium.**

#### **58. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2022/23**

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) regarding Members' allowances in the 2022/23 financial year.

The IRP reviewed allowances paid to elected Members serving most of the district Councils in Worcestershire. The Panel comprised independent representatives of the local community. The Council was required to consider the IRP's proposals, although was not obliged to accept the Panel's recommendations.

In considering the recommendations, Members were asked to note that the IRP's proposals reflected their assessment of what they felt Members should be paid in terms of both the basic allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid to certain Members for undertaking specific roles. The first recommendation, in respect of the proposed basic allowance for Members, was the level which had been proposed for other District Councillors in

Worcestershire. However, the percentage increase required to achieve that level of the basic allowance in Redditch would be higher than at some other Councils because Redditch Borough Council had opted not to increase Members' basic allowance for a number of years. This was not reflected in the IRP's report, which worked on the basis that Members would have agreed the Panel's proposals in previous years. The second recommendation from the Panel, in respect of SRAs, if approved, would result in changes to the SRAs paid to Members as the proposed calculations differed from the Council's current Scheme of Member Allowances. However, recommendations 3 – 6 in the report, concerning payment of travel claims, carers' allowances and payments to Parish Councillors, would not result in any changes.

During consideration of this item, Members were advised that there would need to be an amendment to the budget to reflect historic changes made to Members' allowances. This would be reported to Members in February 2022 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25. However, this did not have implications for the IRP's report.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the proposals and in doing so commented on the decisions made by Members in previous years not to increase the basic allowance. Concerns were raised that this resulted in basic allowance payments to Redditch Members lagging behind elected Councillors serving at the other District Councils in Worcestershire. A decision to increase the basic allowance to the level suggested by the IRP would help to bring the basic allowance into line with that in place at other authorities. Concerns were also raised that it would not be appropriate to decline to increase basic allowances at a time of rising inflation.

However, Members commented that they did not feel, at this time, it would be appropriate to change the arrangements for SRAs in Redditch, as the current arrangements in place reflected circumstances for Members in the Borough.

Reference was made to the potential for a benchmarking exercise to be undertaken by the IRP in respect of basic allowances paid to Councillors in Worcestershire. Members commented that the last time such an exercise had been undertaken had been in 2016 and the pressures and workloads of Members had changed significantly since this date, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Basic Allowance for 2022-23 is £4,732, representing a 6.648% increase;**

- 2) **travel allowances for 2022-23 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance;**
- 3) **subsistence allowances for 2022-23 remain unchanged;**
- 4) **the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged**
- 5) **for Parish Councils in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**

#### **59. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21 REPORT**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21. Members were asked to note that in total an underspend of £373,000 had been identified by the end of the financial year. The underspend would be reinvested in the general fund position for the 2021/22 financial year. This underspend had a number of causes which included the following:

- Borrowing costs had been £183,000 lower than anticipated. This was due to low interest rates as well as to the short-term benefits arising from Government business grant funding being placed in the Council's accounts, though this grant funding had subsequently been distributed amongst eligible local companies.
- In total £330,000 savings had been achieved in respect of management of Council assets and properties. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Redditch Town Hall and other Council buildings had been closed to the public, with most staff working from home, and this had resulted in savings on utilities, particularly heating.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling welcomed the underspend that had been achieved in the 2020/21 financial year. However, the Committee was advised that there remained significant financial pressures for the Council and difficult decisions would need to be taken to address these pressures.

The action that had been taken to achieve savings with respect to management of Council assets was praised, and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) were urged to consider further action that could be taken to achieve savings in future through management of Council assets. Officers confirmed that use of Redditch Town Hall was in the process of being reviewed. CMT were aiming to reduce footfall at the Town Hall and to enable an agile working model at the Council.

Reference was also made specifically to the savings that had been achieved in relation to heating the Town Hall and other Council buildings and the beneficial impact of new windows in the building on heating costs. The Committee was advised that further measures that could be adopted to address heating in Council buildings were being considered. However, Members were asked to note that any action might only be sufficient to offset anticipated increases to utilities costs, which were likely to increase by over 5 per cent in the 2022/23 financial year.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the current financial position in relation to the revenue budgets for the year April 2020 – March 2021 as detailed in the report is noted; and**
- 2) **the additional £120k of general covid grant that will be paid to Rubicon Leisure Limited to balance the year end position, as agreed by the S 151 Officer under delegated authority, be noted.**

**60. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RENT SETTING 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting report 2022/23. The Executive Committee was informed that there were strict Government guidelines in respect of rent setting by Councils and these had been followed when calculating the proposed rent to be paid by Council tenants in the 2022/23 financial year. In total, a 4.1 per cent increase to rents for Council properties was being recommended.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement, in proposing the recommendations, commented that a 4.1 per cent increase to rents was below inflation. This, together with other Council pressures, would potentially have implications for the HRA moving forward.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the actual average rent increase for 2022/23 be set as September 2021 CPI, 3.1%, plus 1% resulting in an increase of 4.1%; and**
- 2) **when void social rent properties are re-let. The rent will be set at the recalculated Target Rent (Formula Rent) for the new tenant.**

**61. FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Fees and Charges 2022/23 report for Members' consideration. Members were asked to note that the appendix to the report had been reissued in the Additional Papers 1 pack with slightly amended figures.

The principle underpinning the report was that, in the absence of better information, fees and charges would be set at a level to achieve full cost recovery. In general, this meant that it was proposed that the majority of fees and charges should increase by between 5 and 6 per cent, based on the best estimate by the Bank of England of the likely level of inflation by April 2022.

There were some exceptions, in terms of services where officers were not proposing to increase fees and charges. This included the charge for the Garden Waste Collection service, as Officers had concluded that an increase at this time would not be commercially viable. In addition, Officers were proposing no increases to the fees for the Dial a Ride, Lifeline and Shopmobility services, on the basis that these services were provided to some of the most vulnerable communities in the Borough. There were also some cases where the increase was slightly over or under 5 or 6 per cent, which had occurred where officers were rounding the charge up or down.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling welcomed the proposals detailed in the report. However, Members were asked to note that inflation levels were difficult to predict and it was possible that this would be higher than 6 per cent by April 2022, which would impact on the Council's financial position.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) Council approve all of the fees and charges; and**
- 2) Council agree that all fees and charges are charged commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.**

**62. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Council Tax Base 2022/23 report for the Executive Committee's consideration. Members were advised that this report, which was prepared annually, contained technical information based on sound data. Officers had identified that the Council Tax Base was 26,546, relating to the number of Band D equivalent properties in the

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Borough. This calculation was important as it enabled the authority to calculate Council Tax levels.

In proposing the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling explained that there was a need to increase the Council Tax Base in the Borough. More Council Band D properties needed to be built in Redditch, as this would help to achieve that higher Council Tax Base.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2022/23, be approved; and**
- 2) **in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2022/23 be 26,546.63 and for the parts of the area listed below be:**

<b>Parish of Feckenham</b>	<b>374.52</b>
<b>Rest of Redditch</b>	<b><u>26,172.11</u></b>
<b>Total for Borough</b>	<b><u>26,546.63</u></b>

## **63. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES (WRS) BOARD - BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at which budget contributions from partner authorities had been discussed. The proposed contributions had been reviewed in detail previously by senior Finance Officers from all of the authorities.

There were a number of budget pressures which were reflected in the figures reported to Members. This included pressures arising from anticipated pay increases, pension contributions, increases to the rent for the premises used by WRS and increases to the financial settlement for ICT support. Some of the pressures were more relevant to certain partner authorities than for others, such as for the Technical Officer for Animal Activity, which was reflected in the figures. In total, Redditch Borough Council's contribution would represent 17.53 per cent of the total budget for WRS in the 2022/23 financial year.

Members subsequently discussed the proposed budget settlement and in doing so noted that the Executive Committee could only determine the financial contribution from Redditch Borough Council. The flexible approach to funding different posts to meet varying

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needs of partners in the county was welcomed as a fair funding model.

During consideration of this item, the Executive Committee praised WRS for the team's hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Members commented that WRS had had to address new work pressures during the pandemic, such as those relating to lockdown restrictions on businesses. The workload of the team had also been impacted in other ways, such as through the increase in noise nuisance complaints, which had arisen during the lockdowns when more people were based at home.

## RECOMMENDED that

partner authorities approve the following for 2022/2023:

- a) the 2022/23 gross expenditure budget of £3,891k;
- b) the 2022/23 income budget of 634k;
- c) the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2022/2023 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Redditch Borough Council	572	17.53

- d) the additional partner liabilities for 2022/2023 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure:

Council	£'000
Redditch Borough Council	14

- e) the additional partner liabilities for 2022/2023 in relation to hosting costs:

Council	Increase in Rent £000	Increase in ICT Hosting £000	Increase in Support Hosting £000
Redditch Borough Council	1	3	2

- f) Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to three Technical Officers.

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

## 64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Leader confirmed that there were no updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

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

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

## 66. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following verbal updates were provided in respect of the work of the Executive Advisory Panels and other bodies.

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

Councillor Lovell advised that there was due to be a meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group in January 2022.

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

Councillor Dormer advised that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was scheduled to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

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

In the absence of Councillor Nazir, the Leader advised that there had been no further meetings of the Board since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee.

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

The Committee was informed that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was scheduled to take place on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer explained that a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel was scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022. All Members were urged to attend this meeting.

**67. RELEASE OF COVENANTS AFFECTING LAND**

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented a report on the subject of the release of a covenant affecting land at Overdale in Astwood Bank that had previously been sold by the Council. The covenant stipulated that the land concerned could only be used as a garden. However, a request had been received from the owner of the land to remove the covenant.

A quote had been received some time ago concerning the level of the capital receipt that would be generated for the Council as a result of removing this covenant. Officers were proposing a slight amendment to the proposals detailed in the report, and this was that there should be an up to date valuation undertaken.

The Executive Committee discussed the report and questioned the frequency with which covenants were applied and the reasons why the Council had applied a covenant to the sale of this particular land in 2009. Officers explained that this was a fairly standard arrangement and covenants were put in place to help protect the Council's interests. At the time that the sale occurred it was likely that the purchaser had asked for additional garden land.

Reference was also made to the planning process that would need to be followed should the covenant be released. Officers confirmed that the proper planning process would need to be followed in these circumstances.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) subject to receiving an updated valuation, authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, following consultation with the Leader, to negotiate and finalise terms for the release of covenants attached to LR Title No WR121916 in return for the capital sum; and**

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**RECOMMENDED that**

- 2) **the Council's budget is augmented by the capital receipt.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.32 pm

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**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
February 2022	Sustainable Warmth Funding	Kath Manning, Climate Change Officer
March 2022	Pre-Decision-Scrutiny - Future Plans for Auxerre House	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
March 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
June 2022	Pre-Decision-Scrutiny - Asset Management Strategy and investment programme for council housing stock	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
July 2022	New Cemetery Provision – Update	Bereavement Services Manager

## 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	Councillor Salman Akbar	Date of referral	26 <sup>h</sup> January 2022
Proposed topic title	Speeding and safer roads		
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green</li> <li>• Living independent, active and healthy lives</li> </ul>		
Background to the issue	<p>Speeding was raised as an issue by a number of Members as part of an Overview and Scrutiny training session in June 2021.</p> <p>Many Councillors within the Borough receive complaints regarding speeding, and are not always clear what action, if any, we can take in our roles. There are particular areas of the town when speeding is considered by residents to be a real concern and worry; residents expect Members to show some leadership on this issue, even if it may not fall under our direct responsibilities.</p>		
Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish the statistics regarding speeding within Redditch.</li> <li>• To establish which organisations are working to tackle speed awareness within the Borough.</li> <li>• Get briefings from local police and West Mercia Road Safety Team as to how roads policing works, what resources there are, and how Councillors can effectively escalate reports from residents about speeding.</li> <li>• Consult with the public regarding the impact of speeding within the community.</li> <li>• Look for examples from other Councils – where successful initiatives have been implemented.</li> <li>• Explore possibility of having Redditch Borough Council undertake some work to highlight National Road Victim Month (August) and World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (November).</li> <li>• Explore action that could be taken to raise Members' awareness of the impact of speeding within the local community.</li> </ul>		
How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)	6 months minimum – this might take slightly longer if the review started prior to the local elections.		

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Team,  
Redditch Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
Walter Stranz Square,  
Redditch, B98 8AH  
Email: [democratic@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@redditchbc.gov.uk)

West Midlands Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
10<sup>th</sup> January 2022

The authority is now using responses from the 2021 census for evidence in several situations. There were a couple of items from the minutes one of which was the range of late reports. None of the members made any comment on the responses from the Mayor.

In the area of Air Quality there is a move towards the size and number of particulates and the limits are to be set by October 2022. Non constituent members will be expected to react with a plan for their areas. We were shown maps showing the density and the reason for some areas of high levels.

It was suggested that there were 122 possible interventions some of which were explain using slides. It is anticipated that the limits will be reduced by greater cooperation even so there was major concern by the members.

There followed a verbal report on housing and land use.

The chair noted that our next meeting on 22 March would be the last of this municipal year and hoped everyone would be in attendance.

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Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022

There is a move to integrate services and Redditch BC will be involved with this; but it is not clear how this will work for the citizens. This is to be coordinated by a new Integrated Care Board who will distribute the finance in a different way to develop the integration. It is anticipated that this will take 4/5 years and the CCG and ICB will work together until it is possible to close the CCG.

We had a report on Cancer Care. The CCG was leading on this and high-level cancers were a priority with 28 days between receiving a diagnosis or being cleared. It is anticipated that work on breast cancer will be on track by March and there are other action plans for other areas.

There is to be more investment in diagnostic with a large bid being proposed and plans are being made for an increase in the population.

At a national level it is intended to continue working with the private until March and the committee praise the good work achieved over the past months.

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